NEW POLITICS VOL. IX, NO. 4, WHOLE NUMBER 36 WINTER 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Affirmative Action — 2003

REGINALD WILSON

ON JUNE 23, 2003, THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES held that the law school admissions policy of the University of Michigan was constitutional but its undergraduate school admissions policy was not. The ruling in effect affirmed the lone dictum of Justice Lewis Powell's (*University of California Regents v. Bakke*, 1978) assertion of twenty-five years ago that "race matters" and now had it speak for the majority of the court. The ruling states that race could be one element in a complex of many elements — such as SAT scores and class standing — but it could not be a definitive element, unlike the terminated policy of the undergraduate admissions system which awarded a numerical weight to race and was considered a quota by the court. Moreover, the court envisioned a 25 year time limit to its ruling and expected that a future court would look unfavorably on extending that deadline.

The opinion, the second most important education decision by the Supreme Court (after *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954) in the past hundred years, was immediately and critically commented on by pundits throughout the land both positively and negatively. "Thanks to Sandra Day O'Connor, affirmative action is still alive," said Andrew Hacker in the *New York Review of Books*. "In one of its most important cases in decades, the Supreme Court . . . upheld the prerogative of colleges and universities to give preference to members of minority groups in admissions," editorialized *The Nation*. On the other hand, Professor Pedro Noguera of Harvard University cautioned that "the court's decision does not provide clear guidance on how to admit students, but it does make clear race can be taken into consideration." Charles Willie, professor emeritus of Harvard was equally cautious: "Whether affirmative action procedures will be necessary a quarter of century from today will depend upon the will of colleges and universities to do what is fair to all applicants." And many voices were openly hostile. Michael Kinsley in the *Washington Post* said, "The court's message to universities . . . is: We have fudged this dangerous issue. You should do the same." And Robert Samuelson, the economist, asserted flatly: "Most Americans detest racial and ethnic preferences. People . . . should advance on individual effort and merit." Peter Wood, professor of anthropology at Boston University, said he was "appalled. This Supreme Court decision may well transform American society — for the worse."

> Its institutions both north and south were mostly segregated — armed forces, schools, jobs, universities — and in the southern states, blacks could not vote. The United States could not present itself, under these circumstances, as the world's leading democracy.

II

TO BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THIS wide divergence of opinion and vigorous dissent we must go back

REGINALD WILSON *is Senior Scholar Emeritus of the American Council on Education and a member of the* New Politics *editorial board.*

to the social climate that prevailed in American before *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1954, just nine years after World War II ended, the United States faced a world that was dramatically changing. The United Nations was founded in 1945. The colonial empires of Britain and France were demanding freedom. And one million black GIs were being discharged from the segregated American armed forces and coming home to face the same segregation they had fought against in "The War for Democracy."

The United States was emerging from a strictly apartheid society. Its institutions, both north and south, were mostly segregated — armed forces, schools, jobs, universities — and in the southern states, blacks could not vote. The United States could not present itself, under these circumstances, as it would like to as the world's leading democracy. Harry Truman desperately integrated the armed forces in 1948 and openly sought black votes in his tight race for the presidency. It was in this climate that the *Brown* decision desegregating public schools was rendered.

The beginning of the modern civil rights movement coincided with this decision and certainly influenced the Supreme Court in its deliberations. In 1955 Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama to a white man, and was arrested and jailed. A young Martin Luther King became the leader of the Montgomery Improvement Association in Alabama shortly thereafter. However, few anticipated the massive outcry and resistance to the *Brown* decision by both north and south. From Little Rock to Boston, the school systems found various subterfuges of resistance.

In addition, these were several laws enacted shortly before World War II, while ostensibly improving the economic circumstances of the population as a whole, served in actuality to further increase the poverty of black workers while enriching white workers and increasing racial isolation. The Social Security Act in the mid-1930s for example, excluded, at the insistence of southern congressmen, domestic and agricultural workers where most blacks were concentrated. The Federal Housing Authority explicitly stated in 1936 that "properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes." Thus, neighborhoods became more isolated racially while minorities, left in central cities, were given unfavorable mortgage loans if they were given loans at all. The unemployment compensation system excluded black women domestic workers from coverage and forced many of them to go on welfare. Black workers were eventually covered by these policies in the l960s but whites had by this time became entrenched in the suburbs, in better-paying jobs and in better housing. Ghettos do not just happen; they are created by explicit and conscious policies.

III

IN SCHOOLING, THE *BROWN* DECISION and subsequent court orders had desegregated some schools despite the protests and resistances. Substantial research has shown that desegregation of elementary and secondary schools results in a positive effect on reading and mathematics scores of minority children and, in later life, influences biracial friendships and improves graduation rates.

Although desegregation peaked in 1972, since that time schools have slowly re-segregated to nearly pre-*Brown* levels. The linchpin of that decision was the Supreme Court ruling in *Milliken v. Bradley* in 1977. That Detroit decision stated that the suburbs could not be included in cross-district busing since the suburbs had not intentionally (as could be documented for the cities) participated in segregation. But the suburbs had intentionally been created through racially restricted housing policies. The court ignored that fact. An example of the effect of that decision is what occurred in Hartford, Connecticut. In 1970, the school system was 71 percent white; in 1990, 93 present of the enrollment was African-American or Hispanic. Before 1950 no major city's population was more than 50 percent black; in 1992 there were nine cities which were majority black. Richard Fossey, (*Readings on Equal Education*, 1998*)* has said it most starkly: "*Brown*'s promise has been broken in the inner cities and may not be fulfilled in our lifetime."

The promise of *Brown* has been broken in elementary and secondary education and has begun to affect higher education in several ways. Already most white students are coming to college from nearly all-white high schools and all-white neighborhoods. Surveys have shown that this distorts their perception of societal reality. For example, a survey commissioned by the *Washington Post*, the Henry Kaiser Foundation and Harvard University found that the majority of whites believed "that blacks are as well off as whites in terms of their jobs, income, schools and health care." It is not surprising that substantial numbers of white college students feel that affirmative action gives black and Hispanic students unfair advantages in college admissions.

IV

We come to higher education with the understanding that it builds on the unequal foundation described in the history of public schooling in this country. The universities and colleges have a similar history of exclusion but with the caveat that they are institutions of choice rather than compulsion. One volume critical of the present university says, "The university is an institution shaped by and for a small fraction of American society" (*Whitewashing Race*, 2003). And that has been its admission practice throughout history. But more so than "a small fraction," read a small, mostly white, mostly upper- and middle-class, mostly Protestant, fraction. The tale has been too often told of the restrictions placed on Jews and Catholics for much of their history, but the near exclusion of people of color, especially blacks, from entry into their hallowed halls by euphemistic strategies such as "qualified," "elite," "selective" and "prestigious" were legion. The colleges in the north admitted a small number of blacks and other minorities, while colleges in the south exclusively relegated blacks to historically black colleges with the benign acquiescence of the national government and the Supreme Court through much of the nation's post-Civil War history.

This was dramatically changed with the struggles of the civil rights movement in conjunction with other social and political events which produced the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Executive Order 11246 of 1965, the *Adams* decision of 1973, and the *Bakke* decision of 1978. These rulings resulted in a surge of black and Hispanic enrollments in predominately white colleges and universities. Black enrollment, for example, increased from 4.9 percent in 1955 to 11.3 per cent in 1990. But this figure is masked somewhat by the 47 percent of blacks and the 56 percent of Hispanics enrolled in two-year colleges, from which transfer to four-year colleges and attainment of a bachelor's degree is more problematic.

The majority of whites say they believe in integration as long as it doesn't happen in their neighborhoods. They hope the school achievement gap between whites and minorities can be closed, but minorities need to do the work themselves and, by the way, don't ask them to spend any money on the effort.

Moreover, the *Adams* case, which was brought by the NAACP on behalf of black parents, was necessitated by the southern states virtually ignoring the Civil Rights Act, and the federal government's reluctance to insist on their obeying it. With a favorable decision in the case, the white southern public colleges were mandated to increase their black student enrollment and black faculties. From 1973, when the decision was rendered, to 1985, when most states were released from the court order, *none* of the states had achieved their self-imposed goals. Yet, the courts released them from the order because "they had made a good faith effort."

Lyndon Johnson's affirmative action executive order and the *Bakke* decision of 1978 gave impetus to black and Hispanics enrollments in public and private colleges and seemed to convince many of these institutions that, astonishingly, this seemed to be the right thing to do! But the Achilles' heel of Judge Powell's decision in *Bakke* was that it rested on a voluntary and nebulous "diversity" initiative rather than a directive to explicitly begin to overcome America's racist history in college admissions. The weak reed of diversity allowed the ruling to be attacked and narrowed over the years from viewing race as a "suspect" category requiring "a compelling state interest" and "strict scrutiny" to even be considered. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, in her rousing dissent in the *Gratz* case stated her disagreement in plain English: "[these rulings] would be fitting were our Nation free of the vestiges of rank discrimination . . . But we are not far distant from an overtly discriminatory past and the effects of centuries of law-sanctioned inequality [that] remains painfully evident in our communities and schools . . . In the wake 'of a system of racial caste only recently ended' . . . large disparities endure."

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's majority opinion in the *Grutter* case however, found the law school's admission strategy more comfortable, and she seemed to be greatly influenced by the strong briefs submitted by business and the armed forces in favor of affirmative action. Writing for the majority she said: "these benefits are not theoretical but real, as major American businesses have made clear . . . what is more, high ranking retired and civilian leaders of the United States military assert that [they need] a highly qualified, racially diverse officer corps . . . to provide national security."

It is clear that the needs of corporate and business America to present a racially diverse face to an increasingly global and non-white world carried greater stress with Justice O'Connor than the arguments for racial justice and equality.

Quite frankly, the undergraduate admission policy of assigning points for various attributes (race, legacy, athletes, music, academics and so on) seemed much more straightforward and honest in quantifying what the university was actually doing rather than the nebulous and complex policy of the law school which will surely be immediately subject to attack. Already the opponents have been successful in attacking affirmative action through the state petition process. They have passed Proposition 209 in California and Proposition 200 in Washington state outlawing affirmative action statewide. They are threatening to do the same in Michigan and Illinois.

V

The affirmative action decision of 2003 rests on the tangled and racist record of the past just described. America is a divided society and promises to become even more so. The Supreme Court in its long history has rendered decisions that are mostly compatible with the majority of white Americans and rarely goes beyond them. It upheld slavery, it upheld racial restriction, it upheld segregated schools, it sanctioned the denial of black voting, etc. When it does render decisions that upset the prerogatives of whites, it soon modifies them in subsequent decisions to make them more palatable — the school desegregation decisions, the suburban exclusion decision, the southern segregated colleges' decisions and so on. The consequence is that the symbolism of equal rights is on the books but the fact of white privilege is relatively undisturbed.

The impact of the affirmative action decision of 2003 will mostly affect the admission policies of about 150 selective public and private universities out of 3500 universities and colleges. Its symbolic impact is much wider. It tells the world, as did the *Brown* desegregation decision, that the United States is aware of its racial problems and is doing something to solve them. However, in the "real" United States, black infant mortality is twice as high as whites and worsening; Latinos and blacks account for 75 percent of active cases of tuberculosis; the black and Latino poverty rate is nearly 25 percent and increasing; and blacks are the most segregated of all racial groups in housing and schools.

When asked, the majority of white Americans say they believe in the usual symbols of democracy — racial equality and integrated neighborhoods. But in a 2001 report from the Russell Sage Foundation, the majority of whites say they would prefer to live in same race neighborhoods while the majority of blacks showed a strong preference for integrated neighborhoods. In the 2003 PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, when asked, " the public continues to believe that closing the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students is important but blames the gap on factors unrelated to the quality of schooling . . . 97 percent point to home life and upbringing." Moreover, in the same poll, 58 percent of the public believes "narrowing the achievement gap does not require spending more money on low achieving students." In other words, the majority of whites say they believe in integration as long as it doesn't happen in their neighborhoods. They hope the school achievement gap between whites and minorities can be closed, but minorities need to do the work themselves and, by the way, don't ask them to spend any money on the effort.

The decision of 2003 does not speak to the resegregation of schools to almost pre-Brown levels. It does not speak of warehousing in ghettos of the black and Latino population. It does not speak of public schools that are comparable to those in a Third World country. Jonathan Kozol describes Morris High School in New York City in his book, *Savage Inequalities* (1991): "Blackboards at the school . . . are so badly cracked that teachers are afraid to let students write on them for fear they'll cut themselves. Some mornings, fallen chips of paint cover classrooms like snow . . . teachers and students have come to see humor in the waterfall that courses down six flights of stairs after a heavy rain." The school student body is black and Latino. Likewise, the role of universities in fiercely restricting the admissions of minorities except to its lower precincts has kept the number of educated minorities artificially low, and ironically, has limited the opportunity of lower-class whites, but they are silent because it maintains their caste distinction. Lower class whites have acquiesced in their own disenfranchisement to satisfy their racial superiority. There are few voices speaking out in the white community for universal access to higher education and to first class primary schools for lower class and working class whites and, thus for everyone. As in the Civil War, the majority of southern white soldiers did not own slaves, nevertheless they fought and died defending the existence of a system which exploited them, but gave them a greater gift — white superiority.

The role of public education is fundamental to the distribution of educational benefits and consequent employment opportunities and leadership access that should be the right of everyone in a democratic society. That will never happen in the present system because the educational benefits like the economic rewards are distributed primarily to the upper and middle classes and severely restricted to the lower classes regardless of race.

Higher education, especially in elite schools, is increasingly the province of the rich and middle classes regardless of race. It is not about the ability to do the work.

With the United States as the wealthiest country in the world, only 25 percent of whites possess a bachelor's degree or higher and only about 15 percent of minorities do so as well. Yet, millions more Americans are capable of achieving a higher education but are prevented from doing so by artificial barriers of costs, inferior primary schools and other impediments: testing, tracking, lack of advanced placement classes, etc.

Higher education, especially in elite schools, is increasingly the province of the rich and middle classes regardless of race. It is not about the ability to do the work. A recent study by Anthony Carnevale and Stephen Rose for the Century Foundation found that students "with quite modest SAT scores of about 1000 are virtually identical [in graduation rates] to students with SAT scores as high as 1200." The significant question they ask is "who is deserving" not "who is qualified." Upper middle class students admitted to top colleges tend to believe they are where they are because they deserve to be there. Indeed, the Carnaevole and Rose study found the "fully 74 percent of the students [admitted to the 146 most competitive colleges in 1995] came from the top quarter of the nation's social and economic strata."

Bowen and Bok, in their 1998 book, *The Shape of the River*, found that "nearly nine of ten African-American students admitted to the most competitive colleges had come from families in the top two tiers of the social and economic ladder." These are the colleges which are most particularly affected by the affirmative action decision. In fact, Kermit Hall, president of Utah State University, says "the best affirmative action that we can practice . . . is to ensure that every student seeking higher education can afford it, and that colleges have the resources to give them the quality education that they deserve." Would that this were true. Over four million qualified high school graduates will be prevented from attending college this decade due to lack of funds alone. Tuition is on the rise and public colleges are raising admission criteria to limit access.

The symbolism of affirmative action was affirmed by the decision of 2003 and, to be sure, it was worth the long and difficult struggle despite its limited impact. The majority of people of color, however, are barred from access to quality schooling before they are born by the twin evils of this society — race and class, which are byproducts of the capitalist system, but operate independently from it. In spite of undeniable progress, the majority of people of color are burdened by life long oppression, poverty and racism. Derrick Bell, professor of law at New York University, and author of *Faces at the Bottom of the Well* (1992), believes that racism is a permanent part of American society. Yet, he goes on to say, "It is not a matter of what we do, or an idealism based on a long-held dream of attaining a society free of racism. Rather, it is a question of both/and. *Both* the recognition of the futility of action — where action is more civil rights strategies destined to fail — *and* the unalterable conviction that something must be done, that action must be taken." A grim but realistic assessment of the present and plan of action for the future.

Sharon vs. Arafat: Leader Bashing as Means in the Oppression of a Nation

Adam Keller

THE ATTITUDE OF ISRAELI SOCIETY to Yasir Arafat, and particularly the process by which the Palestinian leader has been thoroughly delegitimized and demonized in the past three years, is seldom made into the subject of analysis.

Certainly, the manifestations of utter distrust and disgust nowadays made even by many considered doves whenever Arafat's name is mentioned cannot be accounted for solely by his supposed links to terrorism. For one thing, only the most flimsy of proofs was ever offered for such allegations — even after the Israeli army seized the whole of the Palestinian Presidential Archive, in April 2002, and carted it off to be housed in a huge hangar at Military Intelligence Headquarters. For another, the same politicians who spare no opportunity to curse Arafat and threaten him with dire punishment are more than once seen hobnobbing with Arafat's close associates and calling them "good and hopeful chaps." Similarly, denounciations of Arafat as "a corrupt tyrant" sound strange from the mouth of people who had been on the best of terms with such blatantly opulent and cruel dictators as the late President Mobutu of Zaire.

> The same politicians who spare no opportunity to curse Arafat and threaten him with dire punishment hobnob with Arafat's close associates and call them "good and hopeful chaps."

A more logical explanation would be that Israelis as well as Palestinians regard Arafat as the symbol and incarnation of the Palestinian national aspirations — the incarnation of a rival claim to the land, of a rival historical narrative diametrically opposed to that taught in the Israeli school system. It is no real wonder that in times of stress and conflict the tempting idea arises that banishing the symbol would somehow banish the thing itself.

That would help provide an explanation for Ariel Sharon's prolonged, relentless pursuit of Arafat, which often seems part of a personal vendetta far exceeding any consideration of political expediency (though, to be sure, calculated outbursts of Arafat-bashing had proved convenient at various points in Sharon's career, as in those of other Israeli politicians).

On a certain day in August 1982, an Israeli Army sniper had Yasir Arafat in his sights at a distance of less than a hundred meters, while the Palestinian leader and his men embarked on a ship taking them out of besieged Beirut. But had then Defense Minister Sharon authorized the sniper to pull his trigger, Israel would have been implicated in a severe violation of the internationally-brokered agreement on the withdrawal of PLO fighters from the Lebanese capital.

Most people have long since forgotten this incident — but Sharon is reputed to still mention it in frustration as "a lost opportunity," and Arafat had not forgotten, either. What happened (or rather, did not happen) on that quayside in Beirut seems to have set a pattern which the two still follow even after the passage of two decades.

But this significance was to be revealed only much later. For quite a few years, Arafat-bashing had gone out of fashion, kept up only by the extreme right in the years after the Oslo Agreement

---

ADAM KELLER *is a veteran Israeli peace activist and editor of* The Other Israel.

proclaimed Arafat to be Israel's partner in the quest for peace. Even Binyamin Netanyahu, taking over as Prime Minister in the wake of the Rabin assasination, found it expedient to be photographed shaking Arafat's hand and to call him "my friend and partner."

A Spent Force

NOT BY CHANCE, these were the years when Sharon's career was in eclipse, and most of the left considered him "a spent force" and "a has-been." When forced to meet Arafat during the Wye River Conference of 1998, Sharon pointedly insisted upon not shaking the Palestinian leader's hand. At the time, press commentators took this as no more than a personal quirk, rude behavior stemming from Sharon's clinging to outdated prejudice.

Yet even in the heyday of Oslo, Israel — on either the official or the grassroots level — never quite accepted Arafat. He was never invited to address the Knesset, as President Sadat of Egypt was in 1977, or to have a state visit to Israel of the kind routinely held by heads of state from obscure faraway. In the entire seven years of the Oslo process, there nothing but a handful of furtive private Arafat visits to Israel, which were kept secret until he had departed back to Gaza or Ramallah. After the signing of the Israeli-Jordanian peace in 1994, the education ministry published a festive poster showing the handshake between Yitzchak Rabin and King Hussein of Jordan, and the same photo also appeared on a telephone card issued by the Israeli Postal Authority. Nothing of the kind was done with the photo of the handshake between Rabin and Arafat, a photo treated with a certain amount of embarrassment even under governments officially committed to Oslo.

This keeping of the Palestinian leader at arm's length was symbolic of the inherent contradiction between the formal Oslo Agreement and the agreement's reluctant and incomplete implementation — a contradiction which steadily undermined Oslo and eventually led to its collapse.

The written text of Oslo spoke of mutual recognition between two equal partners, as was implied also by the handshaking ceremony on the White House lawn. And in the same famous scene, the figure of President Clinton hovering and spreading his arms over the two Middle Eastern leaders implied that henceforward Israelis and Palestinians would be coequal proteges, equally benefiting from the patronage of the world's sole remaining superpower.

But of course, nothing of the kind materialized during the actual implementation of Oslo. Even under Rabin — and more blatantly under Rabin's successors — official Israel never came to accept the Palestinians as equals. Rather, they were treated as subjects granted certain partial concessions and favors by their gracious overlords, giving over to Palestinian control this or that limited patch of land while keeping overall control and actually accelerating the pace of settlement-building.

For its part, the United States — bound by a longstanding military, political, diplomatic and economic alliance with Israel — never became a honest broker. Arrogating to themselves the role of sole mediator and arbiter between Israel and the Palestinians, the Americans continued to deliver weighted and biased judgements, to the growing frustration of the Palestinians. It culminated with the Camp David conference, where Clinton made an explicit promise in advance not to assign blame in case of failure — only to grant , after the conference did fail, an exclusive interview to Israeli television, roundly putting the blame upon "Palestinian intransigence," and putting the seal of approval upon Prime Minister Barak's claim to have "unmasked Arafat."

By so doing, Clinton opened the floodgates of renewed anti-Palestinianism and Arafat-bashing, which soon rose to monstrous proportions unknown even in the most heated stages of the pre-Oslo period.

It was then that Ariel Sharon came into his own. Ehud Barak — the man whom the peace movement had anointed as Rabin's heir — had taken to hurling accusations at "the perfidious Arafat." By so doing, Barak conceded the main political and ideological point, leaving no reason for the Israeli electorate to prefer him over Sharon. Less than half a year after staging with Barak's consent the Temple Mount provocation which set off the new Israeli-Palestinian conflagration, Sharon had replaced Barak at the Prime Minister's bureau in Jerusalem.

Another Lost Opportunity

From the moment of taking power, Sharon started chipping away at Arafat's legitimacy and diplomatic position, which went on with simultaneously sending the army in deeper and deeper "incursions" and invasions of the territory which Oslo gave over to Palestinian Authority's control.

He went about it in slow and gradual steps. In Sharon's first months, Arafat was still was still free to come and go in his helicopter, travel the world and come back at will, as he had done since Oslo. Officially, he was still recognized as Israel's partner — though Sharon had no intention of conducting any meaningful negotiations.

Shimon Peres — then entering upon his thankless and humiliating role as Sharon's Foreign Minister — was occasionally given the sop of being allowed to meet with Arafat, but in such meetings he represented only himself. This became highly visible in October 2001, just as Peres was meeting Arafat at the Palestinian international airport in the southern Gaza Strip and attempting to work out a ceasefire. During the meeting, the army carried out a particularly lethal raid into the neighboring Palestinian town of Rafah, making the effort stillborn. From Peres' reaction it was clear he had no knowledge of or influence over the army's operations. Indeed, a few weeks later Israeli army tanks and bulldozers swept into the Palestinian airport itself and razed it to the ground.

By this time, Sharon had gotten a windfall: Osama bin Laden had suddenly overturned the international agenda and pushed the United States into a mindset ideally suited for the Israeli PM's plans. With terrorism and the fight against it elevated to the status of the end-all and be-all, it was quite easy for Sharon to get a sympathetic hearing from George W. Bush.

Even before September 11, Bush had little use for Arafat and never agreed to meet him. In the wake of that cataclysmic event, Bush quickly came to accept without reservation Sharon's view of the Palestinian leader — which enabled Sharon to pursue energetically the military campaign against the Palestinians.

Every suicide bombing was used as a pretext for still a further anti-Arafat measure, regardless of whether or not Arafat had anything to do with it. Sharon's Inner Cabinet declared Arafat to be "an irrelevant," with whom no further meetings or contacts of any kind would be held; his Gaza residence was bombed and demolished; the presidential helicopter was destroyed, and an end put to Arafat's globetrotting days; the Palestinian leader was confined to Ramallah, and military incursions placed his headquarters under tighter and tighter siege. A bombing of the headquarters itself narrowly missed Arafat, killing his personal cook instead, the first in a series of attempts by Sharon to rectify "the lost opportunity of Beirut" — replicating it, again and again.

In Sharon's first months, Arafat was still was still free to come and go in his helicopter, travel the world and come back at will, as he had done since Oslo.

Contingency Plans

Momentarily in December 2001, Sharon's momentum was slowed down. Yasir Arafat delivered a dramatic broadcast speech, declaring a unilateral cease-fire — effective immediately. "Irrelevant" or not, the speech was broadcast live on Israeli radio with a simultaneous Hebrew translation — and Israelis, feeling a personal interest in a halt to suicide bombings, paid close attention.

The cease-fire held for nearly a month. It was terminated in the same way that Sharon terminated numerous other cease-fires, before and after full-blown and incipient: a well-calculated assassination of a Palestinian militia leader, precipitating acts of revenge for which the Israeli side undertook its own retaliation, setting the cycle of bloodshed violently rotating again. In this particular case, the assassination had targeted Ra'ed Karmi, a senior member of Arafat's own Fatah organization — which drew Fatah men deep into the thick of the fighting, as they had not been before, and helped lend credence to the depiction of Arafat as a terrorist.

There followed some of the most bloody months in the three years of Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. The army increased its incursions into the Palestinian enclaves into invasions embracing whole cities and often leaving dozens of dead Palestinians behind — which did nothing to stop the increasing Palestinian suicide bombings.

There had been a short interlude in late March, when a new cease-fire was mooted, in connection with the Arab summit at Beirut at which the Saudis were to present their peace proposal which at the time drew much hope, and a meeting was even contemplated between Arafat and Vice President Cheney then visiting the Middle East — his last chance at recognition by the Bush administration. But it all fell through. Sharon did not allow Arafat to go to Beirut (or rather, he might have let him go, but only with a one-way ticket) and soon afterwards the Hamas suicide bombing, killing 29 Israelis who had been celebrating Passover, left the Israeli public incensed and allowed Sharon to launch the so-called "Operation Defensive Shield," amounting to total reconquest of the West Bank cities.

For more than a month, Arafat with his guards and helpers were besieged in the Ramallah presidential compound, with Israeli commandos encamped literally behind his wall, reduced to communicating with the outside world through a small mobile phone — and his popularity soared. Palestinians who themselves were more and more imprisoned in besieged towns and villages rallied behind their leader whose predicament symbolized their own. And this phenomenon repeated itself whenever Sharon launched a new attack on the Palestinian president. Reportedly, the army at the time formed contingency plans for breaking in and capturing Arafat — and possibly, also for the possibility that he would not survive. But such plans were never put into operation.

In early May, Arafat emerged out of the beleaguered building. The army had withdrawn — but not very far away at all. In the coming weeks Sharon even allowed Arafat two trips out of Ramallah, to Bethlehem and Jenin, respectively. But that was just a short respite. In mid-June there was a new clampdown, yet another occupation of the Palestinian cities — and Arafat was once again locked into the Ramallah compound, which effectively became his permanent prison.

It was at this time that President Bush delivered his policy speech of June 24, 2002 — declaring a "change of Palestinian leadership" to be a major aim of his administration's policy.

Sharon regarded the Bush speech as a major coup for his own policy, and with reason. But while declaring their detestation of Arafat and refusing to have anything to do with him, the Americans would not let Sharon perform "leadership surgery" upon the Palestinians with the far from delicate scalpel of the Israeli military. The Palestinians were to remove Arafat by themselves, or at least seem to be doing so.

It was demonstrated in September, when — in the wake of a relatively small suicide bombing in Tel Aviv — Sharon sent in the tanks and bulldozers to systematically demolish the Presidential Compound, stone by stone. Palestinians took to the streets of Ramallah and other cities in protest, defying the tight curfew imposed at the time by the Israeli army — and Bush ordered Sharon, in no uncertain terms, to call off his dogs and remove the Ramallah siege.

The alternate solution was to make Arafat appoint a prime minster and transfer power to that person (to the limited extent that any Palestinian could be said to hold power in the occupied West Bank). At the end, Arafat was to become "a figurehead, like the Queen of England." (But it had taken British monarchs several centuries to resign themselves to reigning but not ruling . . .)

The idea became linked up with the "Roadmap for Peace," laboriously worked up during the second half of 2002 by "the Diplomatic Quartet" consisting of the U.S., EU, UN and

Russia (a manifestly unequal partnership, in which the American partner keeps the lion's share of power and influence) and according to which a Palestinian state would come into being by 2005. This prospect was supposed to compensate the Palestinians for the open and gross interference of outsiders in their internal affairs and to offer Arafat some consolation, making of his giving up his power a patriotic act.

The timing for implementing this design was defined by what the United States considered "the main show" — i.e., its war of conquest in Iraq. Just before the American tanks crossed the border en route to Baghdad, Washington officially published the Roadmap, trying to mollify Arab public opinion; and at the same time Arafat appointed Mahmud Abbas ("Abu Mazen") to be the Palestinian prime minister.

For more than a month, Arafat with his guards and helpers were besieged in the Ramallah presidential compound, with Israeli commandos encamped behind his wall, reduced to communicating with the outside world through a small mobile phone — and his popularity soared.

During the war, Abbas — who had not yet formed a cabinet — acted primarily as a kind of human shield, deterring Sharon from taking drastic action against Arafat — or against the Palestinians in general — while the world was looking elsewhere. But once the Americans reached Baghdad, for their deceptive moment of glory as "liberators," the roadmap gambit was pushed into high gear. George W. was widely expected to emulate his father, who had held the Madrid Conference — which indirectly led to Oslo — in the wake of winning the Gulf War.

Obstacles to Peace

SHARON COULD NOT AVOID publicly declaring that he was highly pleased with advent of the Abbas government and the diminution of Arafat's power. But in fact, he had good reasons not to be happy with the phenomenon of a Palestinian leadership emphatically counted among "the good guys" in George W.'s far-from-sophisticated view of the world; a Palestinian leadership capable of finding a ready ear in Washington for its grievances. (Did the U.S. president ever find out that Mahmud Abbas had been a close associate of Arafat for over three decades?)

Sharon's solution to this dilemma was to pour verbal praise and warm words upon Abbas at any given opportunity — knowing that, coming from himself, such words could only serve to discredit Abbas among his own people. At the same time, Sharon denied Abbas the real concessions which alone could have established for him a real base of support among Palestinians.

Of dozens of settlement outposts established all over the West Bank, illegally even under the settler-friendly laws and regulations of the occupation regime, only a handful were removed — and most of these were immediately re-established with the tacit consent of the army. Of many thousands of Palestinians incarcerated in Israeli prisons, Sharon freed only a few hundreds — and most of these had been soon due for release anyway. Of hundreds of roadblocks and barriers, strangling the Palestinian daily life, only a handful were dismantled. And so on.

For its part the Bush Administration, whose darling Abbas supposedly was, proved not much better. Even on the one issue on which Bush seemed to take up the Palestinian grieveances — Sharon's Separation Wall, snaking its way across the West Bank, cutting up Palestinian towns and villages and dividing many others from their land — the president of the world's sole remaining superpower proved strangely unable to control its unruly Middle Eastern ally.

In the eyes of most Palestinians, Prime Minister Mahmud Abbas thus came to be perceived as a tool of the occupier and of the occupier's overseas patron — and conversely, the public support of Arafat among his own people increased with every curse which Sharon and Bush hurled at him.

Abbas' term as the Palestinian prime minister was full of power struggles between him and Arafat. Still, the Israeli media which avidly published the details of such struggles, was mistaken in interpreting them as a polar opposition between two antithetical forces. In fact, it was far more of a struggle "inside the family" between two men who have known each other and worked together for close to four decades.

In fact, the centerpiece of Abbas' policy — the Hudna or cease-fire, to which he got virtually all Palestinian organizations and factions to agree, including the radical Islamists — could never had been achieved or maintained without Arafat being fully privy to all its details and putting his political prestige behind it. (A point completely missed by the Israeli media and by part of the international one as well, who kept insisting that "terrorist Arafat" was out to smash the ceasefire.)

The Hudna had quite an impact on Israeli public opinion. Regardless of party affiliation, the idea of all Palestinian organizations and factions committing themselves to three months without suicide bombings seemed the best news in years, causing an immediate upturn in business and a general lightening of the mood. When it was cut off after only a month and half it was a rude awakening. (As usual, the returning to the cycle of bloodshed was preciptated by the killing of Palestinian militia leaders. Sharon did promise the Americans not to engage in assassinations, but that promise did not include the "attempted detention in which the suspect is killed while trying to escape.")

Upon the end of the cease-fire and the subsequent downfall of the Abbas Government, Sharon went back to Arafat, getting the cabinet to pass a resolution committing Israel to "removing" that "main onstacle to peace" though without giving the date of implementation. The predictable result was mass rallies of Palestinian support for their tormented president and worldwide protests aimed at the government of Israel. Also the threat to Arafat seemed to be less of a rabble-rousing success among the Israeli public. The defiant action of Uri Avnery, who headed a small Gush Shalom delegation (among them the present writer) which stayed several days at Arafat's headquarters as volunteer human shields, was not exactly popular — but neither did it arouse quite the paroxisms of public rage which it would have caused a year earlier.

Negative Reactions

Aside from targeting Arafat, Sharon engaged upon the collapse of the cease-fire in a new and massive wave of aerial assassinations against Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip, destroying houses and as usual killing many "bypassing" civilians. This time the bombings targeted the most senior of the Hamas political leadership, among them the charismatic Sheikh Yasin, whose narrowly-avoided death might have ignited an unquenchable flame. And there were assorted other acts of aggression, like the demolition of the entire marketplace at Nazlat Issa on the West Bank, and of more than a hundred houses in Rafah, Gaza Strip.

But all this failed to strike the spark which Sharon expected, and there were negative reactions on which he had not counted — most prominent the protest of twenty-seven combat pilots declaring their refusal to take part in any such aerial attack on Palestinians.

Short upon that, former minister Yossi Beilin, at the head of a large group of prominent doves, suddenly unveiled the text of a model peace agreement which he had worked out to the most minute detail together with a group of not less prominent Palestinian personalities and, with the tacit assent of that infamous "obstacle to peace" Yasir Arafat.

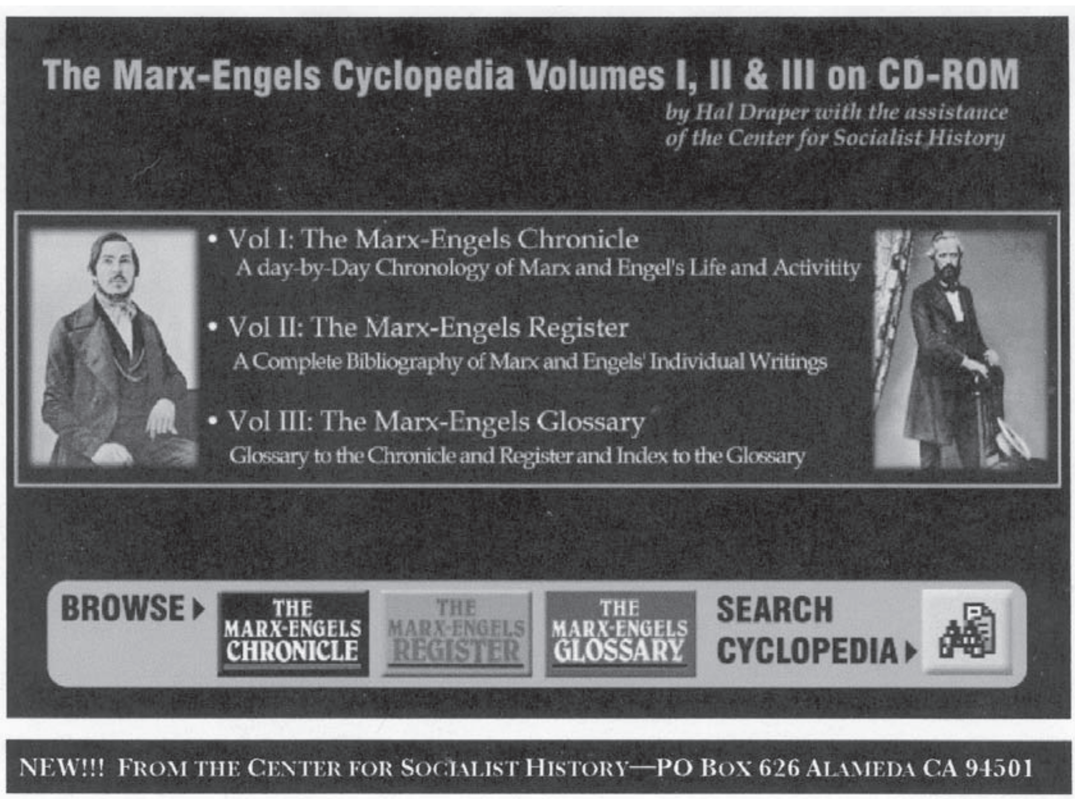
Despite the outburst of anger by Sharon and his ministers, this "Geneva Accord" which was reached under auspices of the Swiss government, received the immediate support of nearly forty percent of Israelis. It put new heart to the entire peace movement, feeling for the first time in three years on the offensive and ready to tell the public that "there is somebody to talk to." This was mani-

> If anything can be learned from observing Israeli affairs, it is that things can turn 180 degrees in no time.

fested in the spirited mood at the Rabin Memorial Rally, attended by 150,000 people in the heart of Tel-Aviv.

There were other signs of the tide turning against Sharon: the bad showing of Likud in the municipal elections, traditional voters in impoverished towns protesting at the ultra-free market economics of Finance Minister Netanyahu; the government's unprecedented head-on collision with the unions with the threat of general strike repeatedly hanging in the air; the various corruption scandals involving Sharon and his sons leading to police investigation; the beginning feeling of Likud leaders that Sharon might become a liability, and the incipient succession struggle.

NONE OF THE ABOVE is decisive, and if anything can be learned from observing Israeli affairs, it is that things can turn 180 degrees in no time. Still, as things now stand, there seems a good chance that at the conclusion of the prolonged tug-of-war between two septuagenarians it will the doomed Yasir Arafat who will remain standing.


The Marx-Engels Cyclopedia Volumes I, II & III on CD-ROM
by Hal Draper with the assistance of the Center for Socialist History
• Vol I: The Marx-Engels Chronicle
A day-by-Day Chronology of Marx and Engel's Life and Activitity
• Vol II: The Marx-Engels Register
A Complete Bibliography of Marx and Engels' Individual Writings
• Vol III: The Marx-Engels Glossary
Glossary to the Chronicle and Register and Index to the Glossary
BROWSE
THE MARX-ENGELS CHRONICLE
THE MARX-ENGELS REGISTER
THE MARX-ENGELS GLOSSARY
SEARCH CYCLOPEDIA
NEW!!! FROM THE CENTER FOR SOCIALIST HISTORY—PO BOX 626 ALAMEDA CA 94501

This article is part of an ongoing discussion of the Iraq war and its aftermath. Various New Politics *editors will be writing on this subject in future issues, not always with identical viewpoints, and we welcome contributions from our readers.*

Questions for the Peace Movement

The U.S. Occupation of Iraq

JOANNE LANDY

IN FEBRUARY 2003, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE in the United States and around the world protested the impending U.S.-led war on Iraq. But today, even among opponents of the war, there is widespread confusion on the question of the ongoing occupation. Many who opposed the war before it began now argue that "Yes, it was a mistake to go into Iraq in the first place, but now that we're there, we have to stay — it's our responsibility to ensure democracy to the Iraqi people and protect them from chaos and civil war, as well as to promote global peace and stability." Democratic presidential candidates Howard Dean and Carol Moseley Braun make this argument, and it is an approach shared by many nonpoliticians as well.

In my view, this line of reasoning is seriously flawed, and leads to disastrous consequences; it ignores the deeply destructive, reactionary and inhumane character of the American role in Iraq, and in the world. However, at the same time that the peace movement opposes war and the continued U.S. military presence in Iraq, it also needs to address the question of how to respond to ruthless dictators like Saddam Hussein, to terrorism and to Islamic political fundamentalism.

> There were those in the antiwar movement who argued that indeed there was a need for regime change in Iraq — and in dictatorial and repressive countries throughout the world — but that this change needed to be achieved by the people in those countries themselves, rather than by imperial power.

To clarify how to think about the occupation, it is useful to go back and review the different approaches within the peace movement before the United States declared war. Some, like the International Action Committee and ANSWER, absolutely refused to criticize Saddam Hussein, seeing him, as they had Slobodan Milosevic, as an antiimperialist leader to be defended, even celebrated. A friend of mine who went from New York to an antiwar demonstration in Washington, DC on an official ANSWER bus was horrified when, in a manner reminiscent of the Stalinists in the 1930s, the organizers treated the riders to a film which included, among other things, praise for Saddam Hussein's

JOANNE LANDY *is codirector of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy and a member of the* New Politics *editorial board.*

education system — presumed evidence that the benevolence of the government outweighed or compensated for any possible excesses. Fortunately, although ANSWER was and is very well organized and has sponsored several large antiwar demonstrations, it does not actually represent the outlook of most peace activists.

Another view was held by the many establishment critics of the Bush administration and substantial elements of the peace movement who argued against the war on "containment" grounds. Saddam Hussein could be successfully contained by sanctions, no-fly zones, inspections, and the threat of more outright military intervention if he didn't comply, so actual war was unnecessary and, if unilateral, especially unwise. There are basic problems with this approach: first, it accepted as a given Saddam Hussein's continuing hold on power and vicious repression of his people, and second, it left in place the various mechanisms of coercion, power and aggression of the United States, operating either directly, or indirectly through the United Nations Security Council.

Rather than accepting the status quo on both sides and trying to simply manage or contain it, there were those in the antiwar movement who argued that indeed there was a need for regime change in Iraq — and in dictatorial and repressive countries throughout the world — but that this change needed to be achieved by the people in those countries themselves, rather than by imperial power. The way people in the United States could encourage such change, these peace activists argued, was not through supporting military intervention, but by promoting change at home that could generate a radically new U.S. foreign policy, one capable of politically undermining rather than strengthening authoritarian governments and movements. For example, the Campaign for Peace and Democracy (of which I am a codirector, along with Thomas Harrison and Jennifer Scarlott) circulated a statement "We Oppose Both Saddam Hussein and the U.S. War on Iraq: A call for a new, democratic U.S. foreign policy" (www.cpdweb.org or see *New Politics*, no. 34, winter 2003, p. 16). This statement gained over 5000 signatures in the course of just a few weeks and was signed by major progressive figures such as Michael Albert, Medea Benjamin, Noam Chomsky, Barbara Ehrenreich, Robin Kelley, Naomi Klein, Adolph Reed, Edward Said, Stephen Shalom, Cornel West and Howard Zinn. It called for the U.S. to adopt a foreign policy that would respond to Saddam Hussein and "the threat posed to all of us by terrorist networks such as al-Qaeda, and by weapons of mass destruction," in the following ways (quoting from the statement):

- 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.
- 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.

The CPD statement noted that "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 vast majority of the peace movement didn't fit neatly into any one of the three categories of 1) apologists for Saddam Hussein, 2) proponents of containment, or 3) advocates of a new antiimperialist foreign policy to effectively counter dictatorship and terrorism and to provide a fundamental alternative to military intervention. However, most peace activists probably floated somewhere between the containment approach and the new foreign policy alternative to both U.S. imperialism and Saddam Hussein outlined in the CPD statement.

As the U.S./British occupation faces mounting obstacles in Iraq and growing disapproval at home, President Bush is desperately seeking to wriggle out of its primary prewar justifications for war, the discredited claims that Saddam Hussein possessed and was likely to use weapons of mass destruction and the suggestion that he was allied with al-Qaeda; instead the administration is shifting its core argument and is basing its case on framing the war and occupation as part of a broad U.S. campaign for democratization throughout the Middle East. This "democratization" argument was used by Bush before the war, but it played a secondary role. Now he has even gone so far as to try to create the impression that his administration has abandoned the decades of U.S. support for autocratic regimes throughout the region, sounding almost like a peace and human rights activist himself when he said, on November 6, 2003, that "Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe." In November the *New York Times* reported that:

> President Bush on Thursday challenged Iran, Syria and two crucial Middle East allies of the United States — Egypt and Saudi Arabia — to begin embracing democratic traditions, and to view the fall of Saddam Hussein as "a watershed event in the global democratic revolution." Mr. Bush had sounded similar themes before, notably in a speech at the American Enterprise Institute a month and a half before he ordered the invasion of Iraq. But until Thursday's speech, he had not identified nations that he thought urgently needed to reform. For the first time, he also raised, gingerly, the issue of the absence of liberty in Saudi Arabia, one of America's major oil suppliers and a nation that has long been spared presidential rebuke . . . He also pressed Egypt — which receives upward of $2 billion annually in aid from the United States — saying it "has shown the way toward peace in the Middle East, and now should show the way toward democracy in the Middle East." (David E. Sanger, "Bush Asks Lands in Mideast to Try Democratic Ways," *New York Times*, 11/7/03)

The claim by President Bush that he now supports democratic reform in the Middle East is hardly credible. The *Times* article quoted above goes on to report, "But later, his [Bush's] spokesman, Scott McClellan, said the president was not threatening any consequences for his Arab allies if they failed to heed his warning." Genuine democracy in the region is incompatible with the real goals of the U.S. military intervention in Iraq — to secure a U.S. military platform in the Middle East and bases in Iraq as an alternative to remaining dependent on an increasingly undependable Saudi Arabia, to advance the global corporate capitalist system, and to gain strategic control over the vast Iraqi oil supply as a way of further enhancing U.S. global power. No truly democratic government in Iraq would long be able to defer to such U.S. military and economic interests.

Some in the peace movement seem to believe that legitimate opposition to the American occupation is dependent on being able to demonstrate that Iraq is worse off now than it was under Saddam Hussein. This is a wrong-headed approach. In fact, comparing prewar and postwar Iraq gives a very jumbled picture. On the one hand, Saddam Hussein's grotesque repressive apparatus, including the torture chambers and rape rooms, is no longer functioning, which is obviously an improvement. But at the same time the U.S. occupation imposes a different kind of straitjacket on the political and economic future of the country, and subjects the Iraqi people to humiliation and often injury and even death at the hands of the U.S. military. Moreover, to the extent that the United States succeeds in sustaining its occupation, it is in a stronger position to dominate not only Iraqi politics but the political and economic life of other countries around the world; it is precisely imperial domination that not only is a major cause of terrible misery in the Third World but also strengthens, especially in the absence of a strong global democratic left, authoritarian and theocratic forces everywhere.

> It is difficult to see how the U.S. occupation is creating the preconditions for democratic rule in Iraq when trade unions, which have historically provided key social support for democracy in countries around the world, are *de facto* illegal, and workers are denied the elementary right to strike.

The question is not "which is worse?" — control of Iraq by Saddam Hussein, a takeover by the now growing fundamentalist theocratic forces, or imperial military control of the country. All of these options are unacceptable, and the victory of any of these forces does not in any way point toward progress. But these are not inevitably the only choices, even though positive democratic options in Iraq are today relatively weak.

The Occupation Paves the Way to Democracy?

THOSE WHO SEE THE U.S. occupation of Iraq as creating the foundation for a democratic Iraq need to face the reality of the role of U.S. troops in the country. As Thomas Crampton pointed out in his October 14, 2003 article in the *New York Times* ("Iraqi Official Urges Caution on Imposing Free Market"), the economic plan the United States is imposing makes even some of its hand-picked Iraqi leaders uneasy. Iraqi enterprises have been largely in the hands of the state, but the U.S. plans a rapid privatization that will mean huge numbers of unemployed, and that will leave the nation's wealth free from meaningful social control. Restrictions on foreign investment have been lifted in all economic sectors apart from oil and other natural resources involving primary extraction and initial processing (many suspect that this exception is merely tactical in light of strong Iraqi public opinion about preserving these resources as a public asset, and that restrictions on foreign investment in this area will be lifted in due time); import duties have been cut to 5 percent, thus threatening most Iraqi enterprises; and the maximum corporate tax rate has been set at 15 percent. In a move that Bush and his friends have not yet dared to try at home, a flat-tax system has been introduced, thus ensuring that wealthier Iraqi individuals and companies won't pay their fair share.

U.S. economic policy in Iraq is brazenly vulgar. Regulations promulgated by the U.S. Agency for International Development have required hiring only U.S. contractors, thus cutting out both Iraqis and non-U.S. foreign investors. Companies with close ties to the administration like Halliburton, Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown & Root, and Bechtel have been flagrantly favored, often chosen without any kind of bidding process. U.S. contractors and subcontractors are charging far greater rates for their services and products than would their local Iraqi counterparts (Phyllis Bennis, "Talking Points: The Madrid Donors Conference: A Fig Leaf for Maintaining U.S. Control," Institute for Policy Studies, 10/16/03, www.ips-dc.org/comment/Bennis/figleaf.htm). Representatives Henry Waxman of California and John Dingell of Michigan have charged that "Halliburton seems to be inflating gasoline prices at a great cost to American taxpayers . . . The overcharging is so extreme that one expert has privately called it 'highway robbery,'" the lawmakers said about Halliburton's no-bid contract, noting that its

Kellogg Brown & Root subsidiary is making the Army pay between $1.62 and $1.70 per gallon, while the average price for Middle East gasoline is 71 cents. ("Halliburton Gouging In Iraq?" CBS News, 10/16/03, www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/10/16/politics/main578436.shtml).

Moreover, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) is being accused of corruption in spending U.S. taxpayers' money, prompting a Congressional investigation. At the same time, in what can be seen only as a weird kind of political joke, the U.S. charges the U.S.-created Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) with cronyism and corruption, holding back on signing multimillion dollar contracts to build and operate wireless phone networks in Iraq because of (likely true) allegations that the bidding for these contracts was "hijacked by associates of the new Iraqi governing council" — even as Halliburton et al. trundle their superprofits off to the bank. ("US delays mobile phone contracts to investigate claims of Iraqi cronyism," *Financial Times*, 11/11/03).

No Pesky Unions

THE U.S.-INSTALLED IGC has in effect banned trade unions in the state sector, which right now includes the lion's share of all Iraqi enterprises. This has been accomplished through keeping Saddam Hussein's 1987 antilabor legislation firmly in place! Moreover, in June the CPA issued a decree forbidding strikes. It is difficult to see how the U.S. occupation is creating the preconditions for democratic rule in Iraq when trade unions, which have historically provided key social support for democracy in countries around the world, are de facto illegal, and workers are denied the elementary right to strike.

Iraqi workers have been routinely mistreated under the occupation. An estimated sixty to seventy percent of Iraqis are without jobs, yet U.S. employers hire overwhelmingly non-Iraqis — either Americans or inexpensive migrant laborers from South Asia. In July 2003 U.S. troops attacked members of the Union of the Unemployed engaged in peaceful protests against U.S. military and corporations' treatment of the jobless. As the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of American (UE) workers union notes, "The August 2 arrest of 52 of their [Union of Unemployed] leaders is a strong indication of what kind of democracy the Bush Administration intends for the conquered country." ("Bring The Troops Home Now," resolution passed by United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America at their 2003 national convention.) [see page 33]

A fuller description of the scandalous U.S. labor policy in today's Iraq can be found in the October 25, 2003 resolution on the occupation and labor rights in Iraq, passed at the National Labor Assembly convened in Chicago by U.S. Labor Against War www.uslaboragainstwar.org. [see page 32] and in articles by David Bacon, including "The Occupation's War on Iraqi Workers" in the December 2003 issue of The Progressive. As this article goes to press, reports have come in of newer arrests of Iraqi trade unionists: on November 23, a U.S. military force in Baghdad arrested Qasim Hadi, president of the Union of the Unemployed in Iraq and Adil Salih, a member of union's leading committee; on December 6, U.S. occupation forces attacked the temporary headquarters of the Iraqi Federation of Workers Trade Unions (IFTU) and arrested eight of its leaders and core activists. In a statement protesting the U.S. action, the IFTU noted that occupation forces "targeted trade unionist cadres and leaders who are well-known for their struggle against the hated dictatorship." ("US Attacks Iraqi Unions' Headquarters," U.S. Labor Against War, 12/9/03, www.uslaboragainstwar.org)

How Do Iraqis Feel About the Occupation?

THOUGH BY MOST ACCOUNTS the U.S. presence in Iraq is becoming increasingly unpopular, the specifics of Iraqi public opinion about the occupation have been unclear. According to the Associated Press, in a Gallup poll taken Aug. 28-Sept. 4, 2003, 71 percent of Baghdad's residents felt that U.S. troops should not leave in the next few months. Just 26 percent felt the troops should leave that soon. However, the poll also showed that almost one in five felt that circumstances could occur in which attacks against U.S. troops could be justified. (Posted 10/14/03 on *USA Today*.) The same AP poll, reported in *The Age* on September 24, showed that "nearly half of Baghdad residents polled have said the country is worse off now than before the U.S.-led invasion, but about two-thirds believe things will be better in five years than they were under Saddam Hussein." (Will Lester, "47 percent of Iraqis think country is worse off," *The Age*, 9/24/03).

In late October, James Zogby interpreted a poll taken in Iraq by Zogby International in August 2003:

> When given the choice as to whether they "would like to see the American and British forces leave Iraq in six months, one year or two years," 31.5 percent of Iraqis say these forces should leave in six months; 34 percent say a year, and only 25 percent say two or more years. So while technically [Vice President Dick] Cheney might say that "over 60 percent [actually 59 percent] . . . want the U.S. to stay at least another year," an equally correct observation would be that 65.5 percent want the U.S. and Britain to leave in one year or less. And attitudes toward the U.S. were not positive. When asked whether over the next five years, they felt that the "U.S. would help or hurt Iraq," 50 percent said that the U.S. would hurt Iraq, while only 35.5 percent felt the U.S. would help the country. (James Zogby, "What Iraqis Think About the Occupation," *AlterNet*, 10/21/03)

Meanwhile, David Rieff, far from an anti-interventionist, reported in early November 2003 that he conducted extensive interviews while on two trips to Iraq since the declared war ended, and found that "In the back streets of Sadr City, the impoverished Baghdad suburb where almost two million Shiites live — and where Bush administration officials and Iraqi exiles once imagined American troops would be welcomed with sweets and flowers — the mood, when I visited in September, was angry and resentful." ("Blueprint for a Mess," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 11/2/03)

With every passing month, Iraqi public opinion seems to grow more negative toward the U.S. occupation. According to a mid-November story in The *New York Times*, a classified opinion poll conducted by the State Department's intelligence branch found that "a majority of Iraqis now regard American troops as occupiers rather than liberators . . ." "'The trend lines are in the wrong direction,' a government official said." (Douglas Jehl, "CIA Report Suggests Iraqis Are Losing Faith in U.S. Efforts," *New York Times*, 11/13/03)

What Is the Character of the Armed Resistance to U.S. and Coalition Forces in Iraq, and Does it Matter?

PERHAPS BELIEVING THE ROSY predictions of Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle and Iraqi exile Ahmed Chalabi, the Bush administration led the American people to expect that occupying U.S. troops would be welcomed with open arms, sweets and flowers. This has hardly been the case. From the very beginning of the occupation there have been both peaceful protests and outright military resistance against the troops. While most Iraqis may not have favored the attacks on U.S. forces at the outset, and many probably still do not support them, very few of those against the attacks have been willing to stand up and denounce them, leading Tom Friedman of the *New York Times* to lament on several occasions that he wishes that those who privately tell him and other Western journalists that they want the U.S. forces to remain in Iraq would speak out in public and voice their support for the American and British military forces. That they don't do so can in part be ascribed to fear of retribution from supporters of Saddam Hussein, but there is good reason to believe that it also reflects widespread ambivalence about and growing opposition to the U.S. military, even among many who hated the Saddam Hussein regime and were glad to see it go. See, for example, the account of recent attacks on U.S. forces in Mosul, an area previously seen as friendly to the occupation:

> . . . when word came Sunday afternoon that two American soldiers had been shot in the head and killed a block away, the men of Ras al Jada fire station ran to the site and looked on with glee as a crowd of locals dragged the Americans from their car and tore off their watches and jackets and boots. "I was happy, everyone was

> happy," Waadallah Muhammed, one of the firefighters said as he stood in front of the firehouse. "The Americans, yes they do good things, but only to enhance their reputation. They are occupiers. We want them to leave." . . . Attacks on Americans which have killed more than 25 in the Mosul area this month, have highlighted what local Iraqis say is a rapidly deteriorating relationship. (Dexter Filkins, "Attacks on GI's in Mosul Rise as Good Will Fades," *New York Times*, 11/27/03)

The critical question is whether independent and democratic forces will be independently organized and capable of projecting and advancing their own program for Iraq, or whether they will be subordinated to the agendas of Baathists and theocratic fundamentalists.

In the same vein, the *New York Times* even more recently reported:

> As the guerrilla war against Iraqi insurgents intensifies, American soldiers have begun wrapping entire villages in barbed wire . . . In selective cases, American soldiers are demolishing buildings thought to be used by Iraqi attackers. They have begun imprisoning the relatives of suspected guerrillas, in hopes of pressing the insurgents to turn themselves in . . . So far, the new approach appears to be succeeding in diminishing the threat to American soldiers. But it appears to be coming at the cost of alienating many of the people the Americans are trying to win over. Abu Hishma is quiet now, but it is angry, too. (Dexter Filkins, "Tough New Tactics by U.S. Tighten Grip on Iraq Towns," 12/7/03)

As the occupying forces increasingly view the entire Iraqi population as potential enemies, and treat them accordingly, popular hatred and anger against the U.S. and its Iraqi allies are bound to increase even more.

As far as the military resistance to the Coalition Provisional Authority is concerned, the U.S. doesn't seem to know which forces predominate within it. Officials put out contradictory theories: "The Bush administration has sought to emphasize the role of foreign fighters as a factor in the resistance, but American military commanders, including General Abizaid have said that it is loyalists to Mr. Hussein who pose the greatest danger to American troops and to stability in Iraq." (Douglas Jehl, "Plan for Guerrilla Action May Have Predated War," *New York Times*, 11/15/03) In the same article General Abizaid, top U.S. military commander in Iraq, is reported as going so far as to assert, with no convincing evidence, that there are no more than 5000 guerrilla fighters in the country.

Of course it is in the interest of the U.S. to portray those who fight against the occupation as unsavory, and doubtless many of them are. But there is every reason to believe that opposition to the U.S. has already spread beyond Baathists and Islamic fundamentalists to encompass broader elements of the population who simply oppose the subjugation of their lives and their country by outside imperialists. The critical question is whether independent and democratic forces will be independently organized and capable of projecting and advancing their own program for Iraq, or whether they will be subordinated to the agendas of Baathists and theocratic fundamentalists. The victory of independent and democratic groups in Iraq is inhibited by the U.S. occupation; peace activists need to focus on how the position of these forces could be made more viable — for example by immediately seeking to build contacts between the antiwar movement and independent democratic journalists, unionists, academics, women's groups and so on. This work has been started by U.S. Labor Against the War and others, but needs to be greatly expanded.

Does it matter who controls the resistance? Some, like British antiwar leader Tariq Ali, seem to think not. Ali probably correctly portrays the resistance as a mixed bag; he writes in *The Guard-*

ian (UK): "According to Iraqi opposition sources, there are more than 40 different resistance organizations. They consist of Baathists, dissident communists, disgusted by the treachery of the Iraqi Communist party in backing the occupation, nationalists, groups of Iraqi soldiers and officers disbanded by the occupation, and Sunni and Shia religious groups." ("Resistance is the first step towards Iraqi independence," *The Guardian*, 11/3/03).

Ali doesn't seem to think it's necessary to examine too closely which of these elements, if any, are dominant or decisive within the resistance, or how secure their control is. His approach appears to assume that the victory of the resistance, no matter who controls it, will automatically produce a positive outcome simply because it will represent a setback for the U.S. This is not necessarily the case, however. While an end to U. S. imperialism in Iraq is certainly to be hoped for and promoted, neither a return to a hyperrepressive regime dominated by Saddam Hussein or someone like him, nor the introduction of a harsh Islamic fundamentalist dictatorship would represent progress. Some may be taken aback by this assertion, but thinking about a parallel proposition helps to illuminate the point: surely the ouster of Saddam Hussein was something all principled supporters of peace, democracy and human rights should have hoped for, but it didn't follow that his defeat by the United States military was in any sense progressive. The triumph of U.S. military power had other, overarching reactionary consequences.

Some would argue that the return of Saddam Hussein or the coming to power of a Taliban-like regime in Iraq would represent a step forward because it would be a form of Iraqi self-determination against U.S. and British imperialism. The more historically-minded among the proponents of this argument analogize the current situation in Iraq to the struggle between the Italian imperialist army and Ethiopia under the rule of Haile Selassie in the 1930s, when socialists and democrats supported the military victory of Ethiopia against Italy despite the fact that the African country was ruled by a feudal monarchy whose overthrow they supported. This analogy holds only up to a point. In both cases imperialist forces should be unreservedly opposed. But there is a critical difference between Haile Selassie and other fossilized tyrants, and the modern dictatorships of rulers like Saddam Hussein or the Taliban. (It may seem odd to describe the Taliban as modern, but in fact it does represent a bizarre fusion of an extremely retrograde religious agenda with contemporary authoritarian methods of recruitment and rule.)

Haile Selassie and his ilk were a dying breed, a premodern historical force, whereas undemocratic, aggressive regimes like those of Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic as well as terroristic religious groups like the Taliban or al-Qaeda are very real contenders for power in today's world. Their victory does not further liberation by opening up the possibilities for democracy in the way that traditional self-determination struggles do. Milosevic and Saddam Hussein are quite different from groups like the Taliban, and thus this range of forces may not constitute a "camp" in the way that the Communist opponents of Western capitalism did in the years of the Cold War, but they are not simply relics. They present a weighty alternative not only to Western capitalist imperialism but also to the forces of democracy and socialism.

In Iraq, then, it very much matters whether Baathists or repressive, extreme theocrats are definitively in the drivers' seat and would come to power if the resistance were to win against the U.S.; if either of these elements is in full control, then peace activists and democrats in Iraq and around the world should not support them — nor, of course, should they support the U.S. Figuring out the relationship of forces in a resistance that Tariq Ali describes as an assortment of Baathists, dissident communists, nationalists, former Iraqi soldiers and officers and Sunni and Shia religious groups is of great importance; of even greater importance is for antiwar and democratic activists to make common bond with the more democratic elements and support their rise to leadership in the resistance before it is too late.

U.S. Troops Out Now

WESTERN IMPERIALISM AND ITS retrograde opponents have a symbiotic relationship in which they mutually strengthen and reinforce one another. For example, by providing an "anti-terrorist" rationale, the murderous attack on the World Trade Center was a gift to those who had long wanted to expand and fortify U.S. military power around the world and to mobilize a hitherto skeptical public opinion behind an aggressive imperial agenda. But the opposite is also the case. The war against Iraq, U.S. military aggression and support for dictators and repressive regimes, and the de facto alliance between the Bush administration and Israel's Sharon government, create not only waves of new recruits for terrorism and political fundamentalists but also widespread acquiescence or even outright support for these elements among ordinary people in the Middle East.

There is a desperate need to build a militant democratic left in the Middle East, and advocates of a new democratic U.S. foreign policy can only succeed over time if they are able to link up with and support the victory of fledgling progressive forces in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt and throughout the Middle East and around the world. But a precondition for making these links is an unambiguous independence from and opposition to U.S. imperial power. Some in the U.S. and Britain who opposed the war today support the occupation as an unfortunate necessity now that Saddam Hussein has been toppled. And others formally oppose the occupation, but nonetheless also oppose the slogan of "Troops Out Now" — which can only mean that they support "Troops Out Later When Some Conditions Are Met" and in the meantime U.S., British and other "Coalition" forces should stay in Iraq.

These reluctant supporters of imperial military power justify their position on the grounds that if U.S. forces leave now there may be a Baathist return to power, the introduction of a harsh Shiite theocracy, chaos or civil war. One or another of these might indeed happen if the U.S. leaves, but the fact is that the longer the U.S. stays, the more powerful the reactionary forces become, and the more likely they are to win out in any future conflict. A *New York Times* story of November 27, for example, notes that "Moderate Iraqis cooperating with the Americans say the young men of Mosul are increasingly heeding the calls of militant clerics." (Dexter Filkins, "Attacks on GI's in Mosul Rise as Good Will Fades") What exists now in Iraq can be described as a form of chaos, and further chaos and civil war with repressive forces leading in contention is precisely what continuing U.S. occupation is breeding, not preventing.

Another justification sometimes given for the U.S. keeping its military in Iraq "for now" is that withdrawal might mean that Iraq will split into three parts: a predominantly Kurdish north, a largely Shiite south and the remaining center of the country, where most of the Sunnis live. This split may well happen once the U.S. leaves, but it would not necessarily be a retrograde development. The country of Iraq was an artificial colonial invention in the first place, and has no automatic reason to remain united, though the breakup of the country would obviously raise crucial questions of minority rights in each of the three new nations. Peace activists and democrats should keep an open mind about the necessity of maintaining the "territorial integrity" of Iraq; given the freedom to choose, the peoples of Iraq may not want to live in one country, and if they don't, the challenge will be to foster a breakup that is as peaceful and mindful of minority rights as possible.

In response to the unexpectedly high level of resistance to the U.S.-led occupation in Iraq, there are signs that the United States may decide to desert its handpicked Iraqi Governing Council and declare an end to the occupation as early as June of 2004. But even if the U.S. resorts to this option, this does not mean that it will abandon its hope of continuing to dominate Iraq. The Bush administration has made it clear that it intends to install permanent U.S. bases in Iraq, even if the formal occupation ends, and Washington will use every resource in its arsenal — from troops to economic pressure — to insure that whatever government comes to power is subservient to U.S. interests.

Can the UN Security Council Save the Day?

MANY PEOPLE PROPOSE that the solution to the current U.S. occupation of Iraq is for the United Nations to play a greater role. Supporters of this approach come from very different political viewpoints. Some, like Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright support a form of multilateralism and greater UN involvement as a more sophisticated way to secure U.S. interests and power. Peace activists and others look to the UN to provide a genuine peaceful and democratic solution for Iraq and to offer an alternative to U.S. domination of the region.

In the decades since the founding of the United Nations, there have been countless attempts to reform the Security Council and democratize the UN system; all thus far unsuccessful.

As presently constituted, however, the United Nations is hardly a vehicle for democratic, accountable resolution of conflicts among or within countries, especially where the question of control of the resources and wealth of Third World countries by First World interests is paramount. Five nations — the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, and China — constitute the so-called Permanent Five (P-5) members of the Security Council, and they each wield a veto over Council decisions. These countries are not elected to their positions, they occupy them "permanently" as a consequence of the power they held at the end of World War II. It is important to keep in mind that the Security Council voted for the first Gulf War (thus making it "multilateral" — a cautionary note), and administered the deadly sanctions against Iraq right up through the beginning of the 2003 war. And while in a move remarkable for its singularity the Security Council refused to rubber-stamp the second U.S. war on Iraq, in October 2003 the Council backtracked and shamefully legitimized the "Coalition" occupation of the country.

In the decades since the founding of the United Nations, there have been countless attempts to reform the Security Council and democratize the UN system; all thus far unsuccessful. Given this fact, it is difficult to understand what truly progressive resolution of the situation in Iraq peace activists expect that the UN Security Council can implement. It is, of course, conceivable that the U.S. occupation of Iraq will become untenable and the United States will have to relinquish formal control of the country. At that point, however, UN intervention could well be worse than nothing — it could easily provide a new fig leaf for U.S. hegemony. And even if it did not simply provide cover for the U.S., is it realistic to expect that a United Nations Security Council dominated by the great powers will actually voluntarily hand over control of Iraq's resources and strategic military position to the Iraqi people themselves? Is the Council likely, for example, to repudiate the U.S.-imposed policy of privatization of the nation's enterprises, or the edict requiring that Iraq give predatory rights to foreign investors? It is far more probable that France, Russia and (from outside the P-5 group) the Germans will simply see to it that they get their share of lucrative Iraqi reconstruction contracts, while cooperating to promote a more presentable government in Iraq that nonetheless is dependent on and cooperative with the Great Powers and their interests. Of course such plans may founder, just as today's U.S occupation looks like it may, but that doesn't mean that proponents of peace and human rights should call for a Security Council-imposed solution. (On the issue of whether UN intervention should be supported, even under the aegis of the Security Council, Liberia and Rwanda may be exceptions to the general rule given how horrific the situations have been in those countries and the relatively minor imperial motivation there was or would have been in such interventions — but that's no reason to discard a general stance of nonsupport.)*

Appreciating the problems with the Security Council, Institute for Policy Studies foreign policy analyst Phyllis Bennis has come up with an innovative approach: "The UN General Assembly, as well as individual governments and groups of governments, should be pressured to take up the Iraq question, removing it from the sole control of the Security Council. The Assembly should be urged to condemn pre-emptive war and to call for an immediate end to the U.S.-UK occupation." ("Talking Points," quoted above) This proposal is problematic in that may mean giving power not directly to Iraqis but to an outside body, but it is interesting in that it attempts to circumvent Security Council control over United Nations intervention.

In an important article Jeremy Brecher begins to spell out a similar creative approach to the United Nations when he calls for a "Shadow UN" of "national governments and groups such as the coalition of the unwilling, the Non-Aligned Movement, and regional organizations" that could "circumvent a U.S. veto in the Security Council by activating the General Assembly." (Jeremy Brecher, "Terminating the Bush Juggernaut," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 5/1/03, www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org), Brecher cites a recent attempt to begin to chip away at the power of the Security Council: "In April 2003, General Assembly President and Iraq War opponent Jan Kavan began trying to establish a General Assembly-based forum to openly debate current foreign policy issues, providing critics of the U.S. an opportunity to address U.S. actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. moved rapidly to derail the initiative, sending a confidential note to several foreign capitals saying that Kavan's proposal would degenerate into a 'politically divisive' talk shop that would 'infringe upon' the Security Council's exclusive right to deal with threats to global peace and security. 'This represents a backdoor amendment to the U.N. Charter,' the note added." (In correspondence with this author on Nov. 18, 2003, Kavan confirmed the events Brecher described, writing that "The [Brecher] quote you sent me is basically accurate. The 'interactive dialogue platforms' which we proposed within the framework of the revitalization of the General Assembly were not supposed to discuss just Iraq or Afghanistan but absolutely any topic member states would wish to raise. The proposal and the surprising US response was described quite accurately at length at that time by [the] *Washington Post*." (The account can be found in an article by Colum Lynch, "U.S. Blocking Criticism at the UN; Officials Fear Debate Provides Platform for Policy Foes, 5/1/03). One must, of course, question whether the U.S. response was at all "surprising," given that the proposal threatened to curtail its power over the United Nations.

It is important to bear in mind that while the General Assembly is far preferable to the Security Council, particularly on anticolonial issues facing the Third World, it is itself deeply flawed by the undue influence and power of wealthy countries, and by the fact that many of the member countries themselves are undemocratic and thus incapable of consistently representing the real interests of their own people. (There is also the problem that small and large countries have identical representation, but this could be relatively easily remedied.) True UN reform is inseparable from the grassroots struggle for global economic equity and democracy, including within countries like Malaysia which have been among the most militant in demanding an end of the domination of UN security decisions by the P-5 Security Council members. Nonetheless, the Kavan proposal was a step in the right direction.

*Several friends and colleagues in the peace movement have suggested to me that while they do not favor an extended UN occupation of Iraq for precisely the reasons I have outlined, they do advocate a very brief period of UN control after U.S. troops completely leave Iraq, during which time real elections (as opposed to the sham "caucus" process advocated by the U.S. exactly in order to avoid true elections) would be speedily set up and carried out. I am deeply skeptical about whether the UN Security Council, with the Permanent Five members each having a veto, would ever design a prompt and fair election process and leave the country quickly after the voting, but I have not totally closed to door to being convinced about the value of proposing this option. It would be very useful for the peace movement to open up a broad public international discussion about whether it would be possible to constrain the Security Council so that it would not have a blank check to do as it pleases in Iraq and would be forced to carry out this agenda for fair and timely elections in Iraq followed by a rapid, total withdrawal.

Summarizing the divergent views in the antiwar movement about the United Nations, Brecher writes " . . . whereas most of the [peace] movement has expressed strong support for the principles underlying the United Nations and has campaigned for governments to support those ideals, a significant minority views the UN as itself little more than an agent of imperialism, something to be disempowered rather than reformed." In my opinion the peace movement needs to go beyond the two options Brecher gives, reforming versus disempowering the United Nations. Peace activists need to fight for democratic reform of the UN and of the countries within it. They should also simultaneously demand that the UN, including the Security Council, do the right thing — e.g., refuse to go along with the U.S. war on Iraq, and the victors' postwar occupation. Meanwhile, however, the Council (as opposed to the UN itself), as it is presently constituted, should indeed be disempowered.

Regime Change at Home

WITH ITS NAKED ASSERTION of the right to preemptive war, its open contempt for the opinions of other countries, and its war on Iraq, the Bush administration has escalated both the rhetoric and the reality of U.S. imperial power. But Bush and the Republicans do not bear sole responsibility. While a majority of Democratic members of Congress (if one aggregates the House and Senate votes) voted against a resolution supporting the war, the Democratic Party was never seen as championing opposition to it, and once the war started, what Democratic opposition there was largely dissipated, except for mavericks like Dennis Kucinich and John Conyers.

Democratic dissent against the war was hardly audible until popular dissatisfaction with the failures of the occupation began to manifest itself in the fall of 2003. Even then, Democratic opposition was hardly adequate. On October 16, for example, Ted Kennedy, one of the more outspoken Democrats, made a sharp attack on the administration's request for $87 billion to finance the occupation, but at the same time he declared that the U.S. "cannot withdraw now, leaving Iraq to chaos or civil war . . . We need a realistic and specific plan to bring stability to Iraq, to bring genuine self-government to Iraq, to bring our soldiers home with dignity and honor." Kennedy's statement is grounded in the assumption that the U.S. is capable of bringing democratic stability to Iraq. This is an illusion: just look at the results of the first six months of occupation, and, as is plain for all to see, the situation is rapidly going downhill.

Howard Dean was the only candidate that the media was paying attention to who unequivocally opposed the war. The Democratic establishment was united in its opposition to Dean because he refused to let them stitch up the process and anoint some complete insider hack. It's a positive development, basically, that ordinary Democrats embraced someone who is perceived as an "outsider" whose candidacy can be used to oppose the war and shake up the party. The problem is that Dean doesn't oppose the occupation any more than Kennedy does, and that if elected he will easily make peace with the Democratic Party mainstream on the fundamental domestic and international issues. (The Gore endorsement of Dean signifies an important first step in this rapprochement.) Dean's critique of the U.S. war on Iraq never objected to the assumptions of both Democrats and Republicans that U.S. power in the world needs to be advanced, and that the United States should pursue a procorporate foreign policy.

Senator Joseph Biden, along with many other Democrats including Senator Hilary Clinton, is worse than either Kennedy or Dean. Despite his criticisms of the administration for being too unilateral, Biden now calls for an *increase* in the numbers of U.S. troops in Iraq. Mainstream Democratic Party critics of U.S. foreign policy, along with critics from the CIA, the military, and former Cold War allies like Germany, perform a valuable function of opening up the debate and to a certain extent delegitimizing the crude use of American power in the world. This opening can be extremely useful, and the peace movement needs to take advantage of it. However, it is crucial that the movement also recognizes and exposes the limitations of these critics to people both in the U.S.

and abroad, and limit common action to areas of actual agreement.

But Don't We Have to Defend Ourselves?

The Bush administration's appeal for the support of the American people rests on the claim that only a tough military approach can defend ordinary Americans against maniacal dictators and terrorist attackers. People in this country are becoming uneasy with this claim, especially as the war in Iraq seems unending, the U.S. victory in Afghanistan unravels, the number of casualties and deaths of U.S. soldiers in Iraq continues to mount, and terrorist attacks spread around the globe. If only we had a resolute, progressive opposition party in this country, free of corporate control, that could turn Bush's claim around and clearly state that a democratic and egalitarian foreign policy is the only answer to the threats of dictatorship and terrorism! Such a party could point out that the iron fist, the police state, and endless war don't enhance security for anyone, in the long or the short run. And such an opposition could crystallize growing public unease with Bush's approach into powerful opposition to the occupation of Iraq and, by extension, future military attacks on Iran, Syria, North Korea or elsewhere.

But we have no such opposition party, so we are going to have to start mounting our protests from the bottom up, handicapped at every point by not yet having a political voice. There are hopeful signs. Unofficial reports reveal widespread low morale in the military (recall that it was precisely such low morale that played a key role in ending the Vietnam war), and military family members have been courageously speaking out against the war and occupation. The peace movement is once again stirring, and many politicians are seeing the war as a point of vulnerability for the Bush administration. Other countries balk at bailing the U.S. out of the mess in Iraq. All of this may result in a U.S. defeat in Iraq. But to avoid more dangerous and destructive imperial ventures in the future, we need to start now to build not only a vigorous protest movement in the streets but an independent political party that can champion a truly nonimperialist, democratic foreign policy.

December 9, 2003

ON THE OCCUPATION AND LABOR RIGHTS IN IRAQ

A Resolution by U.S. Labor Against the War

Whereas: since George W. Bush declared an end to the war in Iraq in April, unemployment among Iraqi workers has reached 70%, facing many families with hunger and dislocation, and

Whereas: since Bush announced the war's end, the U.S. occupying authority has frozen Iraqi wages for most workers at $60 per month, while at the same time eliminating bonuses, profit sharing, and bonuses for food and housing, causing a sharp cut in the income of those Iraqi workers still employed, and

Whereas: $87 billion was appropriated by Congress supposedly for the reconstruction of Iraq, yet not a dime is set to be used to raise Iraqi wages or for the benefit of its unemployed workers, and these extraordinary expenditures will come at immense cost in services and jobs here in the U.S., and

Whereas: since April Iraqi workers have begun to reorganize their trade union movement, seeking a better standard of living, and to preserve their jobs and workplaces, and

Whereas: the U.S. occupation authority has continued to enforce a law issued by Saddam Hussein in 1987, prohibiting unions and collective bargaining in the public sector and state enterprises, where most Iraqis work, and in June promulgated a new law prohibiting strikes, threatening any worker who encourages strike activity with being held as a prisoner of war, and

Whereas: the U.S. occupation authority has announced that it intends to privatize the factories, refineries, mines and other state enterprises, selling them off to private owners, despite the fact that these enterprises belong to the Iraqi people, not to the U.S., and has issued a new law, Public Order 39, allowing 100% foreign ownership of Iraqi businesses and the repatriation of profits, and

Whereas: the privatization of Iraqi workplaces would result in the massive layoff of Iraqi workers, at a time when unemployment is already at crisis levels, and

Whereas: the U.S. occupation authority is in effect making it illegal for Iraqi unions and workers to organize at the workplace to oppose privatization or have any voice at all in the future of their own jobs, and

Whereas: Iraqi unions are seeking to organize despite having no resources of any kind, while the U.S. occupying authority continues to withhold from them the welfare funds and other resources and buildings held by the Saddam-Hussein affiliated government unions, Therefore be it resolved: that this local union (or other labor body) calls for full trade union rights in Iraq, and for the occupation authority to immediately repudiate the 1987 Hussein law banning unions in public enterprises, to annul its prohibition on strikes, and eliminate any other restriction on the full exercise of labor rights, and

Be it further resolved: that we call on the U.S. occupation authority immediately to implement Conventions 89 and 98 of the International Labor Organization, guaranteeing the rights to organize and strike, and

Be it further resolved: that we call for an end to the United States occupation of Iraq, so that Iraq can be governed by its own people, and guarantee the rights of its own people, labor rights included, and

Be it further resolved: that we call for a Congressional investigation of the suppression of trade union rights in Iraq, and the privatization of the workplaces of Iraqi workers and the property of the Iraqi people, and

Be it finally resolved: that we will donate material resources, such as computers, telephones and office furniture, as well as money, to the Fund to Support Iraqi Trade Union Rights, established by U.S. Labor Against the War.

10/26/03

BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW

A Resolution by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)

The war in Iraq is long over but the death toll — Iraqi and American — continues to mount daily. Whatever goodwill U.S. troops enjoyed in the immediate aftermath of Saddam Hussein's fall is evaporating as Americans in uniform continue on as an army of occupation.

The already astronomical costs of the occupation are also rising. Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator of occupied Iraq, said in July that the cost of rebuilding the country could be $100 billion and take three years. But private analysts estimate the military and nation-building operations will cost taxpayers as much as $600 billion.

At a time when public entities are laying off workers and curtailing basic services including important security services — the expenditure of huge sums to further the Bush administration's aims in Iraq is unconscionable.

Much of those huge sums will be pocketed by corporations with close connections to the White House. Among the bigger windfalls, Vice President Cheney's company, Halliburton, is expected to realize $400 million in taxpayer-funded profits through its exclusive contracts. Bechtel is the recipient of a $680 million contract that covers upgrading Iraq's water and sewer systems. This pursuit of billions in profits is protected by U.S. troops subjected to daily assaults.

The administration's goals of privatization and creation of a regional free trade zone are an indication that reconstruction is taking place to benefit American big business, not Iraqi working people. In the wake of the war's destruction of so many workplaces, many Iraqi families are now without any income. In late July, U.S. troops attacked members of the Union of the Unemployed engaged in peaceful protests against the treatment of unemployed persons by U.S. corporations and occupation forces. The August 2 arrest of 52 of their leaders is a strong indication of what kind of democracy the Bush administration intends for the conquered country.

By its nature, democracy cannot be imposed from the top down. The people of Iraq should decide their future and enjoy complete control of their resources. That is the only real democratic option.

The delegates to the 67th UE Convention last September said that the Bush administration is cynically using inflated claims of Iraq's threat to vastly increase the military budget, to help his friends in the oil business control oil production in the Middle East, and to boost his own popularity and prop up the electoral fortunes of the pro-corporate Republican Party. None of these will help to prevent terrorism, but all of them will hurt workers in the United States and abroad.

We believe events have proven those statements to be correct. Let there be no mistake. Saddam Hussein was a ruthless tyrant whose misrule will not be missed. But let us not be fooled into thinking that Hussein's misdeeds were the reason Americans were sent into war. The world has too many dictators. Not every dictator controls the world's second largest oil reserves. Saddam did — until he was deposed by U.S. might. Prior to this, Saddam's brutal, blood thirsty regime enjoyed the material support of successive administrations, including that of the elder Bush, as long as it suited the purposes of U.S. foreign policy.

President Bush repeatedly misled the American people about the reasons for war. He refused to talk about the oil. He tried to link the Iraqi government to terrorist networks. There was no link. He claimed Iraq possessed and was producing chemical and biological weapons. None have been found. He claimed Iraq was developing nuclear weapons. There were none. He used bogus information to claim that Iraq was buying uranium from Africa. He has since been forced to admit that information was false, in hopes all the other lies will be ignored.

In opposing the war, this union has been concerned from the first for the well-being of the men and women in uniform, who include our members, relations, friends and coworkers. We will not rest easy until they are out of danger and are safely returned home. Our experience in Afghanistan teaches us to distrust the administration's claims about quick and easy victories and to question its concern for the well-being of our troops.

Ultimately the greatest gift we can give the women and men of the armed services is to construct a democratic foreign policy based on the best interest of the American people, not corporations — a policy that promotes peace and security based on the rule of law and the will of the community of nations as expressed in the United Nations.

This 68th UE Convention calls on the Bush administration to immediately cease military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to bring home U.S. military personnel; and turn over the task of rebuilding Iraq to a genuine, multinational peace-keeping force under the supervision of the UN, with the United States making good on its obligation to finance rebuilding. This convention also calls for Congressional hearings to investigate war profiteering and the secretive, closed-bid reconstruction contracts in Iraq, and endorses efforts to halt the U.S.-led drive to hand over Iraq's industries, services and public resources to powerful multinational corporations, and backs the right of Iraqi workers to organize democratic trade unions.

9/25/03

Immigration in a Global Era

Saskia Sassen

Over the last decade we have seen a sharp increase in the estimated numbers of would-be immigrants who have died trying to get into the United States and into Europe. Who is it we are determined to keep out to the point that they risk their lives to get in? An equally determined but tiny minority of men, women and children from mostly poor countries, who will come no matter what in search of work or refuge. They are not criminals. But the result of our determination is that we are feeding a criminal trade. There has been a sharp growth in illegal trafficking of people as receiving countries have clamped down on entries and semi-militarized more and more borders.

These developments raise two issues. One concerns the old trade-off between policies that criminalize what may not intrinsically be a criminal act and to do so in the name of controlling a somewhat untenable situation; this in turn raises the incentives for genuinely criminal actors to promote the forbidden activity. A familiar instance of this trade-off concerns marijuana control policy. Does the criminalizing of marijuana in the U.S. — and the UK — really work better as a policy to control its use than the controlled legality of marijuana in the Netherlands, which leaves very little room for profit making by drug dealers and hence no incentive to expand its use?

> Are there ways of regulating the flow of people into our societies that could strengthen, rather than weaken, the civic fabric?

The second policy issue raised by these developments is that the deaths of these thousands of people attempting to enter affect us all, not only those directly concerned. The fact that these people lack the proper documents for entry is easily represented in policy and media circles as exempting us from any responsibility as societies for these deaths. The lack of proper documents somehow seems to make these deaths less human and reduce whatever might be our responsibility contributing to these deaths.

The trend toward greater police and military control and growing disregard for international human rights codes as well as our civil liberties laws is promoting illegal trafficking and weakening our rule of law and thereby our democracies. These policies are adding to an already growing mix of what I would describe as negative incentives, or incentives with negative outcomes for significant sectors of our societies.

Illegal trafficking and the deaths of men, women and children who are not criminals, and who die on our "soil" eventually touches the fabric of *our* societies and distorts or weakens the rule of law. In the long run it will affect us all. Yes, the central victims are the men and women who are trafficked and especially those who die. But we would be foolish to think that we can allow these abuses and deaths to happen in the name of maintaining control, and remain untouched. The

Saskia Sassen *is the author of several books, including* Guests and Aliens *(1999) and the forthcoming* Denationalization: Territory, Authority and Rights in a Global Digital Age *(2004). An interview with Saskia Sassen appeared in* New Politics, *no. 29 (summer 2000). An earlier version of this article appeared in the Swedish journal* Ord and Bild *(no. 6, 2002).*

growth in illegal trafficking and the sharpening of extreme anti-immigrant politics willing to sacrifice some civil liberties in the name of control are indications of this broader negative effect.

The Interconnectedness of Violence

PART OF THE CHALLENGE is to recognize the interconnectedness of forms of violence that we do not always recognize as being connected or for that matter, as being forms of violence. The sharp growth of government debt, poverty, unemployment and the closing of traditional economic sectors in the global south, partly due to neoliberal economic globalization, has created whole new migrations as well as fed an exploding illegal trade in people. We now have growing evidence that International Monetary Fund (IMF) policy has sharpened these conditions, even as it has brought great prosperity to about 20 percent of residents in many countries in the global south.

By supporting IMF policies, our governments are contributing to those conditions that are going to stimulate emigration and illegal trafficking in people. Further, as the rich economies become richer partly because of these same IMF policies, they also become more desirable destinations. This in turn creates a source for hard currency for the governments of the sending countries in a context where they face mounting debt and declines in national revenues as neoliberal globalization weakens and often destroys many of the national economic sectors in these countries. Thus these governments are not interested particularly in regulating emigration either. Finally, as these same policies have also raised inequality and unemployment inside the rich economies, the disadvantaged have become radicalized, often taking on extreme right wing politics, a growing trend in Western Europe.

The tragedy is that those most affected negatively, those to whom violence has been done both in the global south and in the rich economies, the victims of it all, now confront each other as enemies inside our countries. Anti-immigrant sentiment probably runs highest among those who have hurt from the same policies that have hurt the poor and the middle classes (though not the upper 20 percent) from where come the immigrants and would-be immigrants. And as the rich countries raise their walls to keep immigrants and refugees out, they feed the illegal trade in people and raise the profits to be made as despair rises in the global south and fear in the global north. This is not sound policy. This is a vicious policy cycle.

The same infrastructure, both technical and institutional, that has enabled global flows of capital and goods, services and the new transnational managerial and professional class, also enables migrations and illegal trafficking. And it facilitates the flow of remittances back to sending countries, a major incentive for not doing anything on the part of these governments. These various entanglements raise the complexity of the challenge of how to regulate immigration. But these entanglements and this type of complexity are going in the wrong direction. We need to reverse this dynamic.

When globalization policies go wrong, they really go very wrong for countries in the global south. Thereby these policies sharpen the incentives for both emigration and trafficking for emigrants, traffickers and governments in the global south, given growing government indebtedness and lack of opportunity for workers and would be entrepreneurs in much of the global south.

Emigrants enter the macro-level of development strategies for sending countries through their remittances. In many countries these represent a major source of foreign exchange reserves for the government. While the flows of remittances may be minor compared to the massive daily capital flows in various financial markets, they are often very significant for developing or struggling economies.

In 1998 — the last year for which comprehensive data are available — global remittances sent by immigrants to their home countries reached over seventy billion dollars. To understand the significance of this figure, it should be related to the GDP (gross domestic product) and foreign currency reserves in the specific countries involved, rather than compared to the global flow of capital. For instance, in the Philippines, a key sender of migrants generally and of women for the entertainment industry in several countries, remittances were the third largest source of foreign exchange over the last several years. In Bangladesh, another country with significant numbers of its workers in the Middle East, Japan and several European countries, remittances represent about a third of foreign exchange. Exporting workers and remittances are means for governments of coping with unemployment and foreign debt.

This would also seem to be the case given the growing interdependencies brought on by globalization, which also enables illegal trafficking. Cross-border business travel, global tourism, the Internet and other conditions integral to globalization enable multiple global flows not foreseen by the framers and developers of economic globalization. This creates a difficult trade-off in a context where September 11th has further sharpened the will to control immigration and resident immigrants. Increased illegal trafficking and the reduction in civil liberties will not facilitate the need to learn how to accommodate more immigration to respond to the future demographic turn.

Let me focus next with some detail on one specific flow, which brings many of these issues together.

Illegal Trafficking

TRAFFICKING IN WORKERS for both licit and illegal work (e.g. unauthorized sex work) illuminates a number of intersections between the negative conditions in the global south and some of the tensions in the immigration regime.[1] Trafficking is a violation of several distinct types of rights: human, civil, political. Trafficking in people appears to be mainly related to the sex market, to labor markets, to illegal migration. Much legislative work has been done to address trafficking: international treaties and charters, United Nations resolutions and various bodies and commissions. Trafficking was also addressed in the G8 meeting in Birmingham in May 1998. The heads of the eight major industrialized countries stressed the importance of cooperation against international organized crime and trafficking in persons. President Clinton issued a set of directives to his administration to strengthen and increase efforts against trafficking in women and girls, and Paul Wellstone introduced a senate bill that addressed the issue in 1999.

NGOs are also playing an increasingly important role. For instance, the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women has centers and representatives in Australia, Bangladesh, Europe, Latin America, North America, Africa and Asia Pacific. The Women's Rights Advocacy Program has established the Initiative Against Trafficking in Persons to combat the global trade in persons.

> When globalization policies go wrong, they really go very wrong for countries in the global south.

This type of trafficking shows us one of the meanings of interdependence in the current global system. There are two distinct issues here: one is that globalization has produced new conditions and dynamics, especially the growing demand for these types of workers by the expanding high income professional workforce associated largely, though not exclusively, with globalization.[2] The second issue is that globalization has enabled older trafficking networks and practices which used to be national or regional to become global.

Here I want to focus on some of the data on the trafficking of women, especially for the sex industries and the growing weight of this trafficking as a profit making option for the traffickers, especially it would seem from the global south. This, then, adds to the role of emigrants' remittances generally, whether from lawful, unauthorized or trafficked immigrants in the account balance of many of the impoverished governments of sending countries. Profits and revenues are, clearly, a disincentive to attack this trade. Insofar as the countries of the global north are one of the key destinations, they do not escape the consequences of this illegal trade either.

Trafficking in migrants is a profitable business. According to a United Nations report, criminal organizations in the 1990s generated an estimated $3.5 billion per year in profits from trafficking migrants (excluding most of the women trafficked for the sex industry). The entry of organized crime is a recent development in the case of migrant trafficking; in the past it was mostly petty criminals who engaged in this type of trafficking.

The Central Intelligence Agency reports that organized crime groups are creating intercontinental strategic alliances through networks of co-ethnics throughout several countries; this facilitates transport, local contact and distribution, provision of false documents and so on. The Global Survival Network in 1997 reported on these practices after a two-year investigation using the establishment of a dummy company to enter the illegal trade. Such networks also facilitate the organized circulation of trafficked women among third countries — not only from sending to receiving countries. Traffickers may move women from Burma, Laos, Vietnam and China to Thailand, while Thai women may have been moved to Japan and the United States.[3]

Although there is no exhaustive data, the available information suggests that trafficking in women, including minors, for the sex industry is highly profitable for those running the trade. The UN estimates that four million women were trafficked in 1998, producing a profit of $7 billion for criminal groups. These funds include remittances from prostitutes' earnings and payments to organizers and facilitators in these countries.

In Japan, where the so-called entertainment industry is legal, profits are about 4.2 trillion yen per year over the last few years; there is growing evidence that illegally trafficked women are a growing share of sex workers. In Poland, police estimate that for each Polish woman delivered, the trafficker receives about $700. In Australia, the federal police estimate that the cash flow from 200 prostitutes is up to $900,000 a week. Ukrainian and Russian women, in high demand in the sex market, earn the criminal gangs involved about $500 to $1000 per woman delivered. These women can be expected to service on average 15 clients a day, and each can be expected to make about $215,000 per month for the gang.[4]

It is estimated that in recent years several million women and girls are trafficked within and out of Asia and the former Soviet Union, two major trafficking areas. Increases in trafficking in both these areas can be linked to women being pushed into poverty or sold to brokers due to the poverty of their households or parents. High unemployment in the former Soviet republics has been one factor promoting growth of criminal gangs as well as growth of trafficking in women. Unemployment rates among women in Armenia, Russia, Bulgaria and Croatia reached 70 percent and in Ukraine 80 percent with the implementation of market policies. There is some research indicating that economic need is the bottom line for entry into prostitution.[5]

Some of the features of immigration policy and enforcement may well contribute to make women who are victims of trafficking even more vulnerable and to give them little recourse to the law. If they are undocumented, which they are likely to be, they will not be treated as victims of abuse but as violators of the law insofar as they have violated entry, residence and work laws. Efforts to address undocumented immigration and trafficking through greater border controls over entry raise the likelihood that women will use traffickers to cross the border, and some of these may turn out to belong to criminal organizations linked to the sex industry.

Further, in many countries prostitution is forbidden for foreign women, which enhances the role of criminal gangs in prostitution. It also diminishes one of the survival options of foreign women who may have limited access to jobs generally. Prostitution is tolerated for foreign women in many countries while regular labor market jobs are less so — this is the case for instance in the Netherlands and in Switzerland. According to International Organization for Migration data, the number of migrant women prostitutes in many European Union countries is far higher than that for nationals: 75 percent in Germany, 80 percent in the case of Milan in Italy, etc.

While some women know that they are being trafficked for prostitution, for many the conditions of their recruitment and the extent of abuse and bondage only become evident after they arrive in the receiving country. The conditions of confinement are often extreme, akin to slavery, and so are the conditions of abuse, including rape and other forms of sexual violence and physical punishments. They are severely underpaid, and wages are often withheld. They are prevented from using protection methods against AIDS, and typically have no right to medical treatment. If they seek police help they may be taken into detention because they are in violation of immigration laws; if they have been provided with false documents there are criminal charges.[6]

> Trafficking in women, including minors, for the sex industry is highly profitable for those running the trade.

Entertainment and Poverty

As tourism has grown sharply over the last decade and become a major development strategy for cities, regions and whole countries, the entertainment sector has seen a parallel growth and recognition as a key development strategy. In many places, the sex trade is part of the entertainment industry and has similarly grown. At some point it becomes clear that the sex trade itself can become a development strategy in areas with high unemployment and poverty and governments desperate for revenue and foreign exchange reserves. When local manufacturing and agriculture can no longer function as sources of employment, of profits and of government revenue, what was once a marginal source of earnings, profits and revenues, now becomes a far more important one.

The increased importance of these sectors in development generates growing tie-ins. For instance, when the IMF and the World Bank see tourism as a solution to some of the growth challenges in many poor countries and provide loans for its development or expansion, they may well be contributing to develop a broader institutional setting for the expansion of the entertainment industry and indirectly of the sex trade.

This tie-in with development strategies signals that trafficking in women may well see further expansion. It is a worrisome possibility, especially in the context of growing numbers of women with few if any employment options. And such growing numbers are to be expected given high unemployment and poverty, the shrinking of a world of work opportunities that were embedded in the more traditional sectors of these economies, and the growing debt burden of governments rendering them incapable of providing social services and support to the poor. Under these conditions, women in the sex industry also can become a source of government revenue. These tie-ins are structural, not a function of conspiracies. Their weight in an economy will be raised by the absence or limitations of other sources for securing a livelihood, profits and revenues for respectively workers, enterprises and governments.

Even as the rich countries try harder and harder to keep would-be immigrants and refugees out, they face a growing demographic deficit and rapidly aging populations. According to a major study, at the end of the current century and under current fertility and immigration patterns, population size in Western Europe will have shrunk by 75 million and almost 50 percent of the population will be over 60 years old — a first in its history.[7] Europe, perhaps more so than the U.S. given its relatively larger intake of immigrants, faces some difficult decisions. Where will they find the new young workers needed to support the growing elderly population and to do jobs considered unattractive by the native born, particularly in a context of rising educational attainment? The numbers of these jobs are not declining, even if the incidence of some of them is; one sector that is likely to add jobs is home and institutional care for the growing numbers of elderly people. Export of older people and of economic activities is one option being considered now. But there is a limit to how many elderly people and low wage jobs an economy can export and a society can tolerate. Immigration is expected to be part of the solution.

In the United States the evidence suggests a slightly different pattern. By century's end the forecasted fall for the U.S. is 34 million people, though this represents a point in the upward slope, which will not be completed until after the end of this century. The evidence is fairly clear that a significant component of population growth in the U.S. over the last two decades as well as labor force growth is accounted for by immigrants, both second generation and foreign born. In both cases, immigrants account for a larger component of growth than their share in respectively the general population and the total labor force.

Yet the way the countries in the global north are proceeding is not preparing them to handle this scenario. They are building walls to keep would-be immigrants out. At a time of growing refugee flows, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees faces an even greater shortage of funds than usual. Given an effective demand for immigrant workers, and indeed families for demographic purposes, both of these policy preferences are likely to have negative repercussions for Europe. They construct the immigrant and the refugee as a negative and undesirable subject, thereby encumbering integration. Further, given firms and households interested in hiring immigrants or determined to do so, for whatever reasons, restrictive policies and racialized representations of the immigrant and the refugee, can be expected to feed the already growing illegal trafficking of people.

Immigration Policy

THE LARGE AND LOOMING ISSUE confronting societies under the rule of law is whether policies that brutalize people — no matter what their nationality — and promote criminalized profit-making through the trade in people, are desirable and indeed sustainable if we are to keep up our systems based on the rule of law for which our forebears fought so hard and spilled so much blood. Allowing this sort of brutalization and criminality is a very high price to pay for maintaining border control, and sooner or later it begins to tear at the fabric of the lawful state and of civil society.

The risks to fully documented citizens are illustrated by what is happening today in the U.S. The events of September 11th and the subsequent restrictions on the civil liberties of particular immigration groups in the U.S. are tearing at, and some would say weakening the rule of law as it affects all U.S. residents. The government is granting itself more and more authority to deal directly, in an extrajudicial way, with matters that used to run through judiciaries or that would not be considered a matter for the government to get involved with. In so doing, the federal government is violating basic rights not only of those it has profiled as possibly dangerous, but also of its citizens, all citizens, not just those who might be suspect.

Are there ways of regulating the flow of people into our societies that could strengthen, rather than weaken, the civic fabric? The repeated incidents of would-be immigrants dying at the hands of illegal traffickers do not. They risk producing indifference when it happens over and over again. And they risk promoting acceptance of these deaths by ourselves and our children — all in the name of maintaining control over entry.

We are not only paying a price for those who die on our soil; we are also paying a price for those who are smuggled into our countries alive. The price we pay for allowing the abuse that is human smuggling is much higher than the "price" we pay for accommodating these people who just want a chance to work — and work they do. Indeed, much research suggests that we actually gain from the presence of these immigrants. For instance, seventeen percent of entrepreneurs in London belong to ethnic communities, a far higher share than their population share.

Continuing to use policies that make possible the brutalization of would-be migrants and the profit making of criminal smugglers is a cancer deep inside *our* states and societies. It is the price we pay for criminalizing undocumented immigrants and, more generally, for resorting to policing and militarization as the way of regulating immigration. The U.S. illustrates this to some extent. In the name of effective control, the 1996 Immigration Act strengthened policing by reducing judiciary review of immigration police actions.

A crucial issue here is the object of the expanded policing: It is not known criminals or firms suspected of violating environmental regulations or drug dealers. It is a population sector, not even select individuals, but a fairly broad spectrum of men, women and children.

> Human smuggling is much higher than the "price" we pay for accommodating these people who just want a chance to work — and work they do.

There are consequences to this tension between, on the one hand, the strengthening of police approaches to immigrant regulation and, on the other, the strengthening of civil and human rights and the civic empowerment associated with a stronger sense of civil society. Sooner or later this policing will get caught in the expanding web of civil and human rights. And these rights will include those of citizens. Policing, when unchecked by civil review, can easily violate such rights and interfere with the functioning of civil society.

If my son decided to go write the great American novel by spending time with farm workers or in garment sweatshops, and there were an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) raid he could well be part of the suspects — because I know he would not be carrying his passport with him. Or worse, if he were among the farm workers in California running away from the INS police and pushed towards jumping in one of the water levies, as has happened a number of times over the last few years, he might have been one of those who drowned.

As a result of the 1996 law, the actions of INS agents can escape review and accountability in front of a judge if the persecuted were merely suspected of being undocumented. Sooner or later abusive or excess policing and the weakening of judicial review of such police actions will interfere with the aspiration towards the rule of law that is such a deep part of our inheritance and our lived reality. We need to find another way of regulating entry: now we are strengthening modes of regulation that carry a high cost not only in immigrant deaths but also to the rule of law.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Diana Alarcon-Gonzalez and Terry McKinley, "The adverse effects of structural adjustment on working women in Mexico," *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 26, no. 3 (1999).

Sietske Altink, *Stolen Lives: Trading Women into Sex and Slavery*. New York: Harrington Park Press, 1995.

Asoka Bandarage, *Women, Population and Crisis*. London: Zed, 1997.

Walden Bello, *A Siamese Tragedy: Development and Disintegration in Modern Thailand.* London: Zed, 1998.

William Booth, "Thirteen charged in gang importing prostitutes," *Washington Post*, August 21, 1999.

York Bradshaw, Rita Noonan, Laura Gash and Claudia Buchmann, "Borrowing against the future: Children and third world indebtness," *Social Forces* Vol. 71, no. 3 (1993).

"Brides from the Phillippines?" www.geocites.co.jp/Milkyway-Kaigan/5501/ph7.html.

Claudia Buchmann, "The debt crisis, structural adjustment and women's education," *International Journal of Comparative Studies*, Vol. 37, nos. 1-2 (1996).

Nilufer Cagatay and Sule Ozler, "Feminization of the labor force: The effects of long-term development and structural adjustment." *World Development*, Vol. 23, no. 11 (1995).

Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, New York: Macmillan, 1998.

Grace Chang, "Undocumented Latinas: The new employable mothers," in M. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, eds., *Race, Class, and Gender*. London: Wadsworth, 1998.

Micel Chossudovsky, *The Globalisation of Poverty*. London: Zed, 1997.

Christine Chin, "Walls of silence and late 20th century representations of foreign female domestic workers: The case of Filipina and Indonesian houseservants in Malaysia," *International_Migration Review*, Vol. 31, no. 1 (1997).

Janie Chuang, "Redirecting the Debate over Trafficking in Women: Definitions, Paradigms, and Contexts," *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, no. 10 (Winter 1998).

CIA, "International Trafficking in Women to the United States: A Contemporary Manifestation of Salvery and Organized Crime." Prepared by Amy O'Neill Richard. Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2000. www.cia.gov/csi/monograph/women/trafficking.pdf.

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, *Factsheet*. www.traffickedwomen.org/fact.html.

Coalition Against Trafficking in Women. (Annual). *Reports*.

David Natacha, "Migrants made the scapegoats of the crisis," *ICFTU Online*, 1999. International Confederation of Free Trade Unions: www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/50/012.html.

Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002.

Stephanie Farrior, "The International Law on Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution: Making it Live up to its Potential," *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 10 (Winter 1997).

Global Survival Network, "Crime and Servitude: An Expose of the Trafic in Women for Prostitution from the Newly Independent States." www.*globalsurvival.net/femaletrade.html* (November 1997).

Noeleen Heyzer, *The Trade in Domestic Workers*. London: Zed, 1994.

International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, *Special Report: Global Population*. Vienna: IIASA, 2001.

International Organization for Migration, *Trafficking in Migrants* (Quarterly Bulletin). Geneva: IOM. wwww.iom.int

Erika Jones, "The gendered toll of global debt crisis," *Sojourner*, Vol. 25, no. 3 (1999).

Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema, *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Lap-Chew Lin and Wijers Marjan, *Trafficking in women, forced labour and slavery-like practices in marriage, domestic labour and prostitution*. Utrecht: Foundation Against Trafficking in Women, and Bangkok: Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, 1997.

Lin Lim, *The Sex Sector: The Economic and Social Bases of Prostitution in Southeast Asia*. Geneva: International Labor Office, 1998.

Richard Longworth, *Global Squeeze. The coming crisis for first-world nations*. Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1998.

Rekha Mehra, "Women, empowerment and economic development," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (November 1997).

Eddy Meng, "Mail Order Brides: Gilded Prostitution and the Legal Responses," *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* (Fall 1998).

Aihwa Ong, "Globalization and Women's Rights: The Asian Debate on Citizenship and Communitarianism," *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (Fall 1996).

OXFAM, *International submission to the HIPC debt review*, (April 1999). www.caa.org/au/oxfam/advocacy/debt/hipcreview.html.

Philippines Information Service, "Filipina Brides," 1999. www.pis.or.jp/data/tothug.htm.

Saskia Sassen, "The Participation of States and Citizens in Global Governance," in *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (2003).

Saskia Sassen, "Globalization or Denationalization?" *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (February 2003).

Saskia Sassen, "The Repositioning of Citizenship: Emergent Subjects and Spaces for Politics," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 46 (2002).

Saskia Sassen, *Guests and Aliens*. New York: New Press, 1999.

Susan Shannon, "The Global Sex Trade: Humans as the Ultimate Commodity," *Crime and Justice International* (May 1999).

James Tyner, "The global context of gendered labor emigration from the Philippines to the United States," *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 42, no. 40 (1999).

Kathryn Ward and Jean Pyle, "Gender, Industrialization and Development," in Christine E. Bose and Edna Acosta-Belen, eds., *Women in the Latin American Development Process: From Structural Subordination to Empowerment*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.

Brenda Yeoh, Shirlena Huang, and Joaquin Gonzalez III, "Migrant Female Domestic Workers: debating the economic, social and political impacts in Singapore," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 33, no. 1 (1999).

Notes

1. Trafficking involves the forced recruitment and/or transportation of people within and across states for work or services through a variety of forms all involving coercion.

2. One process that captures this specific type of interdependence is the global migration of maids, nannies and nurses. *See* Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild (2002).

3. There are various reports on the particular cross-border movements in trafficking. Malay brokers sell Malay women into prostitution in Australia. East European women from Albania and Kosovo have been trafficked by gangs into prostitution in London. European teens from Paris and other cities have been sold to Arab and African customers. In the U.S., the police broke up an international Asian ring that imported women from China, Thailand, Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam. The women were charged between $30,000 and $40,000 in contracts to be paid through their work in the sex trade or needle trade. The women in the sex trade were shuttled around several states in the U.S. to bring "continuing variety to the clients." *See* Martin Booth (1999).

4. For more detailed information, see Marjan Wijers and Marieke van Doorninck, *Only Rights Can Stop Wrongs: A Critical Assessment of the Anti-Trafficking Strategies, from the Conference on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2002)*.

5. There is also a growing trade in children for the sex industry — this has long been the case in Thailand but now is also present in several other Asian countries, in Eastern Europe and Latin America.

6. A fact sheet by the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking reports that one survey of Asian sex workers found that rape often preceded their being sold into prostitution and that about one third had been falsely led to becoming sold into prostitution.

7. IIAS (2001) As is well known, several large European countries are now below reproduction levels, notably Italy and France.

Child Labor in the World Economy

GLENN PERUSEK

A WORLD AWAY FROM US, IN THE STRAITS OF MALACCA, between Indonesian Sumatra and Malaysia, approximately 2,000 fishing platforms, known as jermals, operate miles from shore. Fewer than 400 are officially registered with the Indonesian government; the rest operate illegally. These small fishing platforms are built from giant logs that are sharpened like stakes and dropped from barges into the sea floor in water up to twenty meters deep. They form an open-ended rectangular stockade to which smaller timbers are lashed horizontally. Above these, rough sawn timbers form the deck, about two to three meters from the surface of the choppy sea. A wooden shanty with a corrugated metal roof is placed upon the deck.

> On a world scale, one child in six is a child laborer.

Nets strung below the deck are raised by hand. The fish caught in the nets are hauled into wicker baskets and dragged into the shanty. Here they are poured onto the floor, and the difficult, dangerous work of sorting valuable teri, squid, shrimp, eels, crabs and larger fish from jellyfish and poisonous sea snakes is done. The junk fish, "hacked, crushed, and scattered," are pushed back into the sea through cracks in the deck. The workers are left covered in shiny silver scales.

The working day begins at 4 a.m., with the hauling in of the long nets by manual equipment. The nets are lowered and raised again ten times in the day — every two hours. The work is performed largely by children; it does not end until 11:30 p.m. or midnight — one a.m. during the high season. The working day is 12 to 13 hours, with short breaks totaling about six hours.

KKSP (*Kelompok Kerja Sosial Perkotaan*, "Working Group on Social Problems"), an Indonesian humanitarian group, conducted a five-year investigation of labor conditions on the jermals, interviewing workers on more than 140 of the platforms. They found that more than 75 percent of more than 8,000 employees in the industry are children, one-third of whom are under 14. The report puts the number at "at least 5,400 children, and probably many more" are on the jermals. The fishing industry is openly in violation of UN and International Labor Convention on children's rights, and in violation of Indonesian law, which prohibits children under 14 from working more than four hours per day.

Conditions on the jermals are abysmal. The structures are flexible, to be able to absorb the shock of the sea during storms. Nausea is a common complaint. Not only do children haul in the nets, sort and boil fish, they must also cook their own meals. Children, the report says, "are given little food, of poor quality" and no variety to speak of. Nearly every meal consists of rice with fish. Only once every two months are there fresh vegetables. Children are so desperate for food that they will "submit to (homo)sexual relations with one of the older workers" for extra rations. The working hours leave children chronically short of

---

GLENN PERUSEK *is a professor of political science at Albion College.* *He would like to thank Michael Bastian, Nancy Forsythe, Libby Garland and Richard Purcell for their critical suggestions and sources.*

sleep. "Worse than almost anything else is the misery caused by lack of sleep. Some foremen pour boiling water on children who inadvertently doze at their post or fail to wake promptly when summoned." There are no beds for the children on the jermals — this privilege is reserved for the foremen, often the only adults on board. Instead, children sleep on damp board floors or in makeshift shelters on the shanty roof, or on beds of brown paper.

The report found that the following are common: injuries caused by exhaustion; malaria; high blood pressure due to excessive sodium intake; vitamin deficiencies; respiratory and skin problems caused by continuous exposure to damp conditions and salt water; and jellyfish stings. Sanitary facilities on the platforms are nonexistent. Lack of clean water for showers left most children with skin irritations. Exposure to the elements, including strong seasonal winds, and long working hours, left most with coughs, dizziness, nausea.

First aid is rudimentary and insufficient, consisting only of "iodine tincture for cuts, battery acid for stings and a poultice soaked in diesel [fuel] for stomach ache." There is no emergency equipment, not even a boat. In effect, children have no way to escape the platforms, so it is not surprising that KKSP has recorded accounts of physical, verbal and sexual abuse. Investigators found that "most of the children lived in fear of drowning as they were not able to swim." Some had been bitten by sea snakes accidentally caught in the nets; others had been injured by the equipment used to lift the nets. Isolation from families led to the use of tobacco, alcohol or hashish. In addition to the physical strain and hardship caused by work on the platforms, children suffer incalculable psychological damage from isolation, separation from their families and abuse at the hands of foremen and older fishermen.

Children are sought after as jermal workers because they are more "manageable." They are less likely to protest against low wages and long working hours or the isolated conditions. Since the operations are illegal, operators use illegal labor brokers who seek out poor families. The brokers receive an average of 8,000 to 15,000 rupiahs for each child recruited. They promise children wages of 3,000 rupiahs per day — 38 cents per day — plus all the food they can eat. These are wages much higher than street children or farm laborers can earn. Yet, tellingly, the recruiters do not seek child laborers in coastal fishing villages, where conditions on the jermals are well known. Instead, children are typically migrants from inland villages or street children recruited from the bus terminal in Medan City. Investigators found that while parents sometimes knew that employment on the jermals would be hazardous to the health of their children, they seldom knew the extent of these hazards. Abject poverty and promises from the recruiters led them to let their children go. Recruiting agents promise the young boys good wages for working hard, an appealing prospect for those living in impoverished peasant families. According to Pardoen's survey, seventy percent of the boys had fathers working as plantation laborers or tenant farmers, with an average income of 37,000 rupiahs per week.[1]

The labor system on the jermals requires that the boys stay for three months at least, as they are paid only quarterly by operators. They are allowed to leave the jermal only if the operator has found a substitute. Wages are paid only after a substitute has been found. Most jermal children interviewed in Pardoen's study (74 percent) received only 10,000 rupiahs per week, or 120,000 for the three month period, the equivalent of about 17 cents per day. But there are no written contracts and a dozen conditions and exceptions that reduce even this meager sum. As much as two-thirds of the wage can be deducted for food and supplies while the child laborer is on the platform. Children are not paid until they return to dry land, and are not paid in full unless they agree to return to the jermal. Some children Higgs spoke with had worked on Sinchiacuan jermal for 18 months without a break. One 14-year-old had worked there for three years with only five months on land. Since the jermals are mostly unregistered, there are no official channels through which to press for improved working conditions, benefits, food and holidays.

When a nongovernmental organization sued jermal owners and governmental bodies for violating labor legislation in 1993, an agreement was reached between several governmental bodies, the All-Indonesia Fishermen's Association, and the All-Indonesian Workers' Union, that jermals would hire only workers over 18. But the agreement was ignored. KKSP started a pilot project to eliminate child labor on fishing platforms in 1994. Receiving funding from the International Labor Organization's International Program to Eliminate Child Labor, they sought to raise public awareness and to rescue 100 children from the platforms, especially those under 13. KKSP has unsuccessfully attempted to press legal cases against the jermal owners for kidnapping and child abuse. Jermal owners are supposed to pay the fishing authorities and the Indonesian Navy for their permits, but there appears to be no record of their doing so. Thus, KKSP suspects, the jermal owners are paying "protection money" to the Navy and "corruption at the highest level," as Taufan Damanile, founder and chair of KKSP, puts it, allows these conditions to continue to exist.[2]

Sharp Blades

THE JERMAL FISHING BOYS are hardly an isolated case. In impoverished northeastern Brazil, children work ten hours a day, cutting, piling and carrying sisal, the raw material for rugs, rope and handbags for export. Children and their parents regularly have eyeballs punctured or fingers chopped off by the sharp blades of processing machines. "I saw a boy lose his hand," relates one child worker. "He had it one minute, and then he didn't have it the next. He was working with the [sisal shredder]. He was crying a lot, and he was bleeding — on his clothes, on the ground."

In northeastern Brazil, the paucity of decent-paying jobs for parents compels children to work early. Jose Francisco de Jesus, a man with eight children, lives in a tiny brick house without electricity, indoor plumbing or a telephone. Owning no livestock, he typically cannot afford pharmaceuticals for his children. Since his wages are only $7.50 per week, it is necessary for the children to work, as well. They each earn up to $1.50 per week.

For the family, under present circumstances, child labor is necessary for survival. De Jesus is grateful to the sisal farm owner. "If my children didn't work," he says, "we would have to go hungry." In de Jesus' village, Povoado de Jose Valerio, many families live from meal to meal. In Bahia state, annual per capita income is about $140, compared to the Brazilian national average of $4,800. Unemployment exceeds 60 percent — illiteracy 70 percent.

> Most jermal children receive 10,000 rupiahs per week, the equivalent of about 17 cents per day. But there are no written contracts and a dozen conditions and exceptions that reduce even this meager sum. As much as two-thirds of the wage can be deducted for food and supplies while the child laborer is on the platform.

For much of the 1990s, Povoado de Jose Valerio's school was closed because theTeofilandia administration failed to pay teachers. Today, even many children who do attend school must do so intermittently, as their parents must put them back to work when money is scarce. Under such conditions, all of economic and cultural life is centered on survival. "The problem is lack of jobs," says the mayor of Teofilandia. "If you have industry, you can have jobs, and if people have jobs, they're able to survive."

Even though Brazil has had laws against child labor since 1891, these are regularly ignored by states, corporations and parents. In 1996, 3.3 million children, aged 7 to 14, worked. But also in that year, a new government program that pays families $12.50 to $25 a month per child who attends school regularly came into effect. The program had only 3,710 participants in 1996, but 362,000 by 2000. The program's success has helped reduce to 2.5 million the number of child workers in Brazil. Still, the director of Brazil's anti-child labor programs, Glaubert Santos, admits, "It's not a solution. We still have to make sure families have a way to earn steady income — and that means creating jobs."[3]

The ILO Report

THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM of child labor is staggering. Behind the stories of particular groups of child workers are the macrostatistics. The International Labor Organization (ILO), in concert with some governments and firms, labor organizations and nongovernmental organizations, has been engaged for more than a decade in a campaign against what they term the worst forms of child labor. Their recent report, *A Future Without Child Labor*, should be required reading for anyone interested in globalization and labor conditions.[4] The ILO carefully distinguishes "economically active" children from those engaged in "child labor." Economic activity by children that is appropriate to age, safe and consonant with a child's education, is perfectly acceptable. Once school and homework are completed, light age-appropriate work may even help children "learn to take responsibility." The ILO has no interest in abolishing "household chores, work in family undertakings" or "work undertaken as part of education." Light, part-time work, could begin at age 12 and, in general, non-hazardous work should begin no earlier than age 15, although "national social and economic circumstances" will lead different countries to establish different standards; developing countries today might set 14 as a minimum age standard. The ILO hopes to establish 16 as "the general minimum age to which countries should aspire," with hazardous work restricted to those 18 and older.

According to the ILO's definition of economic activity, some 211 million children aged 5-14 are at work. For all children under 18,352 million are economically active. But most of these children are not performing ordinary, acceptable work. Instead, fully 186 million child laborers aged 5-14 and another 59 million aged 15-17 are classed as child laborers. This means that on a world scale, one child in six is a child laborer. In the "worst forms," toil 180 million children, one in eight. Furthermore, most of the children engaged in hazardous work, 111 million, are under 15 years old. Another 59 million are 15-17. Even in the most developed economies, a significant minority of children aged 10-14 is economically active. Especially where there are large pockets of poor families in developed countries, child labor becomes part of an overall family survival strategy.

What does the ILO want to abolish? They define child labor in three general categories:

1. *Child too young for type of work*. Labor performed by persons under a minimum age specified by "national legislation, in accordance with accepted international standards." Essentially it means that children are doing work that they are too young to do, based on social standards established by national legislation *and* international standards. The ILO offers that the general minimum should be not less than 15; 16 as a target which countries should strive for; but that developing countries may wish to apply 14 as a more realistic standard. Light work "compatible with schooling" from age 12 is acceptable.

2. *Hazardous work*. "Labor that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child, known as *hazardous work*."

3. *Unconditional worst forms of child labor*. The so-called "unconditional worst forms of child labor," namely, slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, forced recruitment into military service, prostitution, pornography or other illicit activities.

Not surprisingly, the ILO estimates 70 percent of child laborers are in agriculture, often (but not always) on family farms. A significant number work in commercial agriculture. Because it involves long hours, the use of poisonous chemicals and/or dangerous equipment, the work is hazardous. In manufacturing, children tend to work in "supply chains producing for the domestic market" rather than directly for export-oriented industry. Still, the poverty of workers in such industries contributes directly to the need for families to send small children to work. Even a five- or six-year-old child is an economic asset who can help the family survive until next week or next month when parents' wages are too low to support children and send them to school. While the very worst forms of child labor, such as prostitution or forced recruitment into military service, are significant, they comprise relatively small numbers of the children who are at risk. The estimated 300,000 child soldiers and 1.8 million sex industry workers comprise a minority of the 8.4 million in the "unconditional worst forms of child labor," most of whom, 5.7 million, are in forced labor.

Some of the most moving passages in Karl Marx's *Capital* concern the length of the working day and the conditions of child laborers.

Poverty, Child Labor and Illiteracy

THE ILO SPEAKS OF POVERTY as "inextricably linked to child labor." But the report's authors insist that other factors play a role in giving us a full portrait of the causes for child labor. "Inadequate social protection coupled with under-resourced, poor-quality education systems play a large part in perpetuating child labor."

That's pretty clear: Poverty, bad schools and a lack of social protection lead the most vulnerable, children, into work — whether in agriculture, fishing or other primary industries — or in manufacturing or "service" industries, a particularly pernicious category when we are speaking of children, as it includes domestic work but also illegal activities such as drug trafficking or prostitution. A poverty cycle exists, where children born into abysmal poverty are forced by circumstances to work too young, which is directly detrimental to their health but indirectly also leads to inferior education — which only condemns the next generation to more or less the same situation. "It is abundantly clear that the poverty conundrum at the very heart of this problem — where poverty breeds the worst forms of child labor and the worst forms of child labor breed poverty — must be tackled head on," the report explains.

What can break this cycle? The ILO report calls for higher living standards, improved schools and effective mechanisms for monitoring child labor. That child labor is linked to poverty is "widely acknowledged and undeniable." Labor force participation rates for children 10-14 is 30-60 percent in countries with annual per capita income of $500 (US) or less [in 1987 prices]. When income rises to 501-1000 dollars, participation drops to 10-30 percent.[5] "No one would argue with the general proposition that child labor is both a result and a cause of poverty. Household poverty pushes children into the labor market to earn money to supplement family income or even to survive. Evidence is also clear that, by lowering human capital accumulation, child labor perpetuates household poverty across generations and thereby slows national economic growth and social development."[6]

The Nineteenth Century

IF THE GLOBAL PHENOMENON of child labor appears today as a ubiquitous feature of economic life, it is hardly a recent development. Some of the most moving passages in Karl Marx's *Capital* concern the length of the working day and the conditions of child laborers. We get a real sense of the nature of industrial work, of the ceaseless conflict between rapacious factory owners and generally powerless laborers, in the work's concrete and descriptively empirical chapter on the working day. Marx, we might say, sublimates his outrage at the conditions of laborers to create the systematic and rigorous understanding of the laws of motion of capitalist development.

Marx marshals myriad sources, including the observations of men of the cloth and government inspectors, in describing the manufacturing employer's "werewolf-like hunger for surplus labor." The capitalist in basic manufacturing is endlessly enterprising in extending the length of the working day.[7] Even slave-owning *conquistadors* were no more cruel.[8] Marx relies heavily upon ordinary newspaper reports and official government investigatory documents. In the lace trade, in Nottingham, England,

> children of nine or ten years are dragged from their squalid beds at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning and compelled to work for a bare subsistence until ten, eleven, or twelve at night, their limbs wearing away, their frames dwindling, their faces whitening, and their humanity absolutely sinking into a stone-like torpor, utterly horrible to contemplate . . . The system, as the Rev. Montagu Valpy describes it, is one of unmitigated slavery, socially, physically, morally and spiritually.[9]

Marx goes on to cite depositions given by children themselves, reported in documents of parliamentary inquiries. "William Wood, 9 years old, 'was 7 years 10 months old when he began to work.' He 'ran moulds' (carried ready-molded articles into the drying-room, afterwards bringing back the empty mould) from the very beginning. He came to work every day in the week at 6 a.m., and left off at about 9 p.m." Fifteen hours of work per day, six days a week, at the age of seven. Laborers in this industry, children and adults, suffered a high rate of pulmonary illnesses and short life expectancy. The hand manufacture of matches led to a form of tetanus peculiar to workers in the industry. "The manufacture of matches, on account of its unhealthiness and unpleasantness, has such a bad reputation that only the most miserable part of the working class, half-starved widows and so forth, deliver up their children to it, their 'ragged, half-starved, untaught children'." Some workers in this industry were as young as six. The working day extended from twelve to fifteen hours, including "night-labor, irregular meal-times and meals mostly taken in the workrooms themselves, pestilent with phosphorus."[10]

In *The Making of the English Working Class*, a classic of labor history, E. P. Thompson lends support to Marx's analysis. Thompson takes pains to distinguish the work of children in industrial settings from agricultural labor conducted under the supervision of parents. The apologists for child labor are indeed correct that it was not a new phenomenon associated only with industrialization. "The child was an intrinsic part of the agricultural and industrial economy before 1780, and remained so until rescued by the school." Climbing boys and ship's boys were subjected to very bad conditions. But most child laborers before the industrial revolution worked at "home or within the family economy." Fetching and carrying by very small children or work alongside parents in cotton spinning were common. "So deeply-rooted was child labor in the textile industries that these were often held up to the envy of laborers in other occupations where children could not find employment and add to the family earnings . . . "

Thompson acknowledges that conditions in farm labor, even under family supervision, could be very poor. "In agriculture, children — often ill-clothed — would work in all weathers in the fields or about the farm." But this is very different from the factory system, emphasizes Thompson. "There was some variety of employment (and monotony is peculiarly cruel to the child)." Work was "intermittent: it would follow a cycle of tasks, and even regular jobs like winding bobbins would not be required all day unless in special circumstances . . ." Children were *gradually* introduced to work, and any manufacturing work they did was "interspersed with running messages, blackberrying, fuel-gathering or play. Above all, the work was within the family economy and under parental care." It was not only the development of the factory system, but two other factors, one material, the other ideological, that contributed to the rise of child labor: First, the growth of specialization, "the increasing differentiation of economic roles," and the "break-up of the family economy"; and secondly, the "breakdown of late eighteenth century humanitarianism."[11]

The breakdown of the family, and the erosion of extended kinship ties, had been underway since at least the fifteenth century. The demise of kinship networks made way for the nuclear family ideal in the heyday of industrial capitalism. Today, the unfettered market has eroded the family even further, as it has eroded all other institutions of social protection.[12] Under the piece rate system children came to be employed in "monotonous application for ten, twelve or more hours" per day. "The crime of the factory system was to inherit the worst features of the domestic system in a context which had none of the domestic compensations: 'it systematized child labor, pauper and free, and exploited it with persistent brutality . . .'"[13] Common was a working day of 12 to 16 hours for children, "in the last hours of which children were crying or falling asleep on their feet, their hands bleeding from the friction of the yarn in 'piecing', even their parents cuffing them to keep them awake, while the overlookers patrolled with the strap. In the country mills dependent upon waterpower, night work or days of fourteen and sixteen hours were common when they were 'thronged'."

While some clergy apologized for the factory system, others joined the ten-hour movement.

Under circumstances of great poverty, working class parents, then as now, had to view their children as economic resources. Many industrialists surely saw them that way. "The mixture of terror and of fatalism of the children comes through in the laconic reports. An eight-year-old girl, employed for thirteen hours a 'day' to open and close traps: 'I have to trap without a light, and I'm scared . . . Sometimes I sing when I've light, but not in the dark; I dare not sing then.'"

Masters and Laborers Alike

CONFLICTS OVER CHILD LABOR were necessarily played out in the churches. Some owners were reputed hypocritically to insist that masters and laborers alike attend church, even after the week-long abuse of child laborers, which might end only "five minutes before midnight on the Saturday" and attendance at Sunday school was enforced. While some clergy apologized for the factory system, others joined the ten-hour movement. One "old Methodist lay preacher" preached consistently against the factory, and was repayed for his efforts when "the local Methodist mill-owner at Mytholmroyd always locked the chapel when it was his turn to preach."[14]

Under the growing capitalist economy, labor power was being transformed into a commodity for sale in the marketplace. Land, too, became commodified. In the view of Karl Polanyi, to the extent that markets are free to dispose of humans and the natural surroundings, this entails nothing less than the "demolition of society." Labor power cannot be stored, used indiscriminately, or left idle without profoundly affecting the people attached to it.

> Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as the victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime and starvation. Nature would be reduced to its elements, neighborhoods and landscapes defiled, rivers polluted, military safety jeopardized, the power to produce food and raw materials destroyed. Finally, the market administration of purchasing power would periodically liquidate business enterprise, for shortages and surfeits of money would prove as disastrous to business as floods and droughts in primitive society.

Industrialization, the application of increasingly complicated machines to the production process, drew land, labor and money inexorably into the market system. The factory system above all else transformed human society because it intensified the process of commodification of labor. "All along the line, human society had become an accessory of the economic system." Polanyi argues persuasively that the creation of a labor market in England necessitated the "wholesale destruction of the traditional fabric of society."[15]

It also immediately called into existence countermovements for self-protection. Indeed, the freeing of the labor market, through the Poor Law

Reform of 1834, turned intellectuals and social reformers to the question of the condition of the community. As the nineteenth century progressed, two great social movements contended. One was the forward momentum of the principle of economic liberalism, seeking to establish the self-regulating market. This was countered by movements for social protection, seeking to preserve humanity and nature, and productive organization itself from the vagaries of the market, through the establishment of protective legislation, restrictive associations and other interventions.

Long Cycles

CHILD LABOR LEADS TO A continuing cycle of poverty, even in countries undergoing a process of economic development. At an adequate income level, parents hardly wish to hold children back from education and advancement. It is abject poverty that forces parents to view their children as economic resources in the struggle for survival. But children who labor full-time (or more) for subsistence wages are permanently closed out of the possibility of educating themselves for skilled work. Thus poverty continues generation after generation.

The social movements which succeeded in placing such issues on national and international agendas for change have taken a long time to gestate. They are often politically confused, complicated webs drawing together a myriad of different interests, aiming at unattained goals but achieving results nevertheless. The experience of today's developed countries, as they were developing, contains lessons for social movements, antiglobalization activists and children's advocates. In the United States, for instance, child labor was uncontroversial in the colonial period, as children worked on family farms or would enter into trade apprenticeships between ages 10 and 14. The rise of the factory system in the nineteenth century led to widespread employment of children as cheap laborers. Educational reformers in the mid-nineteenth century pressed for legislation that would establish wage minimums and school attendance requirements. These efforts at the social protection of children were stymied by the influx of southern and eastern European immigrants, the patchwork quality of American state legislation and the powerful interests who sought, for economic reasons, to confine the protective legislation. Child labor grew such that by 1900, 18 per-

Economic Activity and Child Labor, 2000

	5 - 14 years old		15 - 17 years old		TOTAL	
	number (millions)	% age group	number (millions)	% age group	number (millions)	% age group
Econ. active children	211	18	141	42	352	23
of which: Child laborers	186	16	59	18	246	16
of which: Children in Worst Forms	—	—	—	—	179	12
Children in hazardous work	111	9	59	18	170	11
Children in Unconditional Worst Forms	—	—	—	—	8	0.5

SOURCES: ILO estimates for 2000 and *World Population Prospects: The Sex and Age Distribution of the World Population* (New York: United Nations, 2001).

cent of 10-15 year olds — the official figure of 1.75 million — were employed. One-quarter of southern cotton mill employees were under 15; half of these children were under 12.

The National Child Labor Committee was organized in 1904 to address the problem. Along with numerous state child labor groups, the movement "pioneered the techniques of mass political action, including investigations by experts, the widespread use of photography to dramatize the poor conditions of children at work, pamphlets, leaflets and mass mailings to reach the public, and sophisticated lobbying." Still, the political mood was such that little progress could be made. When Congress passed federal child labor laws in 1916 and 1918, they were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Child labor opponents managed to press for Congressional passage of a constitutional amendment authorizing federal child labor legislation in 1924; church groups and farm organizations prevented ratification.

Only under the New Deal was lasting progress finally achieved. The codes of the National Industrial Recovery Act sought to reduce child labor, but the codes as a whole were struck down as unconstitutional. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 for the first time established national minimum wage and maximum hour standards, and established limitations on child labor. Now children under 16 were effectively prohibited from manufacturing and mining employment.[16] The political mood had of course changed, now making such legislation possible. The technical-economic situation had changed, as well — the mechanization of jobs diminished the usefulness of unskilled child laborers. But the decades-long work of children's advocates was indispensable to the passage of any protective legislation at all.

The jermal children and their millions of brothers and sisters toil daily under the weight of grinding poverty. Their futures are bleak so long as subsistence is bought at the price of foregone education. Activists against poverty, globalization and sweatshops are working to awaken world consciousness to their plight. While this movement has been temporarily sidelined by the political reaction to September 11, perseverant and patient activism is indicated. In the coming decades, world-level labor standards, including a global minimum wage, comparable to the national legislation that elevated children out of sweatshop work in the early twentieth century, can be made central to the global social justice agenda.

NOTES

1. At the exchange rate of 8,000 rupiahs to $1, the tenant farmer income of 37,000 rupiahs was $4.63 per week. This was the exchange rate at the end of 1998; today the rupiah is somewhat weaker, at 8470 to the dollar in late August 2003. See *The Economist*, August 30, 2003, p. 74.

2. The description of the jermal laborers draws from the excellent article by David Higgs, "The Fisher Boys of Sumatra," *Independent* (London), November 28, 1998, pp. 21-2. See also Sutrisno R. Pardoen and associates, *Children in Hazardous Work in the Informal Sector in Indonesia* (Jakarta: International Labor Organisation, 1996), pp. 37-45; Ben White and Indrasari Tjandraningsih, *Child Workers in Indonesia* (Bandung: AKATIGA, March 1998), pp. 52-56; and www.antislavery.org.

3. Stephen Buckley, "Heavy burdens of the littlest laborers," *Guardian Weekly*, March 30-April 5, 2000, p. 33. The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics released a study in April, 2003, showing that of the more than 5.5 million child laborers in the country, 49 percent received no remuneration at all. Francisco Fausto, president of the Supreme Tribunal on Labor, responded that the survey "demonstrates the necessity for greater involvement by the Minister of Labor . . . the exploitation of children for labor is as grave as slave labor, in that both of them strike at human nature." Carmen Gentile, "Study: Brazil's Child Laborers Exceed 5.5M," *United Press International*, April 16, 2003.

4. *A Future Without Child Labor*, International Labor Conference, 90th Session 2002, Report I (B) (Geneva: International Labor Office, 2002).

5. P. Fallon and Z. Tzannatos, *Child Labor: Issues and direction for the World Bank* (Washington: World Bank, 1998). The ILO notes that "the decline in the labor force participation of children is less marked as GDP rises in more affluent countries." See *Future*, p. 46 and note 122.

6. *Future*, 46. See R. Galli, *The economic impact of child labor* (Geneva: International Institute for Labor Studies, 2001), p. 21.

7. "At the beginning of June 1836," Marx writes in a footnote, "information reached the magistrates of Dewsbury (Yorkshire) that the owners of eight large mills in the neighborhood of Batley had violated the Factory Act. Some of these gentlemen were accused of having kept five boys between 12 and 15 years of age at work from 6 a.m. on Friday to 4 p.m. on the following Saturday, not allowing them any respite except for meals and one hour for sleep at midnight. And these children had to do this ceaseless labor of 30 hours in the 'shoddy-hole,' the name for the hole where the wool-

len rags are pulled to pieces, and where a dense atmosphere of dust, shreds, etc. forces even the adult worker to cover his mouth continually with handkerchiefs for the protection of his lungs! The accused gentlemen affirmed . . . that they had, in their great compassion for the unhappy children, allowed them four hours for sleep, but the obstinate children absolutely would not go to bed." They were fined £20. See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), pp. 351-3.

8. "The cupidity of mill-owners whose cruelties in the pursuit of gain have hardly been exceeded by those perpetrated by the Spaniards in the conquest of America in the pursuit of gold," concludes John Wade, *History of the Middle and Working Classes* (1835), quoted in Marx, *Capital*, p. 353n.

9. Marx, *Capital*, pp. 353-4, quoting a report in the *Daily Telegraph*, January 17, 1860. The report continues, probably summarizing the view of Rev. Valpy: "What can be thought of a town which holds a public meeting to petition that the period of labor for men shall be diminished to eighteen hours a day? . . . We declaim against the Virginian and Carolinian cotton-planters. Is their black-market, their lash and their barter of human flesh more detestable than this slow sacrifice of humanity which takes place in order that veils and collars may be fabricated for the benefit of capitalists?"

10. Marx, *Capital*, p. 356, citing *Chidren's Employment Commission*, p. liv.

11. See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), p. 332-4; and M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), chapter five.

12. See Mary Ann Glendon, *The New Family and the New Property* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1981); Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

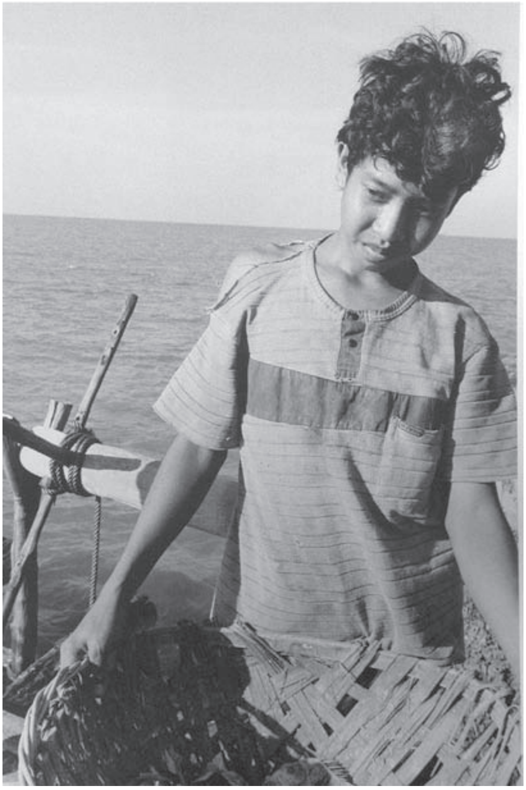
13. Thompson, *Making*, 335, citing H. L. Beales, *The Industrial Revolution* (1928).

14. Thompson, *Making*, pp. 334, 338 and 346.

15. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1944), p. 73, 75 and 77.

16. Irwin Yellowitz, "Child Labor," in Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, eds., *The Reader's Companion to American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), pp. 166-7.

Young mill workers in Gastonia, North Carolina, 1908. Photograph from Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade against Child Labor (1994) *by Russell Freedman* .



A fishing platform worker in Sumatra, Indonesia, 1990s and a construction worker in Kathmandu, Nepal, 1990s. Both photographs by David Parker from Stolen Dreams: Portraits of Working Children *(1998), by David Parker with Lee Enger and Robert Conrow.*

The International Labor Movement Between Geneva, Brussels, Seattle, Porto Alegre and Utopia

PETER WATERMAN

OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS the International Transportworkers Federation (ITF) has been running an international summer school as part of its global solidarity program. In the announcement for the school that took place in Canada in August 2003, a session was planned on "New Strategic Alliances between Trade Unions and the Social Movement: Panel Discussion with Representatives of the 'Social Movements'." This odd formulation is encouraging because of its implicit recognition that

- trade unions do not lead this movement (as they could certainly claim at the previous turn of century);
- the "social movement" exists separate from trade union organization;
- strategic alliances are necessary between these two parties

The next step, surely, would be to remove the inverted commas from the social movement, and for the unions to move from a strategic *alliance* to a close *articulation* with such — for the unions to see themselves as an intimate if autonomous part of the new social movements.

What one might expect from the latest wave of international labor studies is that they would go deeper than the ITF's formulations.* So this article is concerned both with the varied international labor responses to globalization, and with the new wave of international labor studies that are, in their different ways, trying to understand labor in relation to the new movements.

In the title to this somewhat eclectic paper: *Geneva* stands for the International Labor Organization; *Brussels* stands for the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and a trade union internationalism based on social democratic values and a policy of social partnership; *Seattle* stands for the — prematurely celebrated? — marriage of national teamsters and global turtles, and *Porto Alegre* for the self-named global justice and solidarity movement.

And *Utopia*? Utopia means both "good place" and "nowhere" — a good place that does not yet exist. Or which has never existed. This is the place/space for consideration of emancipatory international labor studies (or EILS, a concept that, I think, has previously lacked not only an acronym but even a name).

In reviewing such varied material, I propose

PETER WATERMAN *is the author of* Globalization, Social Movements and the New Internationalisms *(2001). He is a senior research associate at the Institute of Social Science in the Hague, the Netherlands.*

*This essay reviews the following titles: Marc Edelman, "Toward An Anthropology Of Some New Internationalisms: Small Farmers In Global Resistance Movements," in *Focal: European Journal of Anthropology*, no. 40 (2002); Jeffrey Harrod and Robert O'Brien, eds., *Global Unions? Theory and Strategy of Organized Labor in the Global Political Economy*. London: Routledge, 2002; Chris Harman, "The Workers of the World," *International Socialism*, no. 96 (2002); Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life*. London: Penguin, 2002; Rhys Jenkins, Ruth Pearson and Gill Seyfang, *Corporate Responsibility and Labor Rights,* 2002; A.V. Jose, ed., *Organized Labor in the 21st Century*. Geneva: International Institute for Labor Studies, 2002; Neville Kirk, *Comrades and Cousins: Globalization, Workers and Labor Movements in Britain, the USA and Australia from the 1880s to 1914.* London: Merlin Press, 2003; Ronaldo Munck, *Globalization and Labor: A New "Great Transformation"?* London: Zed Press. 2002; and Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, eds., *Socialist Register 2001: Working Classes: Global Realities*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.

to work my way from Geneva to Porto Alegre. And to end up in, or at least with, utopia. The procedure is arbitrary, but it may be therefore considered consistent with the eclecticism of the collection. The conclusion returns to the notion of an emancipatory labor studies.

Geneva

Organized Labor in the 21st Century is published by the research institute of the ILO and, despite a full-color cover of demonstrating Korean workers (of the old corporatist union center in Korea, but in which the color red predominates), it nonetheless reproduces the founding parameters of the ILO: social partnership, social welfare, collective bargaining and the nation-state. It also reproduces the post-1945 developmentalism of the ILO, with Jose's own introduction "drawing lessons" for what are quaintly called developing countries.

The book contains extensive case studies on 10 very different countries, ranging from Japan and Sweden at the beginning to Niger and South Africa at the end. As a database on such countries in the present conjuncture it may have some value. But, bearing in mind that the work is concerned with "trade union responses to globalization," it becomes clear that the understanding of such responses, by either the ILO or the editor, is *national*. Any union response *above, below or beyond* this decreasingly effective (because decreasingly central) level or arena, finds only marginal reference.

Given the manner in which neo-liberal globalization has been undermining both the institutional and ideological bases of contemporary industrial relations, this book comes over less as a vision of the future than a monument to the past. The ILO itself, like the United Nations, has been marginalized by neo-liberal globalization in general and international financial institutions in particular (see Harrod and O'Brien below). One must, therefore, assume that the institution that sponsored the book is hoping that neo-liberalism will blow over, leaving the national or regional departments of labor, employers associations and unions — and the inter-state ILO — to resume the national/regional, bipartite/tripartite, industrial relations of the past. Only the contribution on South Africa threatens to break out of the iron cage of twentieth century industrial-relations-think. It raises the question of whether South African unions are not moving toward a "global social movement unionism." The notion is not, however, taken any further.

Jenkins, Pearson and Seyfang's *Corporate Responsibility and Labor Rights* lies in the territory between Geneva and Brussels, which is also the region of attempts to recreate social partnership for the era of globalization. It does, by this token, however, enter the new terrain of labor's NGO support groups, or transnational advocacy networks. These could be considered to hover around Brussels, Geneva and even Washington. This is an informative collection, on a new area of concern, that of voluntary "codes of conduct," of "corporate responsibility," of "ethical trade," of "framework agreements," of "monitoring" in relation to such, and of union and NGO action here. This destatification of labor relations represents a sea-change in global capitalist labor-control strategy. I have no doubt that labor and citizen movements must enter this area and energetically dispute it. My doubts are about *how* to do this while simultaneously building international labor consciousness, autonomy and power.

As the editors make clear, the new terrain has been created in response to the incapacity or unwillingness of the state, under globalization, to play the role assigned to it in the past. Given the increasing difficulty in using the state, law and the ILO itself, to impose, umpire or even suggest solutions to labor conflicts worldwide, and given the rise of multiple expressions of citizen discontent with uncontrolled corporations and trade, there has appeared this new front — that of an "unmediated" struggle between corporations on the one hand and labor/citizens/consumers on the other.

This virgin territory was largely opened up while the international unions were still fixated on the nation-state and the ILO for the solution to labor's global woes. It was not, therefore — and unlike even the ILO at its foundation — created as a result of a previous wave of labor protest, union demands and social revolution. And this means that the language here spoken is often that of 'stakeholder interest."

These weasel words are meant to frame and justify the creation of some new kind of voluntary global social partnership between capital and its agents, labor and its transnational advocacy networks. This global neo-pluralist understanding has been acceptable to the NGOs at a moment marked by serious marginalization of the unions and of extensive openings for NGOs. It has been blessed by the United Nations, with a global compact between the corporations, unions and the NGOs — criticized even by liberal internationalists as opening the UN door to transnational corporations. The global unions themselves have predictably grasped at this new straw, just as they have those of voluntary "Codes of Conduct," and "Framework Agreements" between international trade secretariats and union-friendly corporations. A dependent, defensive, institutional self-interest marks its response:

> Trade unions appreciated the stakeholder concept to a point. This point was where the idea of "business and stakeholders" began to replace the notion of social partners and social dialogue...Trade unions are the human side of industry as well as an important part of civil society. Kofi Annan understood this dual nature of trade unions when, at a high level meeting on the global compact in July 2000, he said "labor unions can mobilize the workforce — for after all, companies are not composed of their executives." (Jenkins, Pearson and Seyfang)

The editors of this collection are more cautious, even sceptical about, this new terrain. They nonetheless conclude hopefully, but in a language that suggests their acceptance of the hegemonic discourse (of the past as well as the present):

> In the absence of universally agreed commitments by states and corporations to meeting the needs and demands of labor — that they are able to work for a fair reward, with dignity, in a context where their ongoing entitlements as citizens are supported by the state and by private corporations — codes may well represent an important framework both for achieving workplace justice and for extending the global responsibilities of all major stakeholders beyond the moment of production of goods and services to the production and reproduction of labor power in the global economy.

While many of the NGO campaign voices within the book — and they are the majority here — have a broader and more activist orientation to this new area, one seeks in vain for a theoretical approach, an ethical position, a reframing of the matter in relation to union strategy, social movement theory or some emancipatory vision. And while the two first chapters provide a certain orientation to the terrain, I don't think they even begin to suggest how workers might, to paraphrase Marx, bring their hides to this market without receiving a hiding. There is, for example, no serious theoretical/strategic reflection here on the relationship between these new mediators and the people they are thus "representing." Or between advocacy/mediation on the one hand and any autonomous collective public self-expression by those being so represented.

> The new terrain has been created in response to the incapacity or unwillingness of the state, under globalization, to play the role assigned to it in the past.

So what we are left with is a series of informative and thought-provoking chapters, some themselves armed with more of a mobilizing orientation — as with Women Working Worldwide. My general reaction, after reading this book, however, is to signal, as did Roman map-makers of uncharted terrains in Africa: *Hic Sunt Leones.* (Here Are Lions — or, if in Scotland, *Vulpes*). Perhaps another Roman warning needs posting here: *Caveat Emptor* (buyer beware).

Unlike a number of the books mentioned below, there is in this one no awareness of a global justice movement that has itself been reframing such issues within a more holistic, more global campaign against corporate capitalism (capitalism being a word missing from the index).

Brussels

The title of Jeffrey Harrod and Robert O'Brien's *Global Unions? Theory and Strategy of Organized Labor in the Global Political Economy* refers to "global unions," "organized workers" and "international political economy" — all terms familiar to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The ICFTU has recently tried to co-ordinate like-minded international unions under the rubric of Global Unions (see bibliography). This does not mean that the book is addressed to such, nor that it was produced as a service to the existing internationals. On the contrary, much of what it has to say points precisely to the crisis of these and the difficulty of developing some kind of "progressive internationalism."

> A new understanding of growing international social protest under globalization surely cannot occur within the framework of disciplines created for academic purposes.

What the book shares with the ICFTU/Global Unions approach is an assumption of the centrality of the traditional *union* form to *labor* internationals and internationalism, and a search for solutions without social transformation. The introduction thus states that it is "important to take a look at the current experience and policies of unions without a pre-determined yardstick by which to measure...whether their actions further the working class, enhance the possibility of systemic transformation or directly support a society-wide norm of social justice." There is here, therefore, both the hypothetical implication that — to paraphrase a contemporary social movement slogan — "another international labor studies is possible," and a decision to avoid such. The road *not* taken is that which would require direct, rather than indirect, consideration of nonunionized/nonunionizable labor (a massive and growing majority of workers under globalization), whose "resistance to neoliberal globalization is a significant feature of labor unrest." I will return to this with Edelman below.

Insofar, however, as both the labor internationals and the collection are confronting — and seeking humane and democratic alternatives for labor — to neo-liberalism and what has been called the "cancer stage of capitalism," both the internationals and the collection require to be taken seriously. The book *should* be since it is a serious collection, with a wide-ranging and theoretically-informed introduction that raises challenging political, theoretical and academic issues. And, it must be said that, unlike most such international labor collections, this one is of a uniformly high quality.

At the cost of ignoring many contributions, and of homogenizing others, I will concentrate on arguments concerning the problematic present and possible future of union internationalism. These are the chapters by Mine Eder on the contradictions and prospects of union internationalism, Ian Robinson on successive international economic strategies of U.S. and Canadian unions, Rorden Wilkinson on the International Labor Organization, Robert O'Brien on global labor standards, Dan Gallin on labor as a global social force and Rob Lambert on a global social movement unionism.

The contradictions, or obstacles, it must be said, appear profound indeed, given that union responses have been largely corporatist, national and defensive. While it is recognized that neo-liberal globalization is also a powerful provocation to labor internationalism, the "most promising prospects" — those of solidarity networks beyond the unions — are here reduced to tokens.

The successive international economic strategies of the North American union centers have been subordinated in the past — even when resisting them — to liberal ideologies of trade. Recent Canadian or U.S. union embrace of an "international social dimension" comes over as in large part an enlightened protectionism. Although their international strategies may be changing, the claim that the current policies of the U.S. and Canadian unions are "morally defensible and intellectually coherent" appears overstated for strategies that are, basically, determined nationally, if not nationalistically.

The ILO, and the global labor standards that it has been championing, are revealed as being, respectively, seriously undermined and unlikely of achievement. Once again the alternatives proposed hardly meet the challenges raised.

The global social force labor supposedly represents a potential lying in the interstices of a deplorable present and a desirable future. This future is, however, a projection of the powerful European social-democratic tradition from the national-industrial stage of capitalist development. Such a future, it is argued, requires the re-invention of this tradition, and a consequently profound transformation of the inter/national unions themselves. A key necessity is the articulation of the unions with the wider contemporary social movement, seen as having common values and overlapping aims. The leadership of this effort is reserved (as it is by Marxists) for the organized working class: "The trade union movement alone can play this role...It remains...the only universal and democratically organized movement at world level, with an unequalled capacity for resistance." This is a mantra chanted by labor-oriented revolutionary socialists (see, for example, Chris Harman's essay on the "Workers of the World") and, like any mantra worthy of the name, requires no evidence or argument. Indeed, it is an alternative to such. Here, as elsewhere in the book, there are deep-rooted assumptions that surely require questioning, even surpassing, if the emancipatory potential is to be released.

A *global social movement unionism* is presented as the best of four possible answers to the trade unions" globalization crisis, the others being "strategic," "authoritarian" and "political" unionism. The concept of a global social movement unionism is here evoked, rather than conceptualized, as a form surpassing subordination to capital, the state and to political parties — one that creates long-term alliances with social movements, and that extends its interests and field of activities to "civil society." The critique, here, of the various failed or failing union models carries more conviction than the promotion of this fourth one. The case meant to represent 'social movement unionism" is the KMU of the Philippines. But this was, in fact, the union front of the (Maoist) Communist Party of the Philippines, and it has followed the splits and decline of the latter. There is an argument to be made for a global social movement unionism but this surely requires reference to more than one or two problematic cases, to make more than passing reference to the global justice and solidarity movement and to be based on a more-systematic conceptualization.

Occasional reference, in this collection, to what I would call the internationalism of labor's others, to singular extra-union labor solidarity networks or actions, or to particular countries/moments (here South Korea, South Africa, Brazil), do not carry sufficient weight to transform a series of eminently relevant and sobering accounts into even the outlines of an alternative.

Finally, I want to return to the academic or theoretical parameters of the work. The introductory argument is that the parameters for the study of international labor are set by (international) political economy. IPE certainly allows for a widening of the past academic parameters of international labor studies. But a new understanding of growing international social protest under globalization surely cannot occur within the framework of disciplines created for academic purposes (under determined political-economic circumstances?) rather than for socially emancipatory ones. To the Harrod arguments concerning the academic role of international labor studies in relationship to various old or even new disciplines, there needs — for a new kind of labor studies — to be added the relationship of the socially-committed international labor researcher to her discipline and to the social movements under consideration.

Ronaldo Munck's *Globalization and Labor* is an excellent little work, just over 200 pages, and demonstrates, yet again, the author to be a master of the stimulating synthesis. In a backcover puff on the book I say it will be a basic reference work for this decade, relevant to organizers and educators, students and academics, and that it is going to be at the center of debate on international labor and labor internationalism. While a web search reveals that the book has been acquired by academic libraries in many parts of the world, I have so far been unable to find one such review — never mind a debate. So it looks as if I may have to start this.

The eight chapters present a Polanyian approach to the problem of globalization and labor; the golden era of Western capitalism; the globalization era and debate; northern workers; southern workers; the old internationalism; the new internationalism; and results and prospects.

"Polanyi?" I hear you cry, *"Who he?"* Munck tells us that Karl Polanyi, a brilliant critical social theorist of Central European origin, published in 1944 an innovatory but neglected work on the history of capitalism. Crucially, it dealt with the "double movement" within capitalism historically. This is between market domination of society and a social movement (of labor) to regulate this, thus re-embedding the market in society. Munck not only considers that what we see under neo-liberal globalization echoes Polanyi's first movement but that what we both need, and can see some evidence of, is the reappearance of the second movement. This is exemplified, according to Munck, in the international trade union struggle for a "social clause" in trade agreements. We are here only on page five and I already have series of further questions, objections or challenges.

Polanyi, to start with, is hardly neglected. A Google search on "Karl Polanyi 2003" yields 3000 entries. Karl Polanyi has an institute dedicated to his name, with regular international conferences. His growing popularity is due to the theoretical/moral/political underlay he provided for the "golden era" of Western capitalism. Or, rather, since we are talking about a revival of interest, the multifaceted justification Polanyi thus provides for an analogous second movement today. This bring us to the "social clause."

"Social clause?" I hear you cry, *"What's that?"* This is, or was, the politically-contradictory and morally-ambiguous union strategy of trying to obtain and impose international labor standards through the World Trade Organization (i.e. the new interstate organization responsible for undermining and destroying worker jobs and labor rights). This was itself the culmination of a campaign begun 15-20 years earlier by the ICFTU and the campaign is quite revealing of its attempts to obtain things *for*, rather than *with*, workers, strikes, demonstrations and all that historical "second movement" stuff. There is a long, complex and shabby story here, and it is thoroughly discussed elsewhere. The ICFTU spent considerable, but unpublished, amounts of money and uncountable staff hours trying — in the new millennium's most unfortunate union metaphor — "To Get a Seat in the WTO Restaurant." And then in trying to export this McDonaldized product to those in the South, whom the North, in traditional colonial missionary style, presumed to be ignorant of their own best interests. More money was then spent on the evaluation of this problematic export strategy. Today this pathetic piece of westerncentric paternalism is being quietly interred by the ICFTU. There has been no announcement of death, no funeral. But the prolonged burial process may be suggested by citations of the "social clause" on the ICFTU website:

1998	23
1999	5
2000 (Congress year)	13
2001	1
2002	0
2003 (till November)	1

So much for the "what." Before dealing with why it gets key attention in Munck, I want to deal with "how much?" The answer is, a lot. There is a subsection in "Workers South," a further discussion in "New Internationalism," and up to ten mentions elsewhere. As for *why* this chronicle of a death foretold — or at least predictable — plays such a key role in Munck's book, this has to be because of his ideological investment in a Polanyian "second movement" — today implying a globalized neo-Keynesianism. In this Munck sees the ICFTU — no doubt reformed, possibly radicalized by the new social movements, and computerized — as playing a leading role:

> At an international level, the ICFTU has, significantly, recently engaged in a millennial review of its organization, capacities and strategy. Even its most fervent critics recognize that the ICFTU is changing from the Cold War, pro-imperialist, narrowly bureaucratic organization it once was...The millennial review was designed to meet precisely these challenges.

"*What Millennium Review?*" I hear you murmur. As well you might, since this idea, which certainly excited me when first mentioned in 2000, is subject to the same (Uneven) Law of Diminishing Citations as the social clause:

2000 (Congress)	12
2001	17
2002	1
2003 (till November)	1

I am afraid that here again Munck's conviction — that the institutionalized labor movement which brought us the second movement the first time, will also be the first movement the second time — has outweighed the required scepticism of the intellect. Although the one 2003 reference on the ICFTU site *does* claim that the matter will be raised at the 2004 Congress of the ICFTU, it is unlikely, on present evidence, to do more than add a few more members to the orchestra of the Titanic, one or two classes to the below-decks passengers.

Readers may now be also asking questions about this *reviewer*. If things are so bad, why does he insist this is going to be a basic reference work as well as the center of debate? Well, this is because, in addition to his excellent political-economic analyses, Munck's book well expresses the present ambiguity of the institutionalized trade union internationals and internationalisms. Like him (and his front cover photo) they show increasing awareness of the global justice and solidarity movement. Like him they want a globalized neo-Keynesianism. Like him they think the international trade unions can *lead* this movement and/or that this can be done by *alliance* with the new movement, but without transforming themselves in the light of the model of self-articulation (networking and communication) the latter offers. This depends, however, more on the continuing power of attraction exercised by the global justice movement, rather than any specific union initiative one is aware of. And the new movement is, surely, more likely to coerce capitalism into civilizing itself than a subaltern opposition focussed on bargaining fora and bargainable issues.

Seattle and Porto Alegre

MARC EDELMAN'S ARTICLE on "Toward An Anthropology Of Some New Internationalisms" belongs somewhere in the Seattle-Porto Alegre archipelago. This is because he deals with non-unionized/nonunionizable rural labor, with an international small farmer network called *Via Campesina* (peasant way), and with the kind of new internationalisms that have themselves both contributed to and been supported by the global justice and solidarity movement, as well as the World Social Forum. The rural population of the world has now dropped to under 50 percent, and the classical peasant and rural-based guerrilla movements of the past have declined since the days of Mao, Ho and Che. But half the world's population are *still* rural producers or dependent on such, they have become increasingly educated, involved both in other economic activities, and in inter/national labor migration cycles. And neo-liberalism/globalization has not only been confronting them worldwide with identical, analogous or related ills, but also provoking them to new, innovatory — and increasingly international — action.

While Edelman concentrates on Central America, where there have been particular direct stimuli to rural activism, he addresses himself also to the profoundly different circumstances of Karnataka, India, of José Bové's France and even to the apparently well-organized small farmers of the Netherlands. He also reveals a common set of aggravating and facilitating circumstances, the latter including the explosive growth of international nongovernmental organizations, of transnational advocacy networks, of UN and other regional or international conferences — many making space for or even primarily addressed to "civil society actors" or "global civil society." Such aggravations and opportunities, of course, also apply to the non-rural world, which is part of the explanation for the explosive growth of the global justice movement around the turn of the millennium. The other part has to do with the erosion or implosion of "emancipatory" — and even "protective" — states, parties, ideologies, identities and strategies in the face of neo-liberal globalization.

This collection reveals the continuing potency of a new left Marxism, prepared to confront the realities of a globalized, networked, finance and services capitalism.

Via Campesina, founded in 1993, had a number of initial advantages in its ambition to create an international small farmer network. One was its Central American origin at a time of great social ferment. The other was what it had learned from the shortcomings of an early experiment in regional cooperation which had the intention of surpassing *ongización* (NGOization) but, flooded by funding from irresponsible Northern funding agencies, then created a top-heavy and top-down body which later went into crisis. *Via Campesina* now operates from a desk in Tegucigalpa, has a part-time coordinator, affiliates varying from the KMP in the Philippines to the biggest social movement in Latin America, the innovatory landless rural labor movement. *Via Campesina* lobbies within the United Nations and the international financial institutions, but is also a regular presence, punching above its weight, within the World Social Forum and at protest events of the global justice and solidarity movement. Whatever the current success and future potential of this body, it signals the re-emergence of rural labor as a factor in international labor and social movement politics. It cannot be found in either Jose, in Harrod and O'Brien or Munck. Nor, more significantly, on the websites of the ICFTU, Global Unions or the International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers.

More important than Edelman's gloss on *Via Campesina* are the questions he raises about his own discipline, anthropology, in respect to his subject, peasant or small farmer movements. These questions are equally apposite to anyone studying international labor or other social movements. One problem is that of "multi-sitedness" — or breadth at the expense of depth. As well as that of over-identification with movements which might claim to have a privileged role in social emancipation, even if only locally. Here he argues for a distancing, not in any conventional academic sense, but in that of focussing on the wider field within which the movement operates, and over which it makes claims. Edelman does not relate the rise of small-farmer movements to the crisis of trade-union movements (there have been major tensions at local and national level in Brazil). But those interested in advancing emancipatory international labor studies are going to have to do this.

The Socialist Register under review has its origins in Canada, with which both editors and a number of contributors are connected. And the book should be understood as situated within that part of the emancipation archipelago closest to the United States. In so far as the previous issue of the *Socialist Register* was actually *on* utopias, it should also be understood as being as being also fairly close to this continent also. The collection reveals the continuing potency of a new left Marxism, prepared to confront the realities of a globalized, networked, finance and services capitalism. It is against these and other transformations that the international working classes are examined.

Between the editorial preface and the final reflections, this ambitious, substantial (392 pages) and original collection has two essays on the new e-workers (one UK: one U.S., one on low e-workers; one on high ones), one on the peasantry, one on the North/South division among workers, two on India (one on unorganized workers, one on women among such) and country overviews of South Africa, west Europe, Russia, Iran, Brazil and east Asia. The volume also addresses labor and democracy, Islam, working class self-activity, feminism in the labor movement and internationalism and the Zapatistas. This is, unfortunately, the only one on internationalism, though several chapters mention, in passing, the institutionalized traditional union internationals.

Panitch and Leys makes a very nice contrast to Harrod and O'Brien, and with Munck. Where it varies from both would be in its explicit Marxist sympathies, its commitment to, on the one hand, the "other" working classes, and on the other to the global justice movement. It should be remembered that Vancouver, in the west of Canada, is close to Seattle, that Quebec, in the east, was a site of one major antiglobalization protest. And that Canada itself has seen a major campaign against U.S.-sponsored "free trade" agreements, a campaign that developed from a national-protectionist to at least a "progressive internationalist" one, reaching first Mexico then the rest of Latin America. The question is whether all these resources are sufficient to enable the editors to draw together even the evidence and ideas they have collected on this complex class, divided into at least two worlds (North and South), and displaying the structural, historical and cultural differences of "Women in India's Informal Sector," "Chinese Workers in New York," "West European Trade Unionism" and "The Working Class and the Islamic State in Iran." This heavy task falls to the Leo Panitch in his final "Reflections on a Strategy for Labor."

Panitch's title is borrowed from a work of Andre Gorz from the 1960s, when the new left was new. Gorz's later work (1999), the time of the even newer left, is surely more relevant to the collection. The 1999 work concentrates on the necessity for a radical new understanding of work under capitalism, and for any new labor movement to understand and address all its forms (well represented in Panitch and Leys). Insofar as Gorz here was proposing a strategy, it was for "the liberation of time from work." Panitch's own "key, long-term condition for an alternative to globalization is democratic investment control within each state."

As measured against "the liberation of time from work," this comes over as not only failing the slogan test (would it look good on a banner?) but as again looking back toward a nationally-defined solution to labor's global problems. True, Panitch lays stress on the "democratic" here. True, he adds: "refounding, reorganizing and democratizing the labor movement itself"; a non-party but "structured movement," capable of surpassing the existing anticorporate coalition; and, finally, "a new internationalism." Despite its gestures toward learning from Brazil and South Africa, and of open discussion about each other's weaknesses and failings, Panitch's argument remains hostage to the nationalist internationalisms of the past. The problem here is not so much that Panitch reproduces, as he himself admits, the northern focus of Gorz. It is that he prioritises and thus fetishizes the state-national, as the necessary place, space and identity for the emancipation of labor and society, at a time in which this scale or identity is being relativized by the local, the regional, the global and the cyberspatial.

The resistance of this Marxism to what is being increasingly recognized as a new "global solidarity," and which is both powered by and modelled on cyberspace, is revealed in the disappointing exchange, in this issue of the *Socialist Register*, on "Virtual Chiapas." The exchange falls outside the focus on the working class, since it is a follow-up to an article in the "utopias" issue of the annual. It is disappointing because of its failure to place the Chiapas case within any general understanding of the relationship between human emancipation, international solidarity and cyberspace. As I said of this issue when raised in the previous *Socialist Register*: "International solidarity with Chiapas has been heavily marked by the *old* Northern left myth of the revolutionary savage and an *old* left syndrome of self-subordination to such. That this syndrome can be reproduced or even reinforced by the web may be disappointing but should not be surprising to those who know: that media means manipulation (or, if you prefer a kinder word, mediation); how the web works for dominant forces; and how deep the present crisis of the left is internationally."

Utopia

IN RELATION TO INTERNATIONAL LABOR studies, utopia is connected, at least in my mind, with the greatest of antiutopian utopians, Karl Marx. And therefore with Marx*ism*, as a counter-hegemonic orientation to international labor studies — and, of course, internationalism (previously known as "cosmopolitanism"). This has one foot firmly placed in industrial capitalism and the other just as firmly in a socialist future. Put more broadly and dramatically, Marxism is "an unusual, perhaps unique, combination of...science, critique, vision and recipe for revolution...with each of these qualities contributing to and feeding off the others." (Bertell Ollman, 2003) This is a strong claim. It gives Marxism the aura of established truth, infinite both in space and time, of representing both the extent and limits of social science and social transformation — which, indeed, are here identical. My inclination, however, would be to rather see this claim as itself a utopian vision. If, moreover, we consider Ollman's Marxism-as-vision to exist within a *history* of emancipatory thought and struggle, this might allow us to consider, whether or not Marxism(s) are today promoting the emancipation of labor, and if not, whether international labor studies need also emancipating from Marxism.

In "The World Working Class" Chris Harman, a leading figure in the British Socialist Workers Party, has produced a major analysis of the world's working class, intended to argue the "classical" and "simple" Marxist vision that the "growth of capitalism was necessarily accompanied by the growth of the class it exploited, the working class and this would be at the center of the revolt against the system." I am not going to here go into an analysis of Harman's own analysis, leaving this to people better with statistics than I am. I would, however, suggest that his figures, or use of figures, exists in a certain tension with those of other researchers sympathetic to unionism and who, simultaneously, are *not* those with whom Harman is here primarily concerned. The targets here are various post-Marxists and poststructuralists who have been questioning such a classical and simple Marxism as he offers. Harman sets out on a long march through the statistics to demonstrate that announcements of the death of the proletariat have been much exaggerated, and that the world's working class is bigger, absolutely and relatively, than ever. He says that it is therefore an error to see

> movements of disparate social groups as "social subjects," capable of bringing about a transformation of society. They are not. Because their base is not centered in collective organization rooted in production, they cannot challenge the control over that production which is central to ruling class power.

He ends by urging the necessity for the new global solidarity movement to "find ways to connect with the great mass of ordinary workers," who would then, presumably, lead the disparate anticapitalist movement in a clearly socialist direction.

Harman's account deals primarily with workers in their existence as a "proletariat" (or as related to such), rather than as a "working class." This means in their existence for capital rather than their existence for themselves (even more for the emancipation of humankind). The assumption that one can read off working-class consciousness, desire and capacity from structural position is, indeed, a "classical" reading of Marxism, but represents a political-economic-determinist rather than a movement-focused, historical and dialectical reading. As one recent critic of socialist — and feminist — determinism puts it of the Chinese women workers in her study, they

> are not mere passive receptacles for patriarchal and capitalist ideologies. They engage in a contested process of actively defining their identities and constituting their interests as political and cultural subjects. They are shaped but not determined by the bourgeois and patriarchal "others." (Lee 1998)

Indeed, Lee even argues that her workers are agents in creating the workplace structures and processes within which they exist, survive and struggle, with at least the implication that such agency can develop itself in a postcapitalist direction.

Chris Harman mentions working class (actually trade union) behavior only in passing. And then to reveal, at least to readers, its contradictory nature (South Korea, 1990s, positive? Bombay textiles, 1980s, negative?). His assertion of working class primacy remains a theoretical assertion (past), an inevitability (future), and a strategic necessity for the global justice and solidarity movement right now. Given the problematic past and present of his proletariat/working class, given that future necessity or inevitability needs, for conviction, to be based on present evidence and argued immanence, rather than theoretical reassertion, we are left only with the strategic prescription.

Chris Harman has nothing to say about the working class (or working classes) as privileged subjects of internationalism (or, in my hopefully more contemporary phrase, "global solidarity"). However, as anyone who looks can see, it is the new global justice movement that is the vanguard of contemporary internationalism. Which may be why Harman avoids addressing the matter. In reality, of course, it is such new, "non-proletarian," "diverse," "identity" movements that have been bringing internationalism back into the union movement!

Curiously — and despite the presumed vanguard role of the working class — Harman's address is not to this class to win the leadership of the global justice movement, but to the diverse and cross-class movement to win the working class! Here the SWP's investment in the new movement wins out over traditional theory and future aspiration.

I am not, of course, trying to assert some correct, essential and eternal Marx against Harman's "classical and simple" one. We are now living in a post-classical, post-simple phase of capitalism and proletarianization. And this requires a complex understanding of such inter-relations as those: between different kinds of work/er and labor-for-capital; between labor and other struggles; between class and democratic movements; between interest and identity; and between localism, nationalism, regionalism and internationalism. At least if we are concerned with recognizing, confronting and surpassing the multiple forms of alienation with which a capitalism marked by globalization, informatization, consumerism, services and finance increasingly confronts us.

In such a situation, a theory which homogenizes the working class, according "it" an essence that overrides 150 years of industrial revolutions and capitalist transformations, is likely to be of less heuristic value than one which assumes repeated destructuring, differentiation, division and distance, amongst working classes. And which then addresses itself to the question of how such can be surpassed.

Neville Kirk's *Comrades and Cousins* (2003) is a comparative study of labor movements in three white English-speaking countries, between the 1880s and 1914. It is not really about internationalism, nor our brave new world order, nor about utopianism. Indeed, Kirk's book might seem irrelevant to our concerns were it not for the word "globalization" in the subtitle. Unlike many other books attempting to exploit this word to increase sales, this is not a gratuitous gesture. The parallels between that wave of globalization and ours, with regard to both the impact on labor, movements of labor (migration) and labor movements, are striking. This history is (like all history of course) thought backwards from the present day. In Kirk's case the decision is purposeful and explicit. He is unhappy with a reigning consensus amongst labor historians on the predominance of racist and imperialist attitudes amongst these working classes. He wants to investigate more seriously the attitudes of these at that earlier peak of liberal imperialism. The exercise is eminently worthwhile. The parallels between then and now are intriguing.

Reflecting back on the findings of his three long essays, one on the UK/USA, one on Australia, one on "the rule of class and the power of race," Kirk says of his three labor movements that

> notwithstanding differences and disagreements, they were commonly influenced by the structures and feelings of class, and were substantively and morally committed to regulating, taming, and in some cases transforming, capitalism in the interests of working people. The vast ma-

> jority of them also unreservedly condemned the "new imperialist" face of capitalism. Furthermore, they shared a fundamental commitment to building "the movement."

It is not that Kirk wishes to deny the existence of imperial, racist (and, in an aside, patriarchal) attitudes among workers, unionists and socialists in those countries at that time. He wishes, rather, to insist that — at least in the movement press and amongst socialists — there predominated anti-imperialist and anti-racist attitudes, inspired by feelings and notions of class identity and internationalism. He recognizes that nationalism was to be hegemonic during the following century. And he argues, for the future, the value of the "utopian principle of inclusiveness," for defence against the divisive impacts of contemporary globalization on the working class.

All this is well taken. And the energy with which such matters were debated in the union and socialist press at that time is impressive. But I am unsure whether Kirk situates his period sufficiently, or defines his arena with sufficient breadth. This was, perhaps, a moment at which, amongst these national working classes, a growing sense of class identity, increasing labor self-organization, and a republican-democratic internationalism, were being confronted by capitalist states, economies and cultures — within which workers were being variously incorporated. Kirk hardly prepares us for 1914 and the overwhelming identification of working classes, at least in such industrialized capitalist societies, with their capitalist, imperialist and militarist nation states. Nor does he recognize that the attitudes of the movements he studies were expressed in the virtual absence of even the voices of those about whom they were attitudinizing.

It is well to be reminded of the radical-democratic attitudes that existed in these movements at that time. As well as the variety and complexity of the attitudes expressed. But the (re-) creation of the "utopian principle" in this day and age cannot rest on traditional notions of class identity, of socialism or of internationalism. Too much of the past ambiguity that Kirk so well presents continues, still, today. I am not convinced that the book itself does, as the author believes, demonstrate that "labor in the twenty-first century has most to gain from a strategy of inclusiveness." This surely requires surpassing the limitations of the identities, ideas and ideals assumed at that time. As also of a notion of "inclusion" launched from such limited positions. If the same struggles, between the imperialists and racists and their opponents are still being fought today within the unions, then this suggests that the bases for such a transformation may have to come from beyond the traditional working class, unions and socialism. Or, at the very least, that the voices of the excluded (in terms of people, issues and understandings) sound loudly enough to convert the cousins into comrades.

Eric Hobsbawm's autobiography is, of course, another joker in this utopian corner. His book is not about this century but the past one. It is not social science but political autobiography. It is not about labor but the world. It is, however, *also* about the end of a Communist, Marxist, socialist and even a labor utopia, and therefore bears upon the possibility of even *thinking*, in this new century, about a new articulation between labor, internationalism and emancipation. Born in year one of the Russian revolution, 1917, Eric Hobsbawm is one of the greatest social historians of his time. This also means that while he lived through, surveys and even impacted on the era and the world of national-industrial capitalism, its discontents and counter-movements, he fails, I think, to surpass it.

Hobsbawm sees his century as a disappointing, even tragic, one. Hobsbawm's history of the twentieth century is called *The Age of Extremes* (1994). His best-known intervention into British left politics was entitled "The Forward March of Labour Halted." A great labor historian, Hobsbawm appears trapped in the world he evokes. Hobsbawm lived, as a Communist, the world of industrial capitalism, the rise of the working class, of trade unionism, of socialist political parties, of nation-states and revolutionary state-building. As also of a labor and socialist internationalism that, as he himself recognizes, became in the twentieth century less a matter of autonomous "agitators," increasingly a matter of state/party "agents." His itinerary, as a path-breaking social historian, as a Communist activist, and as a cosmopolitan and multilingual traveller, is never less than interesting. There are shafts of light and moments of admitted confusion, as well as of self-criticism.

But the book leaves one puzzled at his inability to recognize the extent to which the labor movement, as Marxism's privileged agent of social emancipation and internationalism, was, as the century drew to a close, being first challenged and then overtaken by a widening range of social classes, categories and movements, with one origin in an earlier worldwide revolt, of the 1960s, with which he felt limited kinship.

Here we have to contrast Hobsbawm with his contemporary countryman, another great labor and social historian, and social theorist, the one-time Communist, Edward Thompson. Thompson, who abandoned Communism a generation before Communism abandoned Eric Hobsbawm, threw himself with his very considerable energy and talent into the British and international peace, democratic rights and solidarity movements (particularly with East European dissidents in the 1980s), thus prefiguring an internationalism of a "post-nation-state" era. Although his final chapter was written after September 11, 2001, Hobsbawm seems not to have noticed the global justice movement that both before and after this admittedly-sobering event, was beginning to shape a new articulation between labor, unions, youth, women, indigenous peoples, between the "primitive rebels" of one his most imaginative books and the sophisticated ones of the twentyfirst century.

The Forward March

IT IS THE CUSTOMARY PRIVILEGE of the reviewer to dump on others, from a great height, this height preserving his own position from similar treatment. Frequent mention of the World Social Forum and the global justice and solidarity movement, as well as evident sympathy for the contribution of Edelman, reveals that I also inhabit the archipelago that runs from Seattle to Porto Alegre — with planned extension to Mumbai in 2004. Given the partisanship that motivates this review, I feel required to at least draw some more explicit conclusions or suggestions. At the beginning of my utopian section, moreover, I did raise the question of emancipating labor internationalism and international labor studies from Marxism. Or at least from those Marxisms coming from planet Marx (an extra-terrestrial place, visas for which are issued only on recognition of the unique truth aura that surrounds it). I even revealed, I hope, a certain sympathy for the notion of combining "science, critique, vision and recipe for revolution." And I introduced the notion of an emancipatory international labor studies. A little cautious, now, of claiming more than an "unusual" value for this notion, let me try to combine some earlier thoughts with some more directly related to this review. The earlier thoughts went something like this:

> The new global justice movement is the vanguard of contemporary internationalism.

The secular trinity of nineteenth-century socialism was labor, internationalism and emancipation. As early-industrial capitalism developed into a national-industrial-colonial capitalism, the internationalism of labor became literally inter-*national*, and simultaneously lost its emancipatory aspiration and capacity (or vice versa). Now, the dramatic — and labor-devastating — development of a globalized-networked-informatized capitalism is raising the necessity and possibility of a new kind of labor internationalism, capable not only of defence against neo-liberal globalization but also of an emancipatory challenge to capitalism as such. This implies self-liberation from the traditional (understanding of the) working class, the trade union form and socialist ideology. Such an emancipation can be assisted by a recognition of the work and workers produced by a globalized-networked-informatized capitalism. Positively it requires a close articulation of labor with the global justice movement (a.k.a. "antiglobalization," "anticorporate" and "anticapitalist"), and serious address to processes, discontents, social actors, movements and alternatives previously considered marginal or irrelevant. An emancipatory labor internationalism will also need to rediscover utopia.

So much (or little) for an emancipatory labor internationalism. An emancipatory labor studies requires reflection on a certain elements related to this scenario. I will limit myself to one reflection about process, another about space, a third about method.

Process. Although a number of the above-mentioned books and authors allow for and show evidence of involvement in a dialogue with union leaders or labor activists, I do not think we can say that contemporary international labor studies reveals or furthers a systematic dialogue involving the relevant parties. By this I mean that it does not systematically reveal, express or feed into such. In so far as "emancipation" applies as much to process as to outcome, then an emancipatory labor studies would require at least elements of serious dialogue between academics, union leaders, union members, NGOs and such other significant worker and citizen identities as have been mentioned above. There are obstacles to this on both — on all — sides of such a "multilogue," including the territorial claims of union officers, working-class anti-intellectualism, popular suspicion or scepticism of visiting firemen or women. But in so far as this piece is more likely to be read by other academics, it will do no harm to emphasise not so much academic elitism (an easy target) but the manner in which this elitism coincides or combines with Marxist theory and vanguardist practice.

Space. David Graeber's paper on "The Twilight of Vanguardism" is a thoughtful appreciation of the anarchist intellectual and political tradition and its presence within the global justice and solidarity movement. It was presented at an academic seminar but published on a website of the Indy Media Center — itself a major, decentered but international/ist, multimedia site of the new global movement. Which is where I found it and where one might expect it to be most discussed. Now, it is clear that any website, and English language text, even in easy-access academic language, and at reasonable length, is going to be inaccessible (as we are reminded, on the web, by left cyberphobes and cybernoughts) to indigenous people in remote rural areas. But this has been successively true of the press, of the camera, of radio, of cinema and video, and cyberspace operates on revolutionary communicational principles that a) surpass the one-to-one, or one-to-many, technologies of previous media and b) surpass the local parameters of traditional many-to-many networking/communication: "chat" is now itself part of the cybergalaxy. While most (inter)national labor websites have limited, if any, space for serious discussion, other parts of cyberspace have demonstrated its capacity to break through at least the academic/activist divide.

Also significant are those spaces that are simultaneously places. I am here thinking primarily of the World Social Forum, no longer a single event but a type of such, marked by the primacy here of "proposition." This means by its focus on alternatives to neo-liberal corporate-dominated globalization, its openness to civil social actors and its dialogical intentions. The possibility for a multiplicity of such has made the social forums a place increasingly attractive to labor transnational advocacy networks, to the international trade unions and to those pro-labor individuals or *groupuscules* that fall outside these institutions. Place of speech and space of dialogue matter. While there is nothing in the forum to prevent, for example, academic labor specialists from competitively boring the pants off each other, as in conventional academic conferences, the desire for impact and influence encourages them to express themselves in formats accessible and attractive to activists. It is, in any case, with and from the World Social Forum that new ideas are developing concerning popular knowledge-production and the common self-education of activists, leaders and, presumably, academics. While labor and socialist intellectuals have certainly had a hand in the repeated calls of social movements emanating from such forums, this has so far been largely a place at which the various international(ist) labor parties (in the non-party sense) speak *to* each other rather than *with* each other. But one could imagine a time in which those academics interested in an emancipatory labor studies would consider their presence at a global or regional social forum as more worthwhile — for both input and output — than even an academic or union event to which the other party is invited.

Method. Here I am thinking of the fixation on institutions in international labor studies. Or, rather, of the necessity for "indiscipline," of cross-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary or extra-disciplinary work here. I have been confronted, on a number of occasions, even around the new movement, with remarks to the effect that Naomi Klein is "just a journalist." Let us disregard the hypothetical motive of *envy* here. Let us impute to such opinions nothing graver than bourgeois, elitist, academic arrogance. I think that any work concerning labor internationalism, including testimonies, novels, videos, and music, should be evaluated according to, first, the technical or artistic criteria relevant to the mode, and, second, their contribution to human emancipation. Stating this is not a vulgar anti-academic populism.

Bringing this wandering chicken back to its roost, I want to refer again to ethnography. This discipline has its own problems, as further spelled out by Edelman. But I have been, in this essay, primarily concerned with the absence of people (in Spanish, more evocatively, *lo popular*) in the studies reviewed. And, in so far as ethnography is supposed to concern itself with these, I am particularly sympathetic to such work, at least when put together in a cocktail with globalization. And then stirred rather than shaken. Or, maybe it is simply a couple of ethnographers, concerned with the newest experiences of globalization and popular response to such, who have impressed me.

Here I would draw attention to the work of Michael Burawoy and his students, who call for "grounding globalization." This is not, however, a work that even touches on international unionism or labor internationalism. What it nonetheless reveals is the way in which working people, some of them waged or formerly so, experience globalization, survive it and sometimes challenge it. And how, in so doing, isolated rural women, in one interesting case, were able to locally recycle, for their own ends, the work of North American academic feminists and national/regional NGO's. Burawoy notes, but cautiously, in his last paragraphs, the Seattle explosion, which must have occurred as he was reading his proofs. But just before this he says the following:

> Instead of reaching for a global theory of the global postmodern, we should try to map out its distinctive and emergent political terrain. If global imperialism governed through coercion, the forcible domination of center over periphery, metropolis over colony, empire over satellite, the global postmodern is a world governed by hegemony in which consent prevails over coercion. It is dominated by a constellation of ideologies — market freedom and liberal democracy, sovereignty and human rights — that recognizes and works through difference. To be sure, hegemony is always "protected by the armor of coercion," but the latter is deployed only episodically (if dramatically) and in the name of universal principles. Global imperialism called forth wars of movement, violent anticolonial struggles, international wars, but in the global postmodern wars of movement are doomed to defeat. Just as national hegemony cannot be overthrown by revolution, so Western global hegemonies cannot be overthrown through violence. Instead we turn to wars of position in which different groups with multiple identities have to be woven together around universalistic principles such as human rights or environmental justice. It is a war of position because it builds up a mosaic from multiple locations. Its trenches lie in the burgeoning transnational society of ethnic diasporas, deterritorialized nations, nongovernment organizations, professional associations, the global civil society that becomes denser by the day. It is not so much a matter of creating movements outside the hegemonic order but rather on its terrain, radicalizing the meaning of democracy, appropriating the market, democratizing sovereignty and expanding human rights.

This was written before "nine-eleven," and the return to Rudyard Kipling's "savage wars of peace" by the most primitive part of the U.S. elite (and its foreign pro-consuls). But it is an important reminder to the international left that this neo-imperialist *policy* operates within an *epoch* of globalization and that, therefore, other such policies — a global neo-Keynesianism for example — cannot be discounted. A left that reverts to the rhetoric and strategies of traditional anti-imperialism will fail to effectively recognize and surpass the hegemonic appeals of such a neo-Keynesianism, just as it did the first time round.

The recreation of the "utopian principle" in this day and age cannot rest on traditional notions of class identity, of socialism or of internationalism.

However, the major significance of Burawoy's conclusion lies not so much in what it says as where it comes from and what it implies for labor internationalism. It comes out of studies of working people, of many kinds, in radically different locales, all profoundly reshaped by neo-liberal globalization. Its implication for labor internationalism is: this is the new terrain, discourse and orientation. Burawoy is evidently aware of laboring people but does not hint at labor internationalism or even labor struggles, except in so far as he here mentions "appropriating the market." This is an area in which a new labor internationalism, like the classical one, could and should be pro-active — and far beyond wages, jobs and conditions. But it is, just as obviously, a terrain on which increasing numbers of social movements are active — just as labor is, could be, or should be, on the "non-economic" ones. An emancipatory labor internationalism, in other words, must today be constructed on a terrain which does not necessarily privilege labor as activity, identity or movement, but which simultaneously provides labor internationalism with an opportunity for recommencing its forward march. And an emancipatory labor studies would both follow and stimulate such.

And what about "science, critique, vision and recipe for revolution?" Well, I hope I have at least touched above on everything except "revolution." I have elsewhere suggested that the contemporary task of revolutionaries is to make the revolution unnecessary and, by this token, the counter-revolution impossible. This would seem to be both consistent with Burawoy and contradictory to Marx. Given, however, the miserable results of Marxist-inspired revolutions, particularly for the proletariat, the debilitating fear, for believers, of invasion, of counter-revolution or of "the revolution betrayed" (such betrayal increasingly appearing as *internal* to the notion of revolution), this may be no bad thing. Locked in a dance of death that gripped the international labor movement for 100 years or more, we can leave insurrectionism and reformism to bury each other. Now is surely the time to say, like the therapist to whom Alexander Portnoy, in the novel by Philip Roth, has been revealing his sorely-divided soul for several hundred pages, "Now ve may perhaps to begin?"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beyond the Boycott, "Special Issue: Beyond the Boycott: The Future of Worker-Consumer Alliances," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 31, no. 3 (2002).

Michael Burawoy, et. al., *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Patricio Abinales, "Review of *Militant Labor in the Philippines*," *Journal of Political Ecology*, Vol. 6 (1999).

Canadian Labor Congress, "Labor Development Forum: Solidarity for Development," February 12-13, 2002.

Sukti Dasgupta, "Attitudes towards Trade Unions in Bangladesh, Brazil, Hungary and Tanzania," *International Labor Review*, Vol. 141 (2002).

Massimo De Angelis, "Neoliberal Governance, Reproduction and Accumulation," *The Commoner: A Website for Other Values*," July 2003. www.commoner.org.uk/07deangelis.doc.

Gabriele Dietrich and Nailini Nayak, "Exploring Possibilities of Counter-Hegemonic Globalization of Fishworkers' Movement in India and its Global Interactions." Center of Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal, 2001. www.ces.fe.uc.pt/emancipa/research/en/ft/fishworkers.html

Marc Edelman, "Social Movements: Changing Paradigms and Forms of Politics," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 30 (2001).

Marc Edelman, "Toward an Anthropology of Some New Internationalisms: Small Farmers in Global Resistance Movements," *Focal: European Journal of Anthropology*, no. 40 (2002).

William Fletcher, "Can U.S. Workers Embrace Anti-Imperialism?" *Monthly Review*, Vol. 55, no. 3 (2003).

Andre Gorz, "A New Task for the Unions: The Liberation of Time from Work," in Ronaldo Munck and Peter Waterman, eds., *Labor Worldwide in the Era of Globalization: Alternative Union Strategies in the New World Order.* Houndmills: Macmillan, 1999.

David Graeber, "The Twilight of Vanguardism" (2003) www.indybay.org/news/2003/06/1615559.php.

William Greider, *One World: Ready or Not.* New York: Touchstone, 1997.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Barbara Harriss-White and Nandini Gooptu, "Mapping India's World of Unorganized Labor," in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, eds., "Working Classes: Global Realities," *Socialist Register 2001.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.

Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*. New York: Vintage, 1994.

International Transportworkers Federation, "Globalising Solidarity: The Popular Movement to Reform the Globalization Process." ITF Congress, Vancouver, 2002. www.itf.org.uk/congress/2002/pdf/motion_5.pdf.

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, *A Trade Union Guide to Globalization*. Brussels: ICFTU, 2002.

Naomi Klein, *No Logo*. London: Flamingo, 2001.

Gordon Laxer, "The Movement that Dare not Speak its Name: The Return of Left Nationalism/Internationalism," *Alternatives* (2001).

Labor Studies Journal, "Symposium on Two Distinguished Book in Labor Studies," *Labor Studies Journal*, Vol. 27, no. 2 (2002).

Ching Kwan Lee, *Gender and the South China Miracle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Ronaldo Munck, "Labor and Globalization: Results and Prospects," *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol. 14, no. 2 (2000).

Nancy Naples and Manisha Desai, eds., *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Jesper Nilsson, "Interview with Julius Roe: Beyond Nut and Bolt Workplace Issues," *Metal World*, No. 2 (2003).

Bertell Ollman, "Marxism, This Tale of Two Cities," *Science and Society*, Vol. 67, no. 1 (2003).

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, eds., *Socialist Register 2000*. London: Merlin, 1999.

Alejandro Portes and Kelly Hoffman, "Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and Change During the Neoliberal Era," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 38, No 1 (2003).

Andrew Ross, ed., *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers*. New York: Verso, 1999.

Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint*. New York: Bantam, 1970.

Jai Sen, et. al., *Are Other Worlds Possible? A Committed but Critical Collection on the Past, Present, and Possible Futures of the World Social Forum*. New Delhi, forthcoming.

Boaventura Sousa Santos, "The Popular University of Social Movements to Educate Activists and Leaders of Social Movements, as well as Social Scientists/Scholars Concerned with the Study of Social Change," January 2003. www.ces.fe.uc.pt/universidadepopular/indexen.php.

Boaventura Sousa Santos, "The World Social Forum: Toward A Counter-Hegemonic Globalization." Presented at the 24th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Dallas, 2003. www.ces.fe.uc.pt/bss/fsm.php=A9.

Dave Spooner, 2002. "Trade Unions and NGOs," International Federation of Worker Education Associations, 2002. www.ifwea.org/.

Joao Pedro Stedile, "The Government and the Landowners: An Interview with Joao Pedro Stedile," *PUC-Viva Magazine*, June 23, 2003. www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=48&ItemID=3817.

Robert Taylor, *Social Democratic Trade Unionism: An Agenda for Action*. London: Catalyst, 2003.

Trades Union Congress, "A Trade Union Digest of Organizations and Resources on International Development Issues," 2003. www.tuc.org.uk/learning/tuc-6833-f0.cfm

Peter Waterman, "Is it Possible to Build Utopia in One Country?" *Biblio: A New Delhi Review of Books*, March-April, 2000.

Peter Waterman, "Emancipating Labor Internationalism (From 20th century Labor, Unions and Socialism)," 2001. groups/yahoo.com/groups/GloSoDia.

Peter Waterman, "What's Left Internationally? Reflections on the 2nd World Social Forum in Porto Alegre." *Working Paper Series*. No. 362. Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 2002. groups/yahoo.com/groups/GloSoDia.

Peter Waterman, "Adventures of Emancipatory Labor Strategy as the New Global Movement Challenges International Unionism." Paper for Workshop on International Trade Unionism in a Network Society, Leeds, May 2003.

Ingeborg Wick, *Workers' Tool or PR Ploy? A Guide to International Labor Practice.* Bonn: Friderich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2003.

Working USA, "Labor Rights in the Global Economy," *WorkingUSA*, Vol. 5, no. 1, 2001.

World of Work, "Tripartism in the 21st Century," *World of Work* (Geneva), no. 46, 2002.

Lyle Wright, Wayne Amos and Stewart Wells, "GM Crops: The Voice of Canadian Farmers," *OpenDemocracy*, July 24,

2003. www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-4-64-1377.jsp#

INTERNET

Canadian Labor Congress Solidarity Pages: www.clc-ctc.ca

Canadian Labor Congress, Labor Development Forum: action.web.ca/home/clccomm/attach/solidarity_Reporte.pdf

Global Unions: www.global-unions.org/

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions: www.icftu.org/

International Transportworkers Federation: www.itf.org.uk/congress/2002/presentation.htm

International Transportworkers Federation Summer School: www.itf.org.uk/Education/summer_school_2003/program.htm

Movimiento Sem Terra/Landless Rural Labor Movement: www.mst.org.br/home.html

Via Campesina: www.viacampesina.org

Solidarity and Student Protests in Iran

Jeremy Brecher

This past June, vigilante forces attacked nonviolent Iranian student protesters, charging them on motorcycles and assaulting them with batons, chains and knives. Instead of protecting the students against the vigilante attacks, the Iranian government threatened to punish the students severely and arrested over 4,000 people.[1] A new round of protests scheduled for early July was thwarted by a ban on meetings, the closing of university dorms, and the kidnapping of three student leaders. Continuing repression of the student movement, combined with deep popular unrest, is likely to keep the Iranian conflict in the world spotlight.

Normally, the global peace movement and political left would respond to repression by an authoritarian, theocratic regime with outrage and protest. But so far there has been a deafening silence.[2] The reason is probably not that peace activists don't care about democracy and human rights when they are trampled by opponents of America.[3] More likely there is wariness about intervening in a complex, multiplayer drama in which the left could have an impact contrary to what it intends. The purpose of this essay is to promote the discussion needed to help the movement see its way clear to a more forthright, but responsible, response. Such a discussion may also help clarify other situations in which the peace movement and the left must respond to authoritarian regimes opposed to U.S. imperialism.

Iran has long had a strong and recurring internal conflict between autocratic and democratic tendencies. Its first constitutional movement forced the shah (monarch) to accept an elected parliament nearly a century ago, and powerful democratic movements have periodically arisen since that time.

In 1953, the National Front movement, based in the urban middle class and led by Mohammad Mossadegh, aspired to nationalize the British-controlled Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Newly elected U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower authorized the CIA to cooperate with a British plan to overthrow the Mossadegh government. The coup was successful, and the shah was established as a virtual dictator.[4] He froze out the democratic nationalist elements that had backed Mossadegh and, with strong backing from the United States, ruled by tyranny, terror and torture. The U.S. soon succeeded in taking Iran's oil industry from the British. U.S. policy designated Iran along with Israel as Washington's "surrogates" for control of the Middle East.

A recently disclosed aspect of the CIA operation is that it included unprecedented political mobilization of the traditionalist, fundamentalist Shiite religious leaders known as the mullahs.[5] As Gabriel Kolko put it, the U.S. "eliminated a secular, middle class nationalism." As throughout the Middle East, rebellion and discontent increasingly took on fundamentalist Islamic forms and ideologies.[6]

Resistance to the shah grew as the regime become more and more repressive. In 1978 massive street demonstrations led to bloody confrontations with the shah's police, and the shah's peasant-based army soon disintegrated. The revolutionary movement had many tendencies, but the religious leaders who had first been politicized by the CIA ul-

Jeremy Brecher *is a historian and the author and editor of twelve books, including* Strike! *and* Globalization from Below. *An earlier version of this article appeared in* Foreign Policy in Focus *(July 2003; www.fpif.org).*

timately won out. In 1979 the shah fled into exile,and Iran was declared an Islamic republic. Though elections and some other democratic forms remained, the mullahs possessed ultimate power and used mass executions, long incarcerations and vigilante violence to impose their will.

A New Generation

OVER THE COURSE OF THE 1990S, a new Iranian generation came of age that increasingly despised the repressiveness and corruption of the theocratic regime and the poverty and isolation to which it was consigning the country. A reformist movement elected Mohammad Khatami as president.

> Many students and other Iranians have lost faith in the nonconfrontational strategy of the elected reformers.

According to Human Rights Watch, "Iran is caught in a continuing power struggle between elected reformers, who control both the presidency and parliament, and clerical conservatives, who exercise authority through various offices, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the judiciary and the Council of Guardians, and elements of the security forces."[7] Many students and other Iranians have lost faith in the nonconfrontational strategy of the elected reformers. A carefully conducted poll in 2002 showed broad opposition to the regime's policies.[8]

The current protests, the latest in a series, began with student opposition to a plan to charge tuition at state-run universities. The protests spread to a dozen cities, the demands deepened to include full democratization, and support included many adult onlookers, who honked car horns in approval of the student demonstrators.[9] The movement is self-organized and nonviolent, and has wide public support.[10]

The student movement's principal demand is to eliminate the power of the self-perpetuating theocratic elite over the Iranian government and to allow the elected government to rule without the "guidance" of the mullahs and their allies. One widely discussed method to accomplish this proposes a referendum giving full authority to the elected government.

This situation appears to be a straightforward confrontation of idealistic young democrats and repressive fundamentalist authoritarians. But it is embedded in a context of geopolitical manipulation that complicates the picture. Over the last quarter century, every U.S. administration has implacably opposed Iran's Islamic Republic.[11] During the Iran-Iraq war, Washington even "tilted" toward Saddam Hussein as a bulwark against Iran. This is hardly because the United States has sought a democratic Iran — it supported both the mullahs and the shah at one time or another. Rather, it sees Iran as a critical source of oil and a powerful country that currently threatens — but could support — both U.S. and Israeli interests.

Germany, France, Britain, and Russia have taken advantage of U.S. isolation from Iran to develop ties with the regime and to profit from its oil wealth. According to the *New York Times*, France, for example, is "committed to the stability of the Islamic Republic."[12] Opportunistic European support for the current Iranian regime has actually led many of its opponents to consider the U.S. as their only potential savior.

The Axis of Evil

AS PART OF ITS POST-9/11 bluster, the Bush administration declared Iran part of the "axis of evil" and has made numerous threats against it. In order to amplify those threats, the White House has seized on recent indications that Iran is continuing its quest for nuclear weapons, which was initiated by the shah. Washington has pressured the European Union, Russia, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to encourage Iran to accept tighter monitoring of its nuclear programs.

Currently the Bush administration is divided on its Iran policy. Mainstream conservatives in the

State Department have been inclined to support the official reform movement, whereas neoconservatives in the Defense Department see an opportunity to promote a pro-U.S. revolution in Iran.

The Bush administration has repeatedly hinted that it might pursue an Iraq-style attack and occupation. National Security adviser Condoleezza Rice, echoing threats that preceded the U.S. attack on Iraq, recently spoke of a "Made in America solution" if multilateral action does not produce results. "Sometimes one has to fight wars to deal with tyrants," she warned.[13] Notwithstanding such implicit threats, the problems of managing the aftermath of a U.S. attack on Iran appear to be an awesome deterrent.

President Bush recently praised the student protests as "the beginning of people expressing themselves toward a free Iran."[14] This comes as U.S. troops regularly censor the media and shoot down demonstrators next door in Iraq. Although the Bush administration may wish to use student protest to destabilize the situation in Iran, Washington is notorious for promoting revolts that it is not then willing to buttress — witness the U.S.-encouraged uprisings by Kurds and Shiites in Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War that Saddam Hussein was allowed to suppress with extreme brutality. So the White House is unlikely to have scruples about cheering on the Iranian students to destruction. Encouraging the student revolt is done in the interest of Washington's agenda, which can not be accurately described as seeking freedom, independence and self-determination for the people of Iran.

The actual impact of Bush administration destabilization efforts is difficult to evaluate. Bush's endorsement of the student movement may already have helped hard-liners legitimate their suppression of the students as necessary to guard against "foreign forces."[15] On the other hand, fear of foreign intervention may also serve as a constraint. For example, after the start of the student demonstrations, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on state television, "I call on the pious and the [conservative cadres] not to intervene whenever they see riots." Two days later, a right-wing militia pledged not to take part in the street skirmishes.[16]

Such restraint may lead some supporters of democratization to see U.S. threats as a way to accelerate reform. But that presumes that democratization really matters to the Bush administration. In fact, the mullahs are less likely to respond to U.S. threats by conceding democracy and human rights to their citizens than by offering concessions suited to the real Bush agenda — such as oil deals and a cooperative stance regarding Iraq.

Dilemmas for the Peace Movement

FOR THE GLOBAL PEACE MOVEMENT and the left, this situation presents several interlocking dilemmas. How is it possible to promote human rights and democracy in Iran without strengthening Washington's drive to dominate the world in general and the Middle East in particular? How is it possible to oppose European support for the Islamic Republic without undermining the development of a much-needed united front for the containment of U.S. aggression? How is it possible to encourage disarmament and restrict the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction while discouraging U.S. threats against Iran and other countries?

The problem is in some ways parallel to that faced by the international peace movement in the 1980s, when repression of nonviolent antiauthoritarian revolts in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe coincided with aggressive U.S. military expansionism. At that time, the European Nuclear Disarmament movement developed a sophisticated strategy that simultaneously increased pressure for human rights in the East and demilitarization in the West. Today we need to build democratic alternatives to the tyranny of the mullahs, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the devastation that the United States has wreaked on Afghanistan and Iraq and now threatens to visit on Iran.

The goal for the global antiwar movement and the left should be a nonviolent transition to democracy in Iran complete with human rights and freedom from domination by outside powers. The movement should aim to empower the Iranian people against the mullahs, the U.S., the EU or anyone else who would treat them as pawns for self-serving agendas.

Next Steps

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD this goal is to demand that the Iranian regime release all political prisoners, regardless of their beliefs, and end the suppression of protesters' human rights by its own agencies and those of vigilante groups. There is also a clear need to support the peaceful struggle of the Iranian people for democracy, including a referendum to decide their own future. An important aspect here is the demand that European countries and the European Union end both tacit and active support for the suppression of human rights and democracy by the Iranian regime.

> The Bush administration is divided over Iran. The State Department has been inclined to support the official reform movement, whereas the Defense Department sees an opportunity to promote a pro-U.S. revolution in Iran.

International support for human rights played a major role in the democratization in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere in eastern Europe. History indicates that outside support for responsible government can have a substantial impact in Iran as well. In 1996, a German court implicated Islamic Republic leaders of assassinating their opponents in Berlin. Several European countries then briefly cut diplomatic ties with the regime. The ruling had a huge impact on Iranian opinion, contributing substantially to the reformist President Khatami's landslide victory.

Support can take the form of action as well as words. In Poland, labor and left activists bolstered the Solidarity movement by smuggling in printing presses, fax machines, photocopiers and other means for mobilizing the public. Satellite broadcasts are already playing a significant support role for the Iranian movement. More direct contact, ranging from solidarity delegations to the kind of volunteer human rights observation and nonviolent intervention provided by the "internationals" in Palestine, would be difficult but appropriate. So would a campaign for international human rights monitors.[17]

Iran is a signatory to the International Declaration of Human Rights. However, the UN recently canceled the position of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights to Iran.

Such an approach is almost the opposite of a U.S. "liberation" that seeks to impose "democracy" and "human rights" through war and occupation, along the model of Afghanistan and Iraq. The international peace movement should demand human rights and democratization in Iran alongside its demands for an end to the U.S. occupation in Iraq and the Israeli occupation in Palestine.

The left must also lay out an approach to the problem of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that provides an alternative to the selective Bush administration policy of threatening to unilaterally "Saddamize" WMD-aspiring states. A good starting point is to demand that all countries support the Syrian-sponsored UN proposal to make the Middle East a WMD-free zone. This would require the U.S. and other powers to address the issue of Israeli nuclear weapons as part of discussions about eliminating weapons of mass destruction. And in order for any response to proliferation to be effective, the existing nuclear powers would need to meet their responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by moving promptly toward the elimination of their own nuclear weapons. In such a context, specific demands that Iran not build nuclear weapons and that it comply with IAEA demands for answers to questions about its nuclear program are appropriate. But such demands need to be combined with negotiations to provide Iran with other means of security against military attack.

Iran is only one of many countries that appear to oppose the Bush administration's imperial juggernaut but that also suppress the human rights of their own people. It is always a temptation for the peace movement and the left to soft-pedal our critique of such regimes out of a feeling that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." It is particularly hard to find a balanced position when Washington is utilizing the flaws of those regimes it opposes to justify aggression against them while ignoring the equal or greater crimes of regimes it supports.

Iran is only one of many countries that appear to oppose the Bush administration's imperial juggernaut but that also suppress the human rights of their own people.

Failure to defend human rights in such circumstances only plays into the hands of the Bush juggernaut, however. Perhaps the most effective Bush administration justification for its aggression, especially with the media-manipulated American people, is its claim that the U.S. overthrow of regimes like those in Afghanistan and Iraq frees people from tyranny and establishes human rights and democracy. Any movement to terminate the Bush juggernaut shoots itself in the heart when it fails to identify a better way for people to liberate themselves from oppression. We can't afford to provide any justification for the charge that we are the defenders of tyrants. Let us instead be known as people whose fundamental solidarity is not with one or another government but with all people who are struggling for liberation from oppression.

NOTES

[1] "Iran: End Vigilante Attacks," *Human Rights News*, June 20, 2003, available at http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/06/iran062003.htm.

[2] An exception is a critical statement by the International Committee for Transition to Democracy in Iran (CITDI) signed by Samir Amin, Noam Chomsky, Harold Pinter and Edward Said, among others. See citdi@yahoo.fr.

[3] Although it is alleged that "much of the antiwar left has sadly long since stopped caring about the actual freedom of people under oppressive regimes, except, of course, if their plight is a way to blame or excoriate the United States." Andrew Sullivan,"Shocking Silence," *Salon*, June 19, 2003.

[4] Gabriel Kolko, *Another Century of War?* (New York: New Press, 2002), pp. 23-4. According to the *New York Times*, today young Iranians "express nostalgia for the man ousted in that coup, the nationalistic Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh." Elaine Sciolino, "Nuclear Ambitions Aren't New for Iran," *New York Times*, June 22, 2003.

[5] This effort went to bizarre extremes. "Iranians working for the C.I.A. and posing as Communists harassed religious leaders and staged the bombing of one cleric's home in a campaign to turn the country's Islamic religious community against Mossadegh's government." James Risen, "Secrets of History: The C.I.A. in Iran," available at www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/041600iran -cia-index.html. See also "The Secret CIA History of the Iran Coup, 1953," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 28, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28.

[6] Kolko, *Another Century of War?*, p. 25.

[7] "Iran: U.K. Government Should Press for Real Reform," *Human Rights News*, February 4, 2003, available at http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/02/iran020403.htm.

[8] "Poll on U.S. Ties Rocks Iran," BBC News, October 2, 2003.

[9] Sciolino, "Nuclear Ambitions Aren't New for Iran."

[10] The movement has received support from satellite broadcasts by Iranian exiles in the U.S., some of whom favor restoring the shah.

[11] A partial exception was tacit cooperation against the Taliban during the recent U.S. war in Afghanistan.

[12] Sciolino, "Nuclear Ambitions Aren't New for Iran." Recent French repression of opponents of the Islamic Republic who were apparently flirting with U.S. officials can be interpreted as a statement of France's continued determination to support the Iranian regime in the face of U.S. threats.

[13] Anton La Guardia, "Rice Warns of 'Made in America' Solution to Iran's Nuclear Plans," *The Daily Telegraph*, June 27, 2003.

[14] Sciolino, "Nuclear Ambitions Aren't New for Iran."

[15] "In the immediate terms, President Bush's vocal support for student demonstrations has administered them the kiss of death." Nihal Singh, "Mideast Preoccupation Dooms U.S. Strategy to Destabilize Iran," *Khaleej Times*, June 24, 2003.

[16] Ardeshir Moaveni, "Recent clashes open new fault lines in Iran," *Eurasia Insight*, July 2, 2003, available at http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav070103a.shtml.

[17] Iran is a signatory to the International Declaration of Human Rights. However, the UN recently cancelled the position of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights to Iran.

France: Crescendo of the Class Struggle

VINCENT PRESUMEY

IN FRANCE WE HAVE JUST EXPERIENCED a great wave of strikes that directly addressed matters of political power. French history is defined by explosions of militancy which, for our governing class and for most of our journalists, are a "French sickness" that would be good to get rid of: before 2003 there was 1995; before 1995, 1968; before 1968, 1953 and so forth, all the way back to the Revolution. But this time there is something new: the latest wave of militant action is not an end to itself and is only an introduction.

In writing this, I do not claim there is a general strike around the corner. Although we can be sure that there will be struggles, we cannot be sure of their pace. But what is certain is that we are entering a phase of political turbulence and of newness. And yet, for any observer with even a little attentiveness, the dramatic events of the past year or so could have been more or less predicted.

Jean-Pierre Raffarin, a leader of the free market Liberal Democracy Party, was appointed by President Jacques Chirac as prime minister in 2002. Raffarin had a reputation as a moderate but he was also known for his Thatcherite views regarding France's public sector and labor market. Both Chirac and Raffarin were appalled by the massive public sector strikes of November and December 1995, which undermined the last conservative government's efforts to slash-and-burn the public sector. This time the government made it clear it would be waging its campaign on two fronts — first, by confronting salaried employees on the question of retirement and, second, by promoting the cause of decentralization in public education.

Government and business leaders knew they would at some point face a wave of strikes and protests, perhaps stronger than those of 1995. Their intention was to impose their agenda by playing the trump cards that they have held since the 2002 elections: a president elected with 82 percent of the votes prompted by "the danger of Le Pen"; a reliably conservative assembly; and the consolidation of a single hegemonic party of the right — the UMP (Union for a Popular Movement). These elites also knew also that the electoral left — the PS (Socialist Party) above all, along with the PCF (Communist Party) and Greens — did not offer a credible political alternative. Not only had the PS lost the presidency in 2002 under the leadership of Lionel Jospin, but it was increasingly clear that the electoral left had little to offer in terms of a coherent response to the neoliberal agenda.

The Chirac-Raffarin government's intention was to inflict on the country's labor and social movements a lasting defeat on the scale of Reagan's dismantling the air traffic controllers union in the early 1980s or Thatcher's smashing the miners union in the mid-1980s. The problem facing the government is that solidaristic activism is quite strong on the ground. Campaigns around issues of trade, agriculture and protection of social provisions gained considerable momentum from the militancy of the mid-1990s. Much of the public strongly opposes the right's antilabor, antiwelfare state agenda and rejects the neoliberal model. With the right unable to achieve their full program, we are entering into a zone of turbulence not programmed by those who believe they control history.

VINCENT PRESUMEY *is a union secretary in the Allier region. He writes in a personal capacity.*

How to Begin a Strike

THE STRIKES OF MAY-JUNE 2003 BEGAN in the teaching establishments, mainly at the high school level. There had already been massive protests centered around educational issues in the 1990s. This time the government was proposing nothing less than a major overhaul of the public school system, which we can summarize as follows: budget cutbacks and a reallocation of resources to the private sector, adoption of certain U.S. pedagogical practices and a policy of decentralization in which the management of personnel and other questions would be transferred from the national to the local level.

The decentralization of education has been heralded by its defenders as part of a package of overdue public sector reforms. For those who work in the schools, however, the proposed reforms have never been popular. During the 2002 presidential elections, which in the second round pitted Chirac against LePen, the majority of public sector employees did not think at all of striking. But blows soon rained down in the form of new cuts and a series of administrative measures designed to undermine the cohesiveness of the education sector.

In the French context a policy of decentralization is aimed at the national and secular character of the education system. That all children and young people should have access to the same educational programs and opportunities, formulated and implemented on a national basis, has been a core civic value that the neoliberals would like to do away with. Opposition to this decentralization of education surfaced not only from those directly employed in education, but ordinary citizens. The conditions soon became ripe for the development of a united mass movement in defense of a national education system.

But despite ritualistic calls for a general strike, combined with days of small-scale job actions (not useful, and less and less observed by the national unions), between this and the real mobilization of isolated categories like student monitors, things in reality developed very slowly and with difficulty. The majority of education sector workers hesitated to enter into the struggle because it is said that the new government (elected with their own votes, after all), had well calculated its blow and that this struggle would be long, hard and uncertain. These hesitations, once the step was taken, would be transformed into strong determination, but they began by weighing very heavily.

"It is necessary to know how to begin a strike."

> Government and business leaders knew they would at some point face a wave of strikes and protests, perhaps stronger than those of 1995.

This was the message we received in late April from colleagues in Seine-Saint-Denis, who informed us that the general mood was turning militant in their area. It quickly became apparent this was not another confused gathering of dispersed activists and minority sects, but a call to action that was powerful, massive, supported by a majority and organized by the workers themselves through general assemblies. They too hesitated, weighed the pros and the cons and chosen to fight.

Seine-Saint-Denis is an area where the children of unemployed workers and immigrants are the most numerous in France, where the teacher's work is the most difficult, and where teachers are the youngest, and have become, in the last few years, the most united. Relatively speaking, it is the Petrograd of national education. It is with them that the strike started, and after it took off on the Island of Réunion and in Bordeaux it became general.

"It is necessary to know how to begin a strike." This formula is charged with irony, as it intentionally parodies the declaration of the Communist leader Maurice Thorez, who said in 1945, "it is necessary to know how to end a strike." It is a message that had been addressed to me personally by one of the militants of the Seine-Saint-Denis strike, Benoit Mély. Armed with this message we began to build for a strike in our region. Benoit was among the best of the thousands of French teachers who became combatants in the general strike. He died suddenly and unexpectedly on June 22, while getting ready to write an article summing up the strike. May this article be dedicated to him.

The Pension Question

THE MAY-JUNE STRIKE WAVE joined two related causes: the movement by educational personnel to defend the national system of public education, together with a mass campaign to defend pension rights.

As of 1993 French workers gained the right to retire at the age of 60 with a decent pension, either after 40 years of work in the private sector or "only" 37.5 years in the public. Ten years later, the Raffarian government's labor minister tried to introduce a package of "reforms" which would effectively suppress the right of retirement at 60 and impose a 40-year work requirement for everyone. The proposed reforms also sought to gradually increase the number of years that workers would have to put into the labor market before becoming eligible for retirement benefits. The government and the media insisted that the country could not afford to do otherwise, and that the growing numbers of older people were a drain on the national budget. They also claimed that the public sector was running an enormous deficit, which was simply not the case.

But just as we had a consensus that favored Chirac in 2002 and presented him as "the savior of the Republic" and "the president of all Frenchmen," we now have a media-made consensus that says pension reform is necessary. In this context the union confederations made it clear that they were not willing to fight in favor of the 37.5 year figure for public sector workers, or to expand it to cover all workers. At the same time, the unions appealed to the government to "please reform the retirement system."

Two days later electric and gas workers, by a majority, voted against any change in their retirement plan. The government moved to impose the new reforms despite their vote. Other groups of workers got involved. A growing number of people began to assemble in meetings convened by local unions, under the banner of "37.5 years for all."

Feeling the pressure mount, the CGT proposed a one-day strike on May 13 along with mass demonstrations on Sunday, May 25. This call was quickly taken up by teachers, who saw the one-day strike as a protest against both pension cuts and decentralization — in other words, against the entire politics of the government.

Support for the one-day action surpassed all predictions. Since the 1970s there had not been a general strike in industry. An interunion appeal for a "national strike" in the public sector (where they do not use the term "general strike," but talk instead of days of national action) actually consists in organizing a strike in the public sector and persuading delegates from the private sector to lend their support. These were then expected to help organize small groups of workers in their specific industry to strike for an hour or two.

This ritualistic approach to one-day job actions was completely shaken up on May 13. On the one hand, it was shaken up by protests of angry teachers. On the other hand, the participation of the private sector was massive. At Clermont-Ferrand, the industrial city of the Auvergne, the demonstration joined together teachers with workers from the Michelin Tire company in blue work suits who stopped work for the first time since 1977. The Renault automotive works at Cléon likewise shut down for the day.

In the evening and during the night that followed, railway workers and workers in the Paris Métro voted to continue the strike against the retirement plan. This act carried more weight because these workers are not immediately affected by the government's plan, since they have special retirement plans and the government had promised them that these would not be touched. Their strike showed, therefore, not only that they have no confidence in the government — quite rightly — but above all that they do not just fight to feather their own nests (for "special privileges," as the employers' press says).

The CGT has strong support in the public transport section. The union confederation put its full weight behind getting the train workers and the metro agents to go back to work. We saw behavior that recalled the sad Stalinist epoch: make train workers of a given depot believe that train workers of another depot had voted to return to work, while they told the same thing to the next depot, spouting slogans like "we train workers are not going to let ourselves be dragged by these little women teachers" and so on. The return to work was also sold to the rank and file on the basis that "it is necessary to wait a little; we should go there all together." Another transportation strike was announced for May 26, one day after the national demonstration of May 25. A few days later, once the return to work had been effected, the CGT federation decided to postpone the transport strike to June 3, and the other federations of train workers fell into line.

Militants of all unions felt the need, independent of instructions from above, to know each other better and to connect with each other.

While this ensured that a general transit strike was at the very least postponed, and indeed sabotaged, we soon found out that Jacques Chéreque, national leader of the CFDT, had decided to support the government's pension plan and to appeal to wage earners to stop striking and demonstrating. But his efforts had little effect on the growing mobilization taking place at the grassroots, in which numerous union members and CFDT locals continued to participate.

When Everything Collapses

THE STRIKES CONTINUED TO SPREAD inside the teaching establishment, and in mid-May workers at hospitals and tax agencies decided to join the ranks of strikers. After the unprecedented protests of May 13, demonstrations in small cities, towns and villages multiplied.

For many militants, the return to work in public transport was not experienced as the end of the movement, but as an instance of "one step back so as to jump further." The actions undertaken by the CFDT leadership did not curb the movement's rise, even though the CFDT had become, in recent years, the union with the largest membership in the private sector. Moreover, it was the CFDT's position that provided an argument for the other unions, notably the CGT, to say, "let us moderate our demands to preserve unity." This argument no longer held, as more and more CGT officials and locals rejected the policy of collaborating with the government.

In the days and weeks that followed the May 13 protests, numerous mass meetings were held. These assemblies were usually "interunion" or "interprofessional." Militants of all unions felt the need, independent of instructions from above, to know each other better and to connect with each other.

These assemblies helped address the fragmentation of the labor movement which is endemic in France. But they also helped stoke the flame of militancy. A kind of ripple effect was encouraged by these meetings. While the first general assemblies were held in the high schools, and the university sector, the model was adopted elsewhere. Many union militants and delegates elected in these assemblies after May 13 looked for ways to link up their struggles with those of militants in other industries and parts of the country.

This process was most advanced in three regions: in the Marseilles region the assemblies brought together public service workers and sections of the CGT and FO (together with a CFDT opposition group); in the region of Rouen and Le Havre (Seine Valley), an industrial region, we saw the development of liaison committees and meetings between teachers, dockers, merchant marines and truck drivers, while the region of Clermont-Ferrand mingles characteristics of the previous two.

One of the most militant sectors is the construction industry, which tends to be dominated by small companies. Of the various union confederations the CFDT has the strongest roots in construction, and the many CFDT-backed strikes that have taken place on construction sites in recent years gives the lie to official rhetoric that "the private sector does not strike." In Paris, on the other hand, the national union apparatus tends to dominate the scene, but in certain neighborhoods the interunion assemblies remained extremely active, with teachers playing an important part. Not surprisingly, union officials tend to oppose or distrust this move towards democratic self-organization.

The government during this period seemed paralyzed. Furthermore, leftist forces inside the Socialist Party revived as a result of the strike wave. As it happened, the PS's national congress was scheduled to meet during mid-May in Dijon. Before the rousing example of May 13, party leaders had expected that they could beat back the party's more militant wing, which was expected to attract approximately 40 percent of the votes of party delegates. The leadership assumed that the congress would affirm their "social liberal" orientation and prepare the groundwork for the presidential elections of 2007.

On the heals of the mid-May protests, these same party leaders practically painted the rooms of the congress red, and dragged out the old portraits of Jaurès. The climactic moment of the congress was the ovation saluting the entrance of the secretary of the CGT, Bernard Thibault. In fact, there was even talk that the Raffarin government might collapse, producing a new socialist government. The prospect of having the party return to power on the basis of a mass strike wave made the spines of party leaders shiver.

Humming with Demonstrators

When the general assemblies of teachers learned that the federations of railway workers had decided to postpone the public transport strike to the remote date of June 3, it was seen as a bad blow. When you are on strike, when you are losing your pay for weeks and when they tell you that they are going to come to your aid in three weeks, at the moment when exams at the end of the year for students approach, people can get angry. This anger took the form in many cases of a redoubled energy to go to meet the workers directly.

There was a national demonstration on Sunday, May 25. In 1994 the police had estimated that a million demonstrators had occupied two parallel series of streets and boulevards (it was then a demonstration for school and for secularism). This time, the CGT announced that "only" 600,000 people had taken part in the protest, when in fact Paris was humming with demonstrators. According to other estimates, over a million and a half people took part in the Paris demonstration, many of them calling for a "general strike." The fact that the police doctor numbers at demonstrations (all the while knowing the real numbers) — that is classic; the fact that the union leaders themselves divide by two the success of their own appeal — that is original. And this does not even take into consideration the hundreds of thousands of protesters who took part in demonstrations in Marseilles, Toulouse, Bordeaux and Lyon. So great was the force and power unleashed from the cobblestones that an optimist could be forgiven for concluding that everything would unfurl without problems during the following days.

In the wake of the mass turnout on May 25 the CGT and FO called for a new "storm" on the 27; then all was suspended in the wait for June 3, since May 29 was the Pentecost holiday, and many businesses and administration offices closed their doors during the weekend.

During the long weekend, thousands of teachers and militants from the interprofessional assemblies, aware of the danger, that the rail workers might strike for a few days while the teachers' strike was losing momentum, left to meet workers at the doors of their firms.

The "interpros" on these fine warm days began to change themselves into mobile pickets. This was necessary so that the CGT and FO delegates in the factories could overcome the immense apprehension that invaders would come and tell who knows what to "their" guys.

When the transport strike finally got off the ground during the night of June 2, it was clear that while the movement was growing in certain respects, it was already on a downward slope in others. The wear and tear took its toll. The teaching strike held fast only because other sectors had entered the struggle. In the east of France, where the strike wave was feeblest, one had nevertheless seen that the workers of Alsthom, threatened with firings, went to stop work at the professional schools. The total number of strikers was highest on May 13 and never afterwards surpassed it.

From June 3 - 10, the numbers of workers mobilized by the assemblies and local unions began to diminish, but at the same time militants kept meeting to explore the possibility of strikes in the private sector. In many areas rail workers and teachers formed the nucleus of militant action. At the same time, most train workers did not intend to stay out on strike for a sustained period of time; their hope was to stir up things up in tandem with teachers, then return to work.

In my small city we "stirred up" the three main factories, which saw partial work stoppages after the ritual days of action. In the Rouen region, metal and automobile factories saw repeated work stoppages, as did the chemical factory of Lacq, in the southwest. The case of Lacq is interesting; here, groups of union militants "made" the strike, and went beyond work stoppages to demonstrations, without achieving a takeover of the plant. What they did was create daily assemblies which extended the strike every day, cooperating with workers from other firms. Strikes, stretching over several days in a given plant, calling for the withdrawal of the government's pension proposals and also giving voice to demands (usually related to salary) of specific groups of workers.

The events of May-June 2003 offered nothing that could be compared to the thunderclap on the night of May 14, 1968, when the radio announced that "workers of South Aviation at St. Nazaire, copying the methods of students, have declared an unlimited strike and imprisoned their boss." Still, we had achieved a level of mobilization that is comparable to the early days of the historic 1968 general strike and superior in terms of the sheer number of demonstrators, despite much greater levels of unemployment, and widespread fears of further job losses.

Yet, after arriving at this elevated level the movement was unable to go any further. This reflected a political problem, which had not played such a braking role previously: an effective general strike would probably destroy the government, but what would be put in its place? Union leaders of course talked up this problem as part of their campaign against a meaningful, nationwide general strike.

Despite the militancy of the May-June strike wave, many wage earners, including a sizable majority of women and young people working in small businesses, did not strike, except perhaps for an hour or two. Furthermore, many workers in the private sector remain outside the union movement (the case of the construction workers in the region of Clermont-Ferrand is in this respect a positive exception). Union militants made the most headway within the context of large and midsized firms that were already unionized. At the same time, it seems certain that many non-unionized workers, even in small-scale industries, would have responded to a well-organized general strike. Not only would this appeal have resonated far beyond the ranks of paid-up union members, but it would have produced an upsurge of the most vulnerable, of the super-exploited, of those silent ones and would have turned those forgotten ones in all the little firms "where one never strikes" into a tidal wave.

Things Fizzle Out

Their experiences in the days following May 26 and June 3 helped militants recognize that union leaders remain resolutely opposed to the general strike. Thousands of motions were voted during those weeks asking union leaders (CGF and FO especially, since the leadership of the CFDT was no longer the object of such expectation) to appeal for a general strike. But these motions went unfulfilled.

The last large-scale mobilization was held on June 10. On that day, tens of thousands of workers marched in Paris toward the National Assembly. When they reached the Assembly, those at the front of the demonstration collided with the

CGT stewards, who then vanished and gave way to the police, who were exceptionally aggressive in their treatment of demonstrators.

That evening the secretary of the main teachers' union, the FSU, declared that the Bac (Baccalaureate, the tests imposed on young people at the end of their secondary education) would take place as scheduled two days later, while insisting that the strike would continue. At the same time the government announced that the decentralization policy would not affect several categories of teaching personnel, while applying the category to numerous personnel in maintenance, cleaning and kitchen work. In this context, the partial success of the teachers' strike was experienced as a betrayal by lower-paid workers in the school system.

On the other hand, the same night the executive committee of the CGT-Force Ouvière, the third principal union after the CGT and the CFDT, announced that it proposed "the general strike" to other unions. This initiative, deliberately taken late in the day, could no longer alter the situation. On June 12, during a meeting at Marseilles, Bernard Thibault was booed by thousands of unionists of the CGT, chanting "general strike, general strike," not because they thought it possible, but for the principle of the thing. The secretary of the CGT-FO, Marc Blondel, declared that he, at least, had proposed a "general strike," even though FO members in Marseilles, government and sanitation workers, in a majority vote, called for an end to the strike the following morning.

The general sentiment is that the movement of May-June continues, having divided into little streams which could unite again.

The CGT nevertheless continued to "amplify the mobilization during the vacation" by new daily actions to which no one came because people had other things to do. The government's pension proposals, as expected, were ratified by the legislature just as the strike wave was tapering off. The demand made, primarily by the CGT and FO, to the parliamentarians to postpone their vote received a few hundred thousand signatures, which is relatively few: the masses were no longer interested in this kind of thing.

Everything Continues

THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of strikers, the millions of demonstrators, when they felt that "this was giving up," somewhat as one feels variations in the weather, did not abandon the cause at all. In fact, they knew full well that everything was only beginning.

Admittedly, the government has effected its reform of the retirement program and some of its decentralization measures. But the government has been weakened rather than strengthened. They have been unable to "transform the rehearsal" of May 5, 2002, that is, to transform their electoral triumph into a social victory. And in recent months there have been further signs of labor agitation. The movement of May-June continues, having divided into little streams which could unite again.

There is first of all the movement of contract workers in entertainment, who defend their system of unemployment insurance. Their protests prevented the holding of the Avignon Festival in early July and seemed about to develop into a general strike in that sector. But there, again, their principal union, the CGT, failed to organize its membership. Local actions took the place of a national mobilization. In these conditions, the contract workers were dispersed and dislocated, and were confronted with antistrike actions led by employers, a prosperous audience and merchants near the festival. The manner in which this movement of contract workers has been demolished shows a possible danger: that the class struggle in France will get bogged down in a long "rampant May" during which sector by sector, the government will advance its pawns.

This government is, however, divided and uneasy. On June 22 it deliberately sent helicopters and tanks to imprison the farmer and union activist José Bové, who was freed a month later, thus revealing the government's contradictions. The antiglobalist rally, of which José Bové was the "star," brought together 200,000 people.

In Corsica — a unique case among metropolitan French regions — the existence of a national question historically not yet settled, has served successive governments, in alliance with mafioso and corrupt nationalists, to try out their "reforms" against equality before the law, against the public services, against secularism. But the alliance of the government and the mafia, supported in this instance by the PS leadership, submitted to a stinging reverse at the beginning of July: a local referendum on measures connected to decentralization saw the "no" vote carry.

FRENCH UNIONS

CGT: Confédération Générale du Travail, the main French union

CFDT: Confédération Francaise Démocratique du Travail, the second largest union; of Christian origin

FO: Force Ouvrière, (complete acronym CGT-FO), born of a split within the CGT against the Stalinist leadership

FSU: Fédération Syndicale Unitaire, the major teachers' union

There is not a single policy area which does not hold difficulties for the government. In particular, the substantial loss of life (nearly 15,000 deaths) during the August heat wave, which came about partly as a result of cutbacks and retrenchment, rebounded against the government and further weakened it. In addition, following the arrest of José Bové, President Chirac has become again more and more the target of protests, although he had been relatively spared during May-June.

What is new and has the most weight, but is difficult to measure, is the radicalization of thousands of strikers. They have confidence only in themselves. These masses represent the basis on which new political alignments are possible and even necessary. Their political education could well ensure that the next cycle of confrontation, whose date no one knows, but which everyone thinks about, can be victorious; that is, can result in a political alternative. But industrial militants are not the only group who have become radicalized. Most employers, as well as segments of the middle class, notably the cadre of small and middle-sized businesses, want to rip the stitches off these "lazy strikers."

In France, you can't finish changing the world without seizing power, so we need to occupy ourselves seriously with this good old question of power.

Translated by Marvin Mandell

An Autopsy on the Provos

SANDY BOYER

THE PROVISIONAL REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT — both the armed wing the Irish Republican Army and Sinn Fein the political wing — is effectively dead. This may seem strange considering that Sinn Fein holds seats in the Irish and British parliaments and the Northern Ireland assembly. It is also easily the richest political party in Ireland, thanks to extensive U.S. fundraising.

But the republican movement from its beginnings in the late eighteenth century had only one overarching mission — freeing Ireland from British rule. The idea that the everyone living in Ireland is Irish — regardless of religious tradition or whether they are of settler or native descent — had also been a central part of republican ideology.

> The republican movement had only one overarching mission — freeing Ireland from British rule.

Now Sinn Fein is, in the words of one of its prominent local leaders, "enforcing British rule in Ireland." It has two cabinet ministers in the local Northern Ireland administration set up under the Good Friday Agreement, which is so completely subordinate to the British parliament that Tony Blair was able to simply suspend it. Martin McGuinness, a former IRA Chief of Staff who still serves on its ruling Army Council, was the Minister for Education before the suspension.* Bairbre de Brún was the Sinn Fein Minister for Health.

Their experience in office illustrates the nature of the devolved Northern Ireland government. When de Brún took office, the budget she had been given by the British government dictated that one of the two Belfast maternity wards — one located in a primarily Protestant area and the other in a primarily Catholic one — had to be closed. Rather than refusing to close either de Brún, who considers herself a feminist, promptly closed the maternity ward in the Protestant area.

Later she went on to close a hospital serving a predominantly rural area, again because that was what the budget required. When McGuinness was confronted with a demand by school aides to be paid for the summer in the same way as teachers are, he replied that he sympathized with their demand. But, he said, there was nothing he could do because it wasn't in the budget.

Their rapprochement with the British government and their unwillingness to offend the U.S. administration has also forced Sinn Fein to abandon its left-wing stance. During the invasion of Iraq, Adams and McGuinness met with George Bush and Tony Blair in Hillsborough Castle outside of Belfast despite calls for a boycott by the Irish antiwar movement. A Sinn Fein representative who addressed a protest march a few miles from the meeting was heckled and booed.

SANDY BOYER *has been active in supporting Irish human rights causes since 1973. He co-hosts "Radio Free Eireann" on WBAI, 99.5 FM in New York. His articles "Ireland and the Politics of Extradition" and "The Irish Republican Movement" appeared in* New Politics *(no. 16, winter 1994, and no. 17, summer 1994, respectively).*

*The IRA has its own constitution and governing structure. The Army Convention elects an Army Executive which, in turn, elects the Army Council which is responsible for running the organization. The Army Council elects a series of officers including the chief of staff.

A Break With Tradition

WHEN A PERSON DIES IN mysterious circumstances, an autopsy is conducted to determine the cause of death. It is certainly worth attempting a political autopsy to try to determine the causes of the death of provisional republicanism.

The immediate cause was suicide. When they signed the Good Friday Agreement, they effectively agreed that Northern Ireland will be governed by the British government until and unless a majority in the North votes otherwise. This not only forbids the Irish people as a whole from ever voting for any other arrangement, but also forbids the people of England, Scotland and Wales from separating Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom.

In 1976 the republicans rejected an almost exactly identical arrangement and carried out a fierce bombing campaign attempting to bring it down. So what had changed in 22 years? Ed Moloney's groundbreaking book *A Secret History of the IRA* (2002), which was a number one bestseller in Ireland, reveals that by the late 1980s the circle around Gerry Adams, the president of Sinn Fein and a member of the IRA Army Council, had decided that the IRA's armed struggle was incapable of forcing a British withdrawal. Instead of going to the movement and arguing for calling off the armed struggle, this circle embarked on a campaign of secret diplomacy with the Irish and British governments, which eventually produced the Good Friday Agreement.

This represented a complete break from traditional republicanism. When the IRA was unable to sustain their military campaigns in the 1920s, 30s and 50s, they declared a cease fire, stored their weapons, and waited for an opportunity to resume the struggle. This may have been short-sighted and a continuation of their near-total dependence on an armed struggle, but it at least preserved the anti-imperialist core of republican politics.

The interesting question is why Adams and company didn't follow this tradition. And why have they been able to persuade the overwhelming majority of IRA and Sinn Fein supporters and of the nationalist population of the North, to accept the Good Friday Agreement which is, on the face of it, a complete violation of the most basic republican principles.

The answer has to begin with the events that produced the provisional movement. It arose out of the Northern Ireland civil rights movement and especially from massive attacks on Catholic neighborhoods in Belfast by Protestant mobs.

The Northern Ireland civil rights movement was a response to massive institutionalized discrimination against Catholics. Its principal demands were equality in voting rights and an end to discrimination in housing and employment.

Since the formation of Northern Ireland in 1920, the province's central government as well as its county and city administrations had been in the hands of the 100 percent Protestant Unionist Party. They were determined to preserve Protestant/Unionist power in the face of a one-third Catholic minority that felt no loyalty to Northern Ireland.

The result was gerrymandering and discrimination in hiring and housing. The Unionist Party refused to allocate public housing to Catholics or to hire them for government jobs. In Fermanagh, a county with a nationalist majority, the Unionist County Council refused to build housing at all.

Northern Catholics crowded into some of the worst slums in western Europe. They were excluded from virtually all public employment and from the well-paid industrial jobs.

Starting in 1968, the civil rights movement protested this with nonviolent demonstrations consciously modeled on the African-American civil rights movement. Their demands, in the somewhat sexist language of the time, were "one man one vote, one man one job, one family one house."

These demonstrations were repeatedly violently attacked by bands of Protestants who felt the civil rights movement endangered their relatively privileged status in the North.

The escalating tension from the civil rights agitation soon produced a huge anti-Catholic pogrom centered in Belfast. Tens of thousands of Catholics were burned out of their homes by loyalist mobs. The police stood by and watched.

The IRA, as it was then constituted, was both unable and unwilling to defend the Catholic ghettoes. The Dublin-based leadership had few arms available and little interest in waging armed struggle even to defend nationalist neighborhoods. Graffiti on Belfast walls proclaimed "IRA — I Ran Away."

The Belfast pogroms fueled the split in the republican movement that produced the provisionals. Soon they would launch their military campaign against the British army and the police. Thousands of young people flocked into the Provisional IRA and later Sinn Fein.

In later years, continual repression aimed primarily at young Catholic males provided the IRA with a steady stream of recruits. The British army, and even more frequently, the virtually all-Protestant Northern Ireland police force or the locally recruited British army regiment, routinely rousted them, and beatings were commonplace. In U.S. terms, this would be like recruiting a black liberation army in response to systematic police violence.

The IRA provided first and foremost arms and a chance to fight back. It also provided an ideology that explained nationalist oppression and offered a strategy for resistance. In its simplest terms this said that you were oppressed because you were Irish, the solution was to end British rule and the way to win that was armed struggle.

Coming to Terms

In the process the republican movement was transformed. Its membership, previously concentrated in the south, was now predominantly drawn from Northern Ireland. By the early 1980s, Gerry Adams and a group of younger, northern republicans had gained control of the IRA and consequently Sinn Fein.

This new leadership was rooted in the northern experience rather than the ongoing republican tradition dating back to the Easter 1916 rising. Many, like Martin McGuinness, had little family history of republicanism. They had been shaped by the civil rights movement and, especially by the Belfast pogroms and the ongoing security force harassment of nationalist youth. Openly contemptuous of the older republican leadership who had declared ceasefires, they repeatedly stated that they were going to go on fighting until Britain left Ireland once and for all.

In reality they did the opposite.

Once they concluded that the armed struggle wasn't going to drive the British out, the provisional leadership set about coming to terms with the British and Irish governments. They have even done what would have seemed unthinkable a few years ago by allowing a representative of the British and Irish governments to verify that the IRA had rendered much of its armaments inoperable. The IRA recently carried out its third act of decommissioning, which reportedly included all its heavy weapons and a large portion of the supply of plastic explosives. In a carefully choreographed move, Gerry Adams promised that the IRA would permanently end all armed resistance to British rule.

All this has been accomplished with only minimal resistance from the republican rank and file. There was a split that produced the 32 County Sovereignty Movement and the so-called "Real IRA," but that split has been fairly easily contained. If some republicans have been unhappy with the movement's direction, they have tended to just drop out and get on with their lives. Demoralization has been far more common than resistance.

By now it seems very clear that the provisional movement at both the leadership and rank and file level had at best a very thin commitment to the ideals of republicanism. Their defining experience had been Protestant attacks on the Catholic working class ghettoes and the brutality of the overwhelmingly Protestant security forces. It would appear that for most the republican ideology was only an elaborate justification for the reality that they were just fighting for the interests of Northern Catholics not the ostensible goal of a 32 county democratic socialist republic.

When they realized that the armed struggle wasn't about to end British rule, Adams and company turned to promoting Catholic interests inside a Northern Ireland government subordinate to the British parliament. In the Northern Ireland administration, Sinn Fein has functioned explicitly as a representative of the Catholic/nationalist populations, sharing power with the Unionist Party, which represents the majority of the Protestant community. They have jettisoned any pretense of even seeking to represent, what Theobald Wolfe Tone, the founder of Irish republicanism called "Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter."

The disputes within the Northern Ireland administration have virtually never been about political principles, or even priorities. Instead they have been about communal interests and the pace at which the IRA will disarm and move toward disbanding. By the time this article appears, Sinn Fein will, in all probability, be back in coalition with the Unionist Party.

These are at least some of the immediate causes of the provisional movement's accommodation with Britain and with the southern government. But there were also elements in traditional republican ideology that facilitated this.

Adams and McGuinness are not the first IRA leaders to abandon the cause. Eamon de Valera, the last commander to surrender in Easter 1916 and the President of the Irish government during the War of Independence, became the Prime Minister of the partitioned Irish Free State. From there he went on to order IRA members interned and even hung. In addition to Adams and McGuinness at least two previous IRA Chiefs of Staff have come to terms with constitutional politics and the southern establishment, too.

Republicans have always seen armed struggle as the primary, if not the only, strategy for resistance. The IRA, not Sinn Fein, controlled the republican movement. The IRA, as an army fighting a secret war, had to command unquestioned obedience. Secrecy was a military necessity so there could be no free exchange of information.

A Secret History of the IRA makes it clear that Gerry Adams used this habit of secrecy and obedience to negotiate the deal that became the Good Friday Agreement not only behind the backs of the IRA and Sinn Fein but, at times, of other members of the Army Council.

The republican movement's almost complete lack of a class analysis, especially of the southern state, also helped to make the deal possible. Southern governments have been seen as either less or more nationalistic, depending on their policies and pronouncements. This tradition made it natural for Gerry Adams to begin the peace process by soliciting the support of Charlie Haughey, the soon-to-be Irish Prime Minister who was perceived as the most nationalist southern politician.

Republicanism has never had any understanding that there is a ruling class in the south with its own interests and concerns and its own ties to Britain. The Irish ruling class is about as interested in leading a struggle against Britain as the Mexican ruling class is in leading a struggle against the United States. Throughout the peace process the Irish and British governments have worked in tandem, sharing the objective of ending the IRA's struggle and bringing new stability to Northern Ireland.

Changes in the North

Support for the Good Friday Agreement and the peace process has gone well beyond the ranks of the IRA and Sinn Fein. They have been overwhelmingly popular with the Northern nationalist electorate.

Sinn Fein's vote has grown steadily as the process has gone on, at the expense of the Social and Democratic Labor Party, until now the largest nationalist party in Northern Ireland. Sinn Fein is now the largest party on the Belfast City Council and a Sinn Fein representative, Alex Maskey, recently completed a year as the Lord Mayor of Belfast. There are widespread predictions that Sinn Fein will become the largest nationalist party in the North in the next Northern Ireland Assembly elections which are scheduled for November 26, 2003.

Much of this support can be attributed to war-weariness after nearly 30 years of conflict. Ordinary people speak with great emotion about being able for the first time to go anywhere in their own cities and towns without fear of violence. Until the IRA and the loyalist paramilitary groups declared their cease fires, many working class young people seldom went out of their own small ghettoes.

But the deal's popularity goes beyond simple war weariness. There have been great changes in the north since 1968, especially in conditions for nationalists. Gerrymandering and discrimination in the allocation of public housing are a thing of the past. Housing for working class people, once the worst in Western Europe is now among the best. Generous subsidy programs are available to allow people to buy homes courtesy of the British Exchequer.

Large numbers of middle class, professional Catholics have switched their allegiance to Sinn Fein. They see it as the most able and energetic proponent of their interests.

In employment there has been substantial progress for middle class Catholics with an education, even when working class people are often left behind. Discrimination in employment is at least formally illegal. The Catholic to Protestant unemployment rate has declined from two and a half to one to two to one. Unemployment and poverty in Northern Ireland today probably have more to do with class than discrimination.

To a very large degree, the demands of the Northern Ireland civil rights movement — an end to discrimination in housing, employment and voting — have been won. Catholic neighborhoods are filled with new housing built at British government expense and many have their own community center. There are a myriad of community self-help and cultural organizations funded by the British government and/or the European Union. As noted earlier, employment discrimination is now illegal and Catholics with a university degree can enter a comfortable middle class existence.

Much of this, especially the massive spending in nationalist neighborhoods, undoubtedly began as pure British government conflict management strategy. It was obviously intended to wean the nationalist population away from the provos. In that it failed. But it did succeed in helping to create a hunger for normalcy and peace in much of the nationalist population.

This can be seen in the steady rise in the Sinn Fein vote as the peace process has gone on. Large numbers of middle class, professional Catholics have switched their allegiance to Sinn Fein, as they see it as the most able and energetic proponent of their interests.

If these are some of the reasons behind the success of the peace process, the question of what this means for the future of Irish republicanism and revolutionary politics in Ireland remains. The time has surely come for a thoroughgoing rethinking of the republican tradition. The goal of an independent, democratic 32-county republic that, in the words of the Easter 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic, "cherishes all the children of the nation equally" is still a starting point and essential to any republican or socialist politics in Ireland.

The politics and strategies of the republican movement, especially its near-total reliance on armed struggle and absence of class politics, need to be fundamentally reexamined. This is especially crucial because historically republicanism and the labor movement have been the two sources of radicalism in Ireland. This is not to suggest that there is a magic bullet for the Irish left any more than there is for the U.S. left. There is no policy that, if once adopted, will lead inexorably on to the revolution or even to building a new mass movement.

What is needed now is a period of discussion and debate, including with and among republicans. It will be equally important to participate and learn from whatever actual struggles there are on the ground — from the anti-war movement, to campaigns for political prisoners, to protests over new charges for rubbish collection in the south. Only that combination of debate and discussion with involvement in day-to-day struggles holds out any hope for an escape from the present political quagmire.

Intellectuals and Anti-Fascism: For a Critical Historization

ENZO TRAVERSO

WE ARE WITNESSING TODAY a paradoxical and unsettling phenomenon: the rise of fascist-inspired political movements in the European arena (from France to Italy, from Belgium to Austria), accompanied, in the heart of intellectual circles, by a massive campaign to denigrate the entire anti-fascist tradition. In Italy, the media presents anti-fascism as being responsible for the catastrophic shifts of the "first Republic"; while the main biographer of Mussolini, Renzo De Felice, has led a battle to overcome the "anti-fascist paradigm," which is, according to him, the major defect of post-war historiography.[1] In Germany, since the reunification, the appellative "anti-fascist" is used as an insult, in more or less deliberately forgetting all that anti-fascism represented, for the German exile and for the struggle against Hitler's regime, before it was transformed into the state ideology of the German Democratic Republic.[2]

> What remains of the intellectuals' anti-fascist involvement? Can we, today, call ourselves anti-fascists?

In France, the campaign against anti-fascism was launched a few years ago by Annie Kriegel's article in *Commentaire*.[3] It experienced its lowest moment during the publication of a vile pamphlet that tried to present Jean Moulin as a Soviet spy,[4] and its crowning moment, on a much higher cultural plane, with François Furet's *Le passé d'une illusion*, a book in which anti-fascism is reduced to a giant enterprise of mystification that allowed Soviet totalitarianism to extend its influence over Western culture.[5]

What is at stake is important: what remains of the intellectuals' anti-fascist involvement? Can we, today, call ourselves anti-fascists? Those who are convinced, as I am, of the historical value and of the political relevance of anti-fascism, and thus of the necessity to fight a harmful form of revisionism, cannot allow themselves to answer these questions by hiding behind an apologetic idealization of the past. One would be tempted to respond that, by ridding oneself of anti-fascism, one risks effacing the only decent face that Italy was able to put on between 1922 and 1945, Germany between 1933 and 1945, France between 1940 and 1944, Spain and Portugal for almost forty years. But, although necessary, this answer is not enough. To defend anti-fascism as an "exemplary" memory, in the noblest sense of the word, and as a still-living lesson of the past, one must proceed to its critical historization, by grasping the weaknesses and limits that often go hand-in-hand with its greatness. And to understand the intellectuals' relationship to anti-fascism, one must delve deep into the sources of their involvement.

One of George Orwell's last essays, "Writers and Leviathan," is devoted to the relationship that took shape in Europe during the 1930s between intellectuals and politics. In it, he emphasizes

ENZO TRAVERSO *is the author of several books on German and European history, including* The Origins of Nazi Violence *(2003),* Understanding the Nazi Genocide *(1999) and* Marxists and the Jewish Question: The History of a Debate*, 1843-1943 (1994).*

(starting for the most part from an autobiographical reflection) the almost inevitable nature of the irruption of politics into culture. Writers were no longer able to shut themselves up in a universe of aesthetic values, sheltered from the conflicts that were tearing apart the old world. "No one, now, could devote himself to literature as single-mindedly as Joyce or Henry James," he wrote.[6] The same reckoning had already been made, a dozen years earlier, just before the war, by Walter Benjamin, who affirmed the necessity of contrasting the politicization of art and culture — and the involvement of artists and intellectuals — with the aesthetization of politics implemented by fascism:

> *Fiat ars, pereat mundus*: that's the word of command of fascism, which, as Marinetti recognizes, expects from war the artistic satisfaction of a sensory perception altered by technology. That is obviously the perfect realization of art for art's sake. During Homer's time, humanity made itself a spectacle for the gods of Olympus; now it has made itself its own spectacle. It has become alien enough to itself to succeed in living its own destruction like some aesthetic enjoyment of the first order. That is the kind of aesthetization of politics practiced by fascism. Communism's response is to politicize art.[7]

In other words, the intellectual had to "stick his neck out," to scrape against the asperities of the present, to become in his way "militant" if he did not want to stagnate like a fossil, like an anachronistic and useless figure of the man of letters living outside his time.

Intellectual Mobilization

THE NOTION OF THE "INTELLECTUAL," which definitively enters Western vocabulary during the Dreyfus affair, designates precisely that mutual interference between literature and politics that will profoundly mark the entire history of the twentieth century. Of course, this figure does not lack illustrious precedents, from the philosophers of the Enlightenment to the revolutions of 1848, in which a number of men of letters participated. But it is only with the turn of the century that this phenomenon takes on new dimensions, till it becomes, during the period between the two wars, a major aspect of European and Western culture. In *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (*La Trahison des clercs*), Julien Benda tried to capture this image of the engaged man of letters with an ideal-typical definition: "men whose function is that of defending eternal and disinterested values, like justice and reason."[8]

Upon close inspection, though, intellectuals' entry into politics was not always based on these values. Already the Dreyfus affair was an intellectuals' dispute: Maurice Barrès against Emile Zola, Edouard Drumont against Bernard-Lazare. In other words, nationalism against universalism, anti-Semitism against equality, militarism against the republic. During the 1920s and 1930s, these conflicts were to become more pronounced: besides the intellectuals who mobilized to defend democracy, there were others who worked to destroy it. A large part of European culture adhered to values that contradict those of the revolutionary tradition of 1789. Nationalism, anti-Semitism, the "conservative revolution," anti-democratic elitism and fascism all exercised a considerable attraction on a great number of intellectuals in Italy, in France, in Germany, and even in a traditional seat of liberalism like England.[9] One often tends to forget them, out of a kind of retrospective overlap that hides the fact that Gramsci became a central figure of Italian culture only after the war and the fall of fascism, that Maurras and Drieu la Rochelle were just as influential, in France in the 1930s, as Malraux and Gide, and that, under the Weimar Republic, Ernst Jünger was just as famous as Erich Maria Remarque, and Oswald Spengler was much more widely read than Walter Benjamin or Ernst Bloch.

A literary prefiguration of this dichotomy — the democratic, rationalistic, anti-fascist intellectual on the one hand, on the other the romantic and apocalyptic nihilist, rebelling against modernity — was portrayed by Thomas Mann, in the beginning of the 1920s, in *The Magic Mountain*. The two heroes of this novel, Settembrini and Naphta, have been interpreted as the two souls of the author, who had published, at the close of WWI, a manifesto of the "conservative revolution" under the title *Reflections of a Non-Political*

Man, and who was to go on to embody the democratic consciousness of his country when, exiled in the United States, he launched his "Summons to the Germans" (broadcast by the BBC) to denounce the crimes of National Socialism. Others have seen in it a literary transfiguration of the dialogue that Mann had begun with his brother Heinrich, whose philosophy is close to Settembrini's humanist positivism. More recently, this novelistic conflict, set by the author in the heart of the Swiss Alps, on the eve of WWI, has been evoked as the prefiguration of another famous philosophical dispute, this time entirely real, that took place in Davos, in 1929, between the last representative of the German *Aufklärung*, the Neo-Kantian Ernst Cassirer, and Martin Heidegger, the young author of *Being and Time*, founder of a new form of political ontology that would lead him, a few years later, to accept the Nazi regime.[10]

The parabola of the European intelligentsia of the interwar period unfolds between these two philosophical and political poles, ones that are indeed opposite, but not always without shared viewpoints. Some critics have even formulated the hypothesis that the portrayal of the nihilist Naphta was inspired in Thomas Mann by the young Georg Lukács, author of *Soul and Form*, who was attracted, near the end of the war, by Communism to the point of becoming, in 1919, People's Commissar in the Ministry of Education in the ephemeral Hungarian Soviet Republic led by Bela Kun.[11] As a romantic, Naphta is a kind of two-headed Janus, one conservative, even reactionary, the other revolutionary. This metaphorical figure serves here to remind us that many of the intellectuals — often Jewish and anti-fascist — who were destined to play a considerable role in the revitalization of post-war political philosophy were themselves students of Heidegger. One has merely to think of Hannah Arendt and Hans Jonas, or even of the Marxists Herbert Marcuse and Günther Anders. The fact is that, during the 1930s, Naphta had to choose: his rejection of *Zivilisation* could shelter either in the teutonic mythologies cultivated by National Socialism, to the point of accepting the mysticism of blood and soil, or in the radical criticism of the face of modernity embodied by fascism.[12]

If the "engaged" intellectual, the rebellious humanist portrayed by Benda — "*situated* in his time," according to the definition Sartre will give of him a few years later — is far from taking up all the terrain during the first half of the century, he will nonetheless experience a considerable increase in popularity during the thirties. The great turningpoint that marks the political involvement of the intellectuals is not 1917, the October revolution, but 1933, when Hitler came to power in Germany. This engagement often coincides, it is true, with their entry into the magnetic field of Communism, which however does not constitute the point of departure but only the result of their radicalization. In 1917, John Reed, for whom the Russian Soviets were going to "shake the world," remains an exception. In 1934, on the other hand, Heinrich Mann is far from being isolated when he publishes *Hatred*. At the end of the First World War, Louis Aragon, the future eulogist of Stalin and official poet of French Communism, had reduced the October Revolution to a simple "ministerial crisis." No one could react with the same offhandedness faced with Nazism. After 1933, the anti-fascist involvement of intellectuals was to be massive. It would lead many of those who had remained indifferent or who had not hidden their skepticism when faced with the workers' uprisings in Turin, Berlin and Budapest in 1919-1920, to approach the Soviet Union, perceived as a rampart against the rise of the brown plague in Europe.

Anti-Fascism in Exile

This anti-fascist mobilization would be marked, between 1935 and 1937, by two international conferences in defense of culture: the first was held in Paris, the second in Valencia, in republican Spain, in which some of the most significant cultural figures of the time participated.[13] It would reach its peak during the Spanish Civil War, when defense of the Republic came to be identified with the defense of European culture. Numerous writers enrolled in the international brigades or went to Spain to support the Republic, from George Orwell to Ernest Hemingway, from André Malraux to Arthur Koestler, from W.H. Auden to Stephen Spender, from Benjamin Péret to Octavio Paz. The alliance between the anti-fascist intelligentsia and communism would be sustained for a long time, weakened by the Russo-German pact of 1939, then renewed in 1941 and sealed by the resistance. In 1945, Euro-

> The anti-fascist culture was a culture of exile. Its unity was cemented by a crowd of outcasts wandering from one country to another, from one continent to another, like the ambassadors of a humanist Europe threatened with annihilation.

pean culture was, to a great extent, set under the banner of anti-fascism.

Several elements were at the source of this political turning point for the intellectuals.[14] First of all, Hitler's rise to power in Germany — followed a year later by the clerical-fascist coup d'état of Dolfuss in Austria, then by Franco's *pronunciamiento* in Spain — was experienced as a real trauma. Though Italian fascism remained a national phenomenon, isolated, unknown and misunderstood, which could even win over an important sector of Italian culture, from D'Annunzio to Gentile, and even of its avant-garde (the Futurists), the advent of National Socialism to Germany suddenly gave fascism a European dimension, by making it look like a terrible threat, not just for the worker's movement but, more generally, for democracy and culture throughout the continent. This threat was not limited to the political sphere, for it seemed to call civilization itself into question. One had only to listen to the declarations of Nazi leaders to understand that the inheritance of the Enlightenment was in danger: Goebbels did in fact announce that "the year 1789 will be crossed out of history."[15]

Anti-fascism was also identified with the struggle for peace, in a continent where the wounds from the First World War were still open, and where the political balances seemed increasingly more precarious. The Italian attack on Ethiopia, the re-militarization of the Rhineland, the war in Spain, the Sino-Japanese war, then Munich and finally a new war: this escalation aroused an increasing anxiety whose echo was felt in art and culture. Last but not least, fascism had made intellectuals one of its favorite targets, as attested by the thousands of writers, journalists, scientists, academics and artists forced to emigrate. The anti-fascist culture was also, to a very great extent, a culture of exile. Its unity was cemented by a crowd of outcasts wandering from one country to another, from one continent to another, like the ambassadors of a humanist Europe threatened with annihilation. Anti-fascism also expressed itself thanks to a pleiad of German-language journals published in Paris, London, Prague, Zurich, Amsterdam, Moscow and New York by exiles from Central Europe, most of them Jewish. All these intellectuals, Peter Gay has written, contributed to giving to the spirit of Weimar "its true home: exile."[16]

Many critics have emphasized the limits of this anti-fascist involvement, often as generous as it was blind. It wasn't just the "organic" intellectuals and the fellow-travelers of Communist groups that refused to see the tyrannical aspects of Stalinism. André Gide's *Return from the USSR*, George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, Victor Serge's *Midnight in the Century*, and Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, all published between 1936 and 1940, are exceptions, unnoticed upon their publication or soon forgotten — like Gide's book — after an ephemeral sensation. The general tone of anti-fascism with regard to the Soviet regime was rather one of a certain complacency, if not of an uncritical admiration. During the Paris Congress of 1935, Magdeline Paz and Henri Poulaille found it difficult to present an appeal in favor of the libertarian writer Victor Serge, deported to Siberia.[17] With regard to the USSR, the dominant attitude was not that of Gide or Orwell, but of the Fabian socialists Sidney and Beatrice Webb, two intellectuals fundamentally foreign to Communism by tradition, culture, and temperament, who nonetheless published *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization* (1935); or of the German writer Lion Feuchtwanger, who was present at the Moscow trials and who approved of them enthusiastically in *Moscow 1937*.

But one did not necessarily have to convert to the cult of Stalin, after 1933, to defend the USSR. Anti-fascism cannot be reduced to a simple variation of Soviet Communism. In *The Passing of an Illusion*, on the other hand, François Furet stigmatizes "the completely negative idea of 'anti-fascism'" as product of the "great Comintern turning point of 1935," with which, thanks to a clever mystification, Russian totalitarianism is supposed to have disguised itself as a herald of democracy.[18]

This thesis simplifies historical reality for at least two reasons. On the one hand, it erases all the non- and even anti-Stalinist tendencies acting in the heart of anti-fascist culture; on the other, it seems to ignore the fact that, in western Europe, one could not fight fascism by opposing or doing without the support of the Communists and of the Soviet Union. To ignore these facts can lead only to dangerous detours, as a lucid figure of liberal anti-fascism, Norberto Bobbio, recently pointed out: "Over these last years of historic revisionism, I have come to note with bitterness that the rejection of anti-fascism in the name of anti-communism has often led to another form of equidistance that seems to me abominable: the one between fascism and anti-fascism."[19]

The turning point of the Comintern, in 1935, did not determine but fitted into a turning point that had already begun, in the worker's movement as well as in the intellectual world, in 1933. In France, the first appeal for unity of action against fascism followed by a few days the riots of February 6, 1934. It is signed by the Surrealists (André Breton, René Crevel and Paul Éluard) and by writers attracted to Communism like Jean-Richard Bloch and André Malraux. A few days later, a similar appeal launched by the philosopher Alain and the ethnologists Paul Rivet and Paul Langevin, obtained several thousand signatures in a few months. A *Comité de vigilance des intellectuels antifascistes* (CVIA)[20] thus took shape. In short, far from constituting a subproduct, the anti-fascism of the intellectuals precedes the adoption of a policy of the Popular Front by the Communist Party and the SFIO (*Section française de l'internationale ouvrière*).

The alliance between the representatives of European culture and Communism is the product of fascism. The inability or unwillingness to see the true face of Stalinism is all the more intensified when the threat of fascism is great, immediate, terrible. Rare, in Europe, were any anti-fascists ready to denounce Stalin's crimes, or who understood that though the Communists were allies in the struggle against fascism, their policies should not be supported, and that the anti-fascist struggle itself risks being vitiated if one passes over in silence Soviet despotism, the trials, the summary executions, the deportations, the camps (to say nothing of forced collectivization, ignored at the time even by the most virulent anti-Communist literature). That was the course followed by the Surrealists who, in 1936, denounced the Moscow trial as "an abject police production," and by the intellectual milieu that had gathered in New York around the *Partisan Review*, over which Trotsky exercised a certain influence, and which supported an investigating committee, presided over by John Dewey, that aimed to unmask these show trials.[21] We could add the names of Communist intellectuals who broke with Stalinism, from Paul Nizan to Manes Sperber, from Arthur Koestler to Willy Münzenberg.

During his intervention at the Congress for the Freedom of Culture, in 1935, the Italian anti-fascist Gaetano Salvemini, exiled at the time in the United States, very explicitly expressed his reservations with regard to Stalinism, and thus aroused, as Breton had before him, the disapproval of a large part of the public: "I would not have the right to protest against the Gestapo and the fascist Ovra," he asserted, "if I tried to forget that a Soviet police-court policy exists. In Germany there are concentration camps, in Italy there are islands transformed into places of detention, and in Soviet Russia there is Siberia."[22]

In addition, the theory of totalitarianism (putting Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany side by side, like two forms of a new absolutism), whose first formulations were elaborated by some ex-Communist essayists (Franz Borkenau) or conservative-liberals (Eric Voegelin and Waldemar Gurian, then Friedrich Hayek and others) was perceived much more as the sign of a retreat of intellectuals towards an attitude of skeptical passivity and impotent pessimism than as an example of a more effective and lucid involvement. The theoreticians of totalitarianism did indeed grasp the despotic nature of Stalin's regime, but the logical conclusion implicit in their thesis — the impossibility of an alliance with the USSR — became, after 1941, completely unreal. They themselves, beginning with Raymond Aron, refused to draw such a conclusion. Not until the beginning of the Cold War could the concept of totalitarianism be legitimized within the political culture of the western world in order to defend the "free world" against Soviet communism. But during World War II, such an attitude could never have been accepted.

This infernal dialectics between fascism and Stalinism explains to a great extent, without justifying it, the silence of many intellectuals about the crimes of Stalinism. First the threat of fascism, and then the immense prestige and historical legitimacy acquired by the USSR during the Second World War, led a considerable part of western culture to ignore, underestimate, exculpate and even legitimize the Soviet regime. The examples cited above of the Surrealists, of the New York intellectuals and of other independent socialists prove that it was possible to be both anti-fascist and anti-Stalin, and that the fascination exercised at the time by Stalinism on the anti-fascist intelligentsia was not irresistible.

Furet, on the other hand, contrasts the beneficial virtues of a liberalism historically innocent and politically clairvoyant, a true antithesis of totalitarianisms, with the anti-fascism of the intellectuals. His vision of anti-fascism is as unilateral as his apology for liberalism is ahistorical. One of the conditions for the political radicalization and the adherence of intellectuals to Communism, in the context of economic depression and the rise of fascism, resides precisely in the historical crisis of classical liberalism. Left shaken and weakened by the First World War as well as undermined by nationalist pressures, liberal-conservative institutions were fundamentally incapable of opposing fascism. If fascism had been begotten by the collapse of the old liberal-conservative order, how could one identify with this order to fight its monstrous progeny?

If fascism buried liberal democracy, it did so by attacking first the left, the worker's movement, then the Jews and other "anti-national elements," not by calling into question the traditional elite that had established its power in the framework of liberal institutions. Can we forget the adherence to fascism of all the pillars of Italian conservative liberalism: the monarchy, the bourgeoisie and even a considerable part of intellectual society (Vilfredo Pareto and Giovanni Gentile, even including, until 1925, Benedetto Croce)? Can we forget Winston Churchill's praise of Mussolini? Can we forget the thoroughness with which, between 1930 and 1933, the Prussian elite rid themselves of their façade of liberalism and dismantled the democracy of Weimar while preparing for Hitler's accession? In such a context, in western Europe, the USSR seemed much more apt to block fascism than the traditional forces of a deliquescent liberalism.[23]

Of course, we can reproach the intellectuals who upheld the myth of the USSR with having lied to themselves and contributed to deceiving the anti-fascist movement, whose critical conscience they could have respected instead of making themselves the propagandists of a despotic regime. But we can be certain that no mass mobilization against the Nazi threat could have come into being under the guidance of the old conservative politicians.

The struggle against fascism needed a hope, a liberating and universal message that the land of the 1917 revolution seemed to offer. If a totalitarian dictatorship like Stalin's could embody these values in the eyes of millions of men and women — that is indeed the tragedy of Communism in the twentieth century — it is precisely because its nature and its origins were profoundly different from those of fascism. That is what liberal anti-totalitarianism seems fundamentally incapable of understanding.

Anti-Fascism and Anti-Semitism

WHAT IS MORE DIFFICULT TO FATHOM, however, is the silence of anti-fascist intellectuals faced with another chasm in the twentieth century, Auschwitz. The genocide of the Jews in Europe — an extermination that was meant to be total, with no exceptions — was not foreseeable. Many historians are inclined to think, rather, that Hitler was not acting according to a carefully-laid strategy, and that his radical anti-Semitism came to be transformed into a genocidal plan only in the terrible conditions of the war in the East, which was a war of conquest and annihilation. The fact remains that, from 1933 onward, a heavy threat weighed on the Jews, even if no one could yet grasp its catastrophic outcome. The emigration of about 400,000 Jews from central Europe, between Hitler's accession to power and the outbreak of the war, revealed the gravity of this threat in an unquestionable way.

Yet all through the 1930s anti-Semitism was never perceived by anti-fascist intellectuals as one of the founding elements, even as the "central issue" of the Nazi system, but rather as the simple propagandist corollary of a regime that had chosen for its enemies democracy, liberalism, Marxism and the worker's movement, the crushing of which had moreover been one of its first steps, if not its very conditions for existence. Few intellectuals had the clairvoyance of Gershon Scholem who, three months after Hitler's coming into power, wrote from Palestine to his friend Walter Benjamin, exiled in France, a letter in which he defined the advent of Nazism as "a catastrophe of a worldwide historical dimension": "The proportions of the defeat of the socialist and Communist movements in our eyes take on a sinister and unsettling aspect," he wrote, "but the defeat of German Judaism truly beggars comparison."[24] In another letter to Benjamin, in February 1940, Scholem posed the crucial question: "what will happen to Europe after the elimination of the Jews?"[25]

Just after the war, the final solution appeared as just one of its tragic pages among many others, and occupied only a marginal place in intellectual discourse. The dominant attitude was that of silence. Auschwitz was neither the Dreyfus affair nor the Spanish Civil War, nor was it Vietnam, events that triggered intellectuals' debate and to which they reacted by taking on their "responsibilities." Sartre's *Réflexions sur la question juive* [translated by George J. Becker as *Anti-Semite and Jew*], published in 1946, is a revealing example of this "blindness of scholars" faced with Auschwitz. Sartre designates the Jews as the forgotten victims of the war, but he never places their genocide in the center of his thinking. Even after the Nazi extermination camps, in his eyes the "Jewish question" remains the French anti-Semitism of the Dreyfus Affair and of the Third Republic. This famous essay, in which the gas chambers are scarcely mentioned, and then in a completely marginal way, could easily be interpreted as the most significant testimony to the blindness of European culture facing one of the greatest tragedies of the century. But Sartre's example is far from unique.[26]

> The examples of the Surrealists, the New York intellectuals and other independent socialists prove that it was possible to be both anti-fascist and anti-Stalin.

This blindness had of course profound causes, stemming as much from the general context of the war — despite its specificities, the suffering of the Jews formed part of a huge massacre that spared almost no nation, and its visibility was reduced in a continent in ruins — as from an older lack of understanding of the nature of Nazi anti-Semitism, which was thought of as an obscurantist and medieval holdover, not as a form of reactionary modernism. It was, according to a stereotype that dated back to the socialist culture of the nineteenth century, "the socialism of fools," that is to say a simple propaganda weapon. An industrial and bureaucratic genocide was an absolute novelty whose possibility was not reckoned in the categories of anti-fascist culture.[27]

Under Mussolini's and Hitler's regimes, the latter retained only its "regressive" and purely negative characteristics: anti-liberalism, anti-communism, anti-individualism, anti-parliamentarianism, anti-rationalism. Fascism is thus reduced exclusively to its reactionary aspect. Rare are those who discern the roots of fascist movements in industrial society, in the mobilization of the masses, in the cult of technology — those, in short, who recognize fascism as a reactionary variation of modernity. There is nothing more puzzling, on the ideological level, than fascist movements, a nebulous assemblage in which conservatism and eugenics, futurism and neoclassicism, cultural pessimism and "conservative revolution," spiritualism and anti-Semitism, regressive romanticism and technocratic totalitarianism all cohabit; in other words, an eclectic magma where we find Georges Valois and Alfred Rosenberg, Filippo T. Marinetti and Arno Brecker, Julius Evola and Albert Speer, Oswald Spengler and Ernst Jünger, Giovanni Gentile and Carl Schmitt.

This jumble of contradictory sensibilities hid the nature of fascisms as "revolutionary" regimes, whose rejection of liberal and democratic modernity aimed not for a return to a bygone era but to the establishment of a new order, hierarchical, authoritarian, non-egalitarian, nationalistic, even racial, but not backward-looking: fascist mysticism is biologized, its cult of technology aesthetisized, its scorn for democracy founded on the mobilization of the masses, and its rejection of individualism proclaimed in the name of a "community of the people," sealed by war.

It is impossible, however, to grasp the modernity of fascism on the basis of a philosophy of history postulating the evolution of humanity toward the ineluctable triumph of reason. An important characteristic of anti-fascism, which helps to explain its complacency with respect to Stalinism as well as its blindness before the genocide of the Jews, lies in its stubborn defense of the idea of progress, one of the great categories inherited from the European culture of the nineteenth century. "Men and women of the resistance," wrote James D. Wilkinson in *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe*, "resemble their spiritual ancestors of the eighteenth century, the philosophers."[28] The plethora of journals that appear or are revived in 1945 — *Esprit*, *Les Temps modernes*, *Critique* in France, *Der Ruf* and *Der Anfang* in Germany, *Il Ponte*, *Belfagor* and *Nuovo Politecnico* in Italy — claim explicitly to follow this humanist rationalism embodied by Lessing, Voltaire and Cattaneo. The return to liberty and democracy is experienced as a new triumph of the Enlightenment, of reason and law, which makes fascism seem a parenthesis to history, an ephemeral regression, an anachronistic and absurd relapse into an ancestral barbarism, a failed attempt to stop the march of humanity toward peace and progress.

In this climate of confidence in the future, in which history seems finally reinstalled on its natural tracks, no one worries about the survivors of the Nazi extermination camps. No one wants to listen to their story, and Primo Levi encountered the greatest difficulties when he tried to publish *Se questo è un uomo* (*If This Is a Man*, published in America as *Survival in Auschwitz*), which was rejected in 1947 by Einaudi, the most prestigious of the anti-fascist publishing houses in Italy. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, profited from the price it had to pay to conquer the Third Reich. The struggle for progress was identified with the fight to defend the fatherland of socialism. The spirit of the time had been anticipated, on the eve of the war by the philosopher Alexandre Kojève, who, during a conversation with Roger Caillois, thought he saw in Stalin, as Hegel before had seen in Napoleon in Jena, the Spirit of the world, the man of the end of History.[29]

For Theodor Adorno, however, National Socialism was a refutation of Hegel's philosophy of history. In 1944, he in turn believed he had encountered the spirit of the world (*Weltgeist*), not on horseback, or in the form of a Soviet tank, but in the Hitlerian V-2s, the robot bombs which, following the example of fascism, "combine a total blindness with the most advanced technical perfection."[30] Adorno's philosophical position is the same as the Frankfurt School, which brings together one of the most significant movements of German anti-fascist exile. Jews without a country and "without attachments," its leaders participated in the anti-fascist movement while still remaining at its fringes, aware that, despite its defeat, Nazism had already changed the face of the century and the image of mankind. The feeling of a definitive annihilation, that of the Jewish world of central Europe, permeates the writings of the Judeo-German intelligentsia in exile. Auschwitz seemed to them a caesura in history, like "a quasi-total rupture," Hannah Arendt writes in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, "in the uninterrupted flow of western history as man had known it for more than two millennia."[31]

For the intellectuals of the Frankfurt School, recognition of Auschwitz as a rupture in civilization is inseparable from a radical calling into question of the idea of progress. If Nazism tried to erase the humanist inheritance of the Enlightenment, it must also be understood, dialectically, as a product of western civilization itself, with its technological and instrumental rationality henceforth free of any emancipatory aim and reduced to a plan of domination. In this perspective, Auschwitz can be apprehended neither as "regression" nor as parenthesis, but rather as an authentic product of the west, as the emergence of its destructive face. In 1944, Horkheimer and Adorno perceive Auschwitz as the symbol of a "self-destruction of reason."[32] Exiled to the United States, Günther Anders was one of the first, along with Albert Camus and Georges Bataille in France, to consider Hiroshima as the founding event of a new era in which humanity is irrevocably in a position to self-destruct.[33] Far from celebrating a new triumph of the Enlightenment, these isolated figures cannot think of the war as a victorious epic of progress. Before the spectacle of a civilization that transformed modern technology into a "fetish of decadence" (Benjamin), the only feeling possible is shame, a "Promethean shame" (Anders) as great as the extent of the disaster.

An important characteristic of anti-fascism, which helps to explain its complacency with respect to Stalinism as well as its blindness before the genocide of the Jews, lies in its stubborn defense of the idea of progress.

The Balance Sheet

IF ONE WANTED TO DRAW UP a critical balance-sheet of the anti-fascist involvement of intellectuals during the 1930s and 1940s, it is this fundamentally pessimistic way of thinking, quite marginal in the European culture into which it introduces a dialectical, melancholic and desperate dissonance, that seems to me the most interesting and lucid one today. The profundity of these intellectuals' gaze stemmed also from their isolation, the price of which was an almost complete invisibility and powerlessness, which could only accentuate their despair.

This lucidity, favored by exile, presupposed a detachment, a critical distancing, which was not granted to those who, in Europe, were involved in the struggle. Here, where the anti-fascist fight was identified with hope for a new world, the intellectuals' state of mind was different. Indeed, in this fight they were neither the most numerous nor the most generous. The partisans' guerilla warfare — need we be reminded? — was made up of proletarians, rarely of writers. Among the latter, some chose collaboration, others opted for different forms, more or less comfortable, of "adaptation,"[34] but their participation in anti-fascist resistance was not negligible. They indeed were the ones who shaped the culture of the resistance, who wrote for its press, who gave it its color and its style. For a little while, they truly embodied, in the eyes of the world, the universal values of justice and reason that Benda had spoken of fifteen years earlier. That is why the memory of those who chose to fight against fascism, with their pens and often with weapons, should be preserved. It is also thanks to thousands of intellectuals, Communist or not, anonymous or famous, who were shot, who died in combat, in a prison or concentration camp, if the air we breathe today is freer than that of the Europe that swallowed them up.

If we do not think of democracy as a simple procedural norm — according to the vision of Hans Kelsen and Norberto Bobbio — but as an *historical* conquest, we should deduce from this that it is impossible to be democratic, at this end of the twentieth century, without being at the same time anti-fascist. A "non-anti-fascist" democracy would be fragile indeed, a luxury that continental Europe, which was well acquainted with Hitler, Mussolini and Franco, cannot allow itself.[35] That is a lesson that the history of the intellectual anti-fascist resistance should have taught us, clearly and definitively.

Translated from the French by Charlotte Mandell

NOTES

1. See Renzo De Felice, *Rosso e nero* (Turin: Baldini & Castoldi, 1995).

2. In its editorial dated July 22, 1991, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote that "there is no anti-fascism that is not guilty" and declared the 1990s a new era of "anti-anti-fascism" (cf. Wolfgang Schneider, "Deutschland erwacht," *Konkret*, 1991, No. 10, pp. 30-34). See also Antonia Grünberg, *Antifaschismus: Ein deutsches Mythos* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993).

3. Annie Kriegel, "Sur l'antifascisme," *Commentaire*, no. 50, 1990.

4. Thierry Wolton, *Le grand recrutement* (Paris: Grasset, 1993). This work at the very least has the merit of having provoked Pierre Vidal-Naquet's response, *Le trait empoisonné: Réflexions sur l'affaire Jean Moulin* (Paris: La Découverte, 1993).

5. François Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion: Essai sur l'idée communiste au XXe siècle* (Paris: Laffont/Calmann-Lévy, 1983), p. 126. Translated by Deborah Furet as *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

6. George Orwell, *Collected Essays*, vol. 4 (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 409. Viewable online at http://www.orwell.ru/library/articles/leviathan/e/e_wal.htm

7. Walter Benjamin, "L'oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproductibilité technique," *Essais 1935-1940* (Paris: Denoel-Gonthier, 1983), p. 126. Translated as "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in *Selected Writings: Vol. 4, 1938-1940*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2003).

8. Julien Benda, *La Trahison des clercs* (Paris: Grasset, 1975). Translated as *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (New York: Norton, 1969).

9. Cf. Alastair Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism: A Study of Intellectuals and Fascism, 1919-1945* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1976).

10. Cf. Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

11. This hypothesis is at the center of the entire second part of Judith Marcus's work, *Georg Lukács and Thomas Mann: A Study in the Sociology of Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987). On the multiple faces of romanticism, see Michael Löwy and Robert Sayre, *Romanticism Against the Tide of Modernity (Post-Contemporary Interventions)*, trans. Catherine Porter (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

12. Cf. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

13. On the Parisian Congress of 1935, see Michel Winock, *Le siècle des intellectuels* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1997), chapter 27, and Herbert R. Lottman, *The Left Bank: Writers, Artists, and Politics from the Popular Front to the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), chapter 6. On the Valencia Congress, see Andrés Trapiello, *Las armas y las letras: Literatura y guerra civil (1936-1939)* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1994), chapter 10.

14. Cf. Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Gli intellettuali e l'antifascismo," *Storia del marxismo*, vol. 3, no. 2 (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), pp. 441-490. English translation: *The History of Marxism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

15. Quoted in Karl D. Bracher, *La dictature allemande: Naissance, structure et conséquences du national-socialisme* (Toulouse: Privat, 1986), p. 31. English translation: *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism* by (Jean Steinberg, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

16. Peter Gay, *Le suicide d'une république: Weimar 1918-1933* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1993), p. 180; and *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Norton, 2001.)

17. Lottman, *The Left Bank*, pp. 178-184 of the French edition.

18. François Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion*, p. 193.

19. Norberto Bobbio, *De Senectute* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), pp. 8-9.

20. Cf. Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France, de l'Affaire Dreyfus à nos jours* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1986), pp. 98-99; Lottman, *The Left Bank* especially chapter 5 in Part II, pp. 148-158 of the French edition.

21. Cf. Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987),

especially chapter 5, pp. 128-162.

22. Quoted in Marcello Flores, *L'immagine dell'URSS: L'Occidente e la Russia di Stalin (1927-1956)* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1990), p. 214.

23. The liberals who fought against fascism, like the Italian movement Giustizia e libertà, chose to collaborate with the Communists. See, on this subject, the testimony and thought of Norberto Bobbio, who was one of its leaders (*Dal fascismo alla democrazia*, Turin: Baldini & Castoldi, 1997).

24. Letter dated April 13, 1933, in Gershom Scholem and Walter Benjamin, *Briefwechsel* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980). Translated as *Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, 1932-1940* (New York: Shocken Books, 1989).

25. Scholem and Benjamin, *Briefwechsel*, p. 319. See also Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: Histoire d'une amitié* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1981), p. 247. Translated as *Walter Benjamin: Story of a Friendship* by Lee Siegel (New York: New York Review of Books, 2003).

26. On this subject see Enzo Traverso, *L'Histoire déchirée: Essai sur Auschwitz et les intellectuels* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1997), chapter 1.

27. Cf. Dan Diner, "Antifaschistische Weltanschauung: Ein Nachruf," *Kreisläufe: Nationalsozialismus und Gedächtnis* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1995), p. 91.

28. James D. Wilkinson, *The Intellectual Resistance in Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 276.

29. Cf. Denis Hollier, ed., *Le collège de philosophie 1937-1939* (Paris: Folio-Gallimard, 1995), pp. 67-68. See also Lutz Niethammer, *Posthistoire: Ist die Geschichte zu Ende?* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989), p. 77.

30. Theodor Adorno, *Minima moralia, Réflexions sur la vie mutilée* (Paris: Payot, 1991), p. 53. Translated as *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life* by E. F. Jephcott (New York: Verso Books, 1996).

31. Hannah Arendt, *Les origines du totalitarisme* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), p. 11. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979).

32. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectique de la raison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 15. Translated as *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

33. Günther Anders, "Über die Bombe und die Wurzeln unserer Apokalypse-Blindheit," in *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen. I. Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1985). See also Albert Camus, "8 août 1945," *Actuelles: Écrits politiques* (Paris: Folio-Gallimard, 1997), pp. 67-69. On Bataille's thoughts after Hiroshima, cf. Michel Surya, *Georges Bataille, la mort à l'oeuvre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 437-442. Translated as *Georges Bataille: An Intellectual Biography* by Krzysztof Fijalkowski and Michael Richardson (New York: Verso Books, 2002).

34. Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande 1940-1944* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1995), analyzes the forms of "adaptation" the French intellectuals adopted during the German occupation (chapter 21, pp. 321-345). Translated as *Living with Defeat: France under the German Occupation, 1940-1944* by Janet Lloyd (London: Arnold, 1996).

35. According to Marco Revelli, "the anti-fascist paradigm is, in a certain way, the democratic paradigm historicized, contextualized, adapted during mass totalitarianisms and dictatorships." Giovanni De Luna and Marco Revelli, *Fascismo, antifascismo* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1995), p. 30.

Orwell and Socialism

John Newsinger

A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER HIS BIRTH and more than fifty years after his death, the socialist writer, George Orwell, remains a controversial figure, respected and admired by some and hated and loathed by others. This year saw the publication of two new biographies and one critical, indeed positively hostile, study.[1] His own books remain in print with *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* proving particularly popular. A marvellous 20 volume *Complete Works* is available in paperback, a unique publishing event testifying to interest in the man and his work.[2] And his posthumous reputation is still summoned up to endorse contemporary political causes including both the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the opposition to that invasion. Both as a socialist and a writer, Orwell remains important. What this contribution to his 100th birthday will attempt is some explanation as to why this is the case. How was it that this product of the British imperial middle class, educated at Eton and having served as an officer in the colonial police in Burma, went on to become a major novelist and socialist commentator?

It was Orwell's experiences as a police officer in Burma that began his transformation. Having gone out to the country a supporter of Britain's imperial mission in 1922, he returned home in 1927, its determined opponent. He had recognized firsthand that the empire was a system of exploitation and oppression and he wanted no part in it. Indeed, he came home with a philosophical rejection of all authority, a determination to expiate the guilt he felt at his complicity in empire, and the intention of becoming a writer. At this time, his political ideas were moving to the left but in an unsystematic fashion as he went about building a socialist on the bones of a "blimp." Orwell combined his political sympathies and his literary ambitions in *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) and in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). The first already displays a remarkable ability to chronicle the lives of the poor, an acute understanding of class and class prejudice and a strong sense of solidarity with the underdog. The second, published by the Left Book Club, recounts Orwell's encounter with the industrial working class, in particular the miners. He provides a marvellous celebration of the miners, observing that while in his lifetime he might expect to write thirty books, a miner in his would produce 8,400 tons of coal or enough to pave Trafalgar Square two feet deep. He insisted that "all of us really owes the comparative decency of our lives to poor drudges underground, blackened to the eyes, with their throats full of coat dust, driving their muscles forward with arms and belly muscles of steel."[3] Nevertheless, the portrayal of the working class in *The Road* is of the working class as victim.

To some extent, this reflected the historical experience of the decade following the defeat of the General Strike of 1926 and the subsequent six month lockout that broke the miners' union. This was compounded by the effects of the great depression that saw some 200,000 mining jobs disappear. In November 1935, however, the Miners Federation had balloted its members for strike action to secure a return to national bargaining and secured a 97.3 percent vote in favor. A settle-

John Newsinger *is the author and editor of several books, including* Shaking the World: John Reed's Revolutionary Journalism *(1999),* Orwell's Politics *(2002), and* British Counterinsurgency: From Palestine to Northern Ireland *(2002).*

ment was reached without a strike, but the fact remains that Orwell arrived in the north of England at a time when the miners were beginning to reassert themselves. If the dispute had proceeded to a national miners' strike then without any doubt *The Road* would have been a very different book and there is every reason to believe that Orwell's attitude towards the working class would have been very different. Instead of seeing the working class as victim, he would have seen the working class in action. This was not to be. It is worth noticing that in all Orwell's considerable journalism there is no account of a strike.

The Road also provided an account of Orwell's own personal odyssey and, more controversially, an absolutely wrongheaded discussion of why it was that the British left had failed to overthrow the Conservative-dominated National Government in conditions of mass unemployment. The Labour Party had revealed its limitations when it was in office in 1929-31, the Communist Party were Russia worshippers, but his most ferocious criticism was for those who had made socialism "a fad." The irony is that it was the 'faddists' with whom he was most closely involved through the *Adelphi* magazine and the Independent Labour Party (ILP), which he eventually joined after his return from Spain in 1938. His attack on the faddists was all the sharper because he believed that it was the ILP, not the Labour sellouts nor the Russia worshippers, who would provide the basis for a new socialist party, something that was urgently necessary if Britain was to avoid "a slimy Anglicized form of fascism."[4]

The Spanish Civil War

THE DECISIVE EPISODE IN Orwell's political formation was his time as a volunteer fighting in Spain. He set out in the last days of 1936 to enlist in the fight against fascism and found himself serving in the ILP contingent of the POUM militia on the Catalonia front. Revolutionary Barcelona was a revelation and he famously wrote:

> It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the anarchists; every wall was scrawled with the hammer and sickle and with the initials of the revolutionary parties . . . All this was queer and moving. There was much in it that I did not understand, in some ways I did not even like it, but I recognised it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for.

As for the militia, he later described it as providing "a foretaste of socialism, by which I mean that the prevailing mental atmosphere was that of socialism." His experiences left him with his desire "to see socialism established much more actual than it had been before."[5]

> In all Orwell's considerable journalism there is no account of a strike.

Whatever his criticisms of the Communists, at this time he still believed that they shared the commitment to carry the socialist revolution in Spain through to completion. Indeed, at the time, he thought their argument that winning the war came first and that socialism had to wait on this more convincing than those of the POUM. Although not a Trotskyist organization, the POUM urged that the war would only be won if the revolution was completed, that workers' power was necessary for victory. Moreover, the decisive front in the war was the Madrid front and here it was the Communists who were bearing the brunt of the fighting. Orwell decided to transfer to the Communist-controlled International Brigades.

When he arrived on leave in Barcelona in May 1937 it was with the intention of effecting this transfer. What he discovered, however, was that the disagreement between the Communists and the POUM was not over different ways to achieve the same socialist objective. In practice, the Communists were intent on liquidating workers' power, dismantling the militia system and smashing the revolutionary left, starting with the POUM before moving on to the anarchists. The interests of Soviet foreign policy required a bourgeois republic in Spain and Orwell found himself on the opposite side of the barricades. From this point of view his Spanish experiences provided him with a dual education: as far as he was concerned he had seen and been part of a revolutionary working class exercising power in Barcelona. Socialism was no longer a theory, he had seen it being established by real working class men and women. The other lesson was that the Communists were the enemy of this flesh-and-blood socialism. Indeed, they destroyed it in the name of the Soviet Union. This dual education informed his politics for the rest of his life.

May 1937 saw the Communists carry out a coup d'etat in Barcelona, provoking a general strike and a week of street fighting in which over 900 people were killed. The outcome was a political retreat by the anarchists that left the POUM exposed to the full fury of Communist vengeance. As for Orwell there was now no way that he was going to transfer to the International Brigades. As he told a Communist friend, throwing in his lot with the Communists "might mean sooner or later being used against the Spanish working class" and when that happened he intended to use his rifle "on the side of the working class and not against them." Later, he observed that if he had transferred to the International Brigades he would have probably been quietly executed for political unreliability.[6]

After the May events, Orwell returned to the front where on May 20 he was shot in the throat. He was recovering from the wound when on June 16 the POUM was banned and the Communists began rounding up its leaders and activists. Orwell, together with his wife, Eileen, went into hiding and on the 23rd they successfully slipped across the border into France. They both faced arrest as "known Trotskyists" and there can be no serious doubt that if Orwell had been taken he would have died in prison either from medical neglect or police brutality. Others were not so lucky and the roundup was accompanied by torture and summery execution. The POUM leader, Andres Nin, was tortured to death in an attempt to force a confession that the organisation was in league with Franco.[7]

A Literary Trotskyist

ORWELL RETURNED TO BRITAIN a revolutionary socialist, not a Trotskyist, but someone who was very much influenced by Trotskyist ideas. He can perhaps best be described as a "literary Trotskyist," that is as a writer who refused any organizational commitment to the Trotskyist movement, but was engaged in a critical dialogue with its ideas. From this point of view, *Homage To Catalonia*, his account of his experiences in Spain, can be seen as the first volume of a remarkable "literary Trotskyist" trilogy along with *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. We shall return to this point. Orwell's intention once back in Britain was to "spill the Spanish beans," to expose what the Communists had done in Spain and do what he could for those of his comrades who had fallen into their hands. What he found was that the British left, very much under Communist influence, was not prepared to listen.

With a general European war looking more and more certain, Orwell took up an antiwar position. He argued that such a conflict would not be a war against fascism, but a clash of rival empires. The socalled democracies all exploited extensive colonial empires that were governed by undisguised military force little different from fascism. When war broke out, however, his stance changed and he developed a kind of "revolutionary patriotism."

For Orwell, victory in the conflict with Nazi Germany was only possible if there was a socialist revolution in Britain and such a revolution would only survive if it defeated Nazi Germany. He called for the arming of the people and thought that the Home Guard that the government had established might become a revolutionary militia. London in 1940 was, he believed, reminiscent of St. Petersburg in 1916. The old order was completely discredited, unrest was widespread and increasing and revolution was imminent. "I dare say," he wrote, "the London gutters will have to run with blood. All right, let them, if it is necessary." Elsewhere, he insisted that "the feeling of all true patriots and all true socialists is at the bottom reducible to the Trotskyist slogan: 'The war and the revolution are inseparable.'"[8]

These hopes and expectations were not to be realised. The entry of the Soviet Union and the United States into the war meant that victory without a socialist revolution became not only possible but certain. The forces of reaction consolidated themselves at home with Orwell identifying the suppression of the Quit India movement in 1942 as decisive. In these circumstances, he recognised that his revolutionary hopes had been falsified and began to acknowledge that the best that was possible in Britain was a Labour government. In November 1943 he became the literary editor of the left-wing Labour weekly newspaper, *Tribune*.

> Orwell returned from Spain not just determined to expose the reality of Communist politics, but also determined to understand why the Soviet Union behaved the way it did, to understand what had gone wrong with the Russian revolution.

One thing that many commentators on Orwell miss is the intellectual seriousness with which he engaged with the problem that Communism and the Soviet Union posed for socialists. He returned from Spain not just determined to expose the reality of Communist politics, but also determined to understand why it was that the Soviet Union behaved the way it did, to understand what had gone wrong with the Russian revolution. He read widely on the left, looking at Trotskyist, anarchist and dissident leftist accounts, and it is this reading that informs his later writings, not just his journalism and polemical essays, but also *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The American journals, *Partisan Review* and later *Politics* were part of this reading with the theory of bureaucratic collectivism that Dwight Macdonald, in particular, espoused, having a crucial influence on *Nineteen EightyFour*.[9] First though let us look at *Animal Farm*.

Orwell wrote *Animal Farm* while he was working at *Tribune*. It is a compelling satire of the Russian revolution that was to be hijacked by the political right, but which Orwell certainly did not intend as offering any comfort to these people, for whom he felt the greatest hostility. They were the enemy and his objection to the Communists in *Animal Farm* is that they had come to behave no differently. The novel, it must be insisted, is not against revolutionary change, it is against the betrayal of revolution, against the emergence of a new ruling class. The overthrow of Farmer Jones and the establishment of Animal Farm is wholeheartedly endorsed. Orwell's objection is to Napoleon and the pigs establishing themselves in power, introducing a dictatorship over the other animals and adopting the same privileged way of life as the farmers.

While this is in essence the Trotskyist critique of the "revolution betrayed," Orwell, in fact, follows the anarchists in seeing the revolution as having gone wrong at the time of Kronstadt. The way he stages his indictment is of great interest. At the end of the novel, the animals looking through the window find that they can no longer tell the men from the pigs and the pigs from the men. Orwell's indictment is that the Communists are no different from Western capitalists and imperialists. This climatic scene was inspired by the Teheran Conference in November 1943 when Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin met together to decide the fate of the world. The radicalism of this stance is surely obvious. The tragedy was that for many years the left's continuing illusions about the Soviet Union were to effectively hand the book over to the right. For Orwell, "the destruction of the Soviet myth was essential," but it was essential for "a revival of the socialist movement."[10]

One of the problems with Orwell's politics is that while he carried on an engagement with

Trotskyist ideas up until his death, in practical terms he reconciled himself to Labour reformism as all that was possible in Britain. He was often scathing about Labour's political timidity once elected into government in 1945, but nevertheless he supported them domestically against both the Conservatives and the Communists. Inevitably this pulled him to the right, pulled him away from revolutionary politics towards reformism. This shift was compounded by his hostility towards the Soviet Union. Orwell regarded the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe as a straightforward act of imperialism no different from the British occupation of India. Moreover, he regarded the mass Communist parties in Italy and France not as a strengthening of the left, but as a strengthening of the Soviet Union. In these circumstances, he was to give his support to the Labour government in the opening phases of the Cold War. This was to even involve him in making clear that in the event of a third world war, he would support Britain and the United States against the Soviet Union.

While his embrace of reformism pulled him to the right, Orwell still hoped for something better. In the July-August 1947 issue of *Partisan Review*, Orwell published a neglected article, "Towards European Unity." This was part of a series on "The Future of Socialism" with other contributions by Sidney Hook, Granville Hicks, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and Victor Serge. In his contribution, Orwell made clear that he regarded the situation as pretty hopeless but nevertheless insisted "our activities as socialists only have meaning if we assume that socialism can be established." The most likely future was nuclear war and/or a new age of tyranny, but this could be avoided if "democratic socialism" could be "made to work throughout some large area." Western Europe seemed the only possible area and he proclaimed that "a socialist United States of Europe seems to me the only worthwhile political objective today."

Orwell acknowledged that "socialism cannot properly be said to be established until it is worldwide, but the process must begin somewhere." The Russians would certainly be hostile to such a development that would threaten their empire. The United States would also be hostile and would use its economic might to prevent the project from succeeding. Britain would be in a difficult position in this respect because it was already "almost a dependency of the USA." The obstacles were huge, but nevertheless this was the "only" cause worth fighting for. Moreover, he still thought that some time in the future a socialist movement might emerge in the United States and that there was every likelihood that the next generation of Russians would not be prepared to stand for Stalinism. The situation was grim, but there was still hope. This was a very different scenario from *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.[11]

Trotskyist Heresies

AND WHAT OF *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*, the third volume in Orwell's literary Trotskyist trilogy? Far from being influenced by James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution*, the book is a literary reworking of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, a Trotskyist heresy that Orwell encountered in the pages of *Partisan Review*. It provides a horrific vision of an aspiring totalitarianism and was very much part of his continuing war with the Communists. Nevertheless, the critique is clearly one mounted from the left. Winston Smith's thoughts as he watches a working class woman hanging out the wash are those of an international socialist, not those of a conservative:

> The mystical reverence that he felt for her was somehow mixed up with the aspect of the pale, cloudless sky, stretching away behind the chimney pots into interminable distances. It was curious to think that the sky was the same for everybody, in Eurasia and Eastasia as well as here. And the people under the sky were also very much the same — everywhere, all over the world, hundreds of thousands of millions of people just like this, people ignorant of one another's existence, held apart by walls of hatred and lies, and yet almost exactly the same — people who had never learned to think but who were storing up in their hearts and bellies and muscles the power that would one day overrun the world. If there was hope, it lay with the proles . . . The future belonged to the proles . . . The proles were immortal, you could not doubt it when you looked at that valiant figure in the

yard. In the end their awakening would come.

For Orwell, the future did not lie with the market or the private enterprise system or the nation or the race, it lay with the proles. From working class women throughout the world, "made monstrous by work and childbearing, toiling from birth to death and still singing . . . a mighty race of conscious beings must one day come."[12] These are not the sentiments of a man of the right.

The problem for Orwell was, of course, working class consciousness and how it could become socialist. This had been his concern since he wrote *The Road to Wigan Pier*. It was given powerful expression in his essay, "Looking Back on the Spanish War" published in 1942. Here he argued that the working class, in the long run — and he emphasised that he meant the long run — "remains the most reliable enemy of fascism, simply because the working class stands to gain most by a decent reconstruction of society." They could certainly be fooled or defeated but "sooner or later they always take up the struggle again." He likened working class struggle to the growth of a plant: the plant might be blind and stupid "but it knows enough to keep pushing upwards towards the light and it will do this in the face of endless discouragements." This is the same sentiment that Winston expressed in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The reason the "endless discouragements" did not finally cure him of his socialism was that in Spain he had seen the working class "acting consciously, he knew there was hope and he remained true to that conviction."[13]

Why then was *Nineteen Eighty-Four* successfully hijacked by liberals and conservatives as an ideological weapon in the Cold War, a weapon they used to beat the whole of the left? One reason is certainly the theoretical weaknesses of the underlying theory of bureaucratic collectivism that seemed to portray Stalinism as worse than capitalism. Anything was preferable to the horrors of Orwell's fictional dystopia. More important, however, was the fact that so much of the left, both Communist and nonCommunist, continued to believe that the Soviet Union and its satellites were socialist, that they deserved to be supported, apologised for, and even emulated. It was these sections of the left that handed *Nineteen Eighty-Four* over as a club with which they could be beaten.

From this point of view it is important to remember that when Orwell wrote the book Communist dictatorships were being consolidated throughout Eastern Europe, the Titoist purges that consumed tens of thousands of people were just beginning and Stalin was still celebrated by Communists worldwide as the hope of humanity. This was what Orwell was fighting against. As far as he was concerned, however, this was a fight to free the left from "the Soviet myth" rather than an attack on the left. Orwell was to make this absolutely clear before he died, and there can be no doubt that if he had survived longer he would have continued to make it clear.

> This was a move to the right from his earlier revolutionary politics, but to social democracy, not conservatism.

What his assault on Stalinism and its apologists earned him was the undying enmity of a section of the left, not just the Communists, but all those who believed that the Soviet Union was, in some way or other, a workers' state, progressive, a step forward from capitalism — actually existing socialism. The fact that Orwell's stance has been vindicated has, of course, only served to deepen the enmity. It has been given a new lease of life by the revelation in 1996 of Orwell's relationship with the Information Research Department (IRD), part of the British secret services.

The IRD was established in 1948 as a secret propaganda department to counter the threat from the Soviet Union. While Orwell's involvement with this organisation was a serious mistake, it is absolutely vital to realise the real nature of his mistake. The IRD in its early years projected itself as an organisation that was going to propagandize for a social democratic way forward distinct from both U.S. capitalism and Soviet Communism. It was created by the postwar Labour government and at least initially tried to recruit men and women from the left who were nevertheless strongly opposed to Communism. For a time the IRD actually distributed copies of *Tribune*, the leftwing Labour newspaper, to British embassies.

It was this social democratic prospectus that secured Orwell's support. There is no way that he would have had anything to do with a right-wing organisation as his refusal to support the League of European Freedom showed. What this reveals, of course, are illusions in the Labour Party that he would certainly not have entertained before 1945. This was a move to the right from his earlier revolutionary politics, but to social democracy, not to conservatism. As we have already seen, he was still involved in a dialogue with revolutionary ideas, but the Labour government seemed the best political prospect in the circumstances. This attitude led him into murky waters.[14]

Orwell advised the IRD on which writers were likely to be sympathetic to their particular brand of antiCommunism, warning them against writers he believed to be either Communist or Communist sympathizers. This was a serious mistake on his part. What it does not amount to however is support for any British McCarthyism. Orwell did not become an informer who named names. He identified individuals whom it was not worth the IRD approaching. Moreover we know beyond any dispute that despite the ferocity of his antiStalinism he was publicly and privately opposed to any antiCommunist purge in Britain, or the banning of the Communist Party. He was one of the founders of the Freedom Defence Committee that had been set up because the Communist-influenced National Council for Civil Liberties refused to assist Trotskyists or anarchists being persecuted by the State. He urged that the Committee should oppose any purge of Communists in the British civil service carried out by the Labour government. To be blunt, Orwell defended the civil liberties of people who would have quite cheerfully had him shot. This cannot be emphasised too strongly.

Orwell's Final Years

ONE USEFUL EXERCISE IS to examine Orwell's last years. He was seriously ill for most of 1948, spending the first seven months of the year in the hospital. He had a relapse at the end of the year and was hospitalised once again, finally dying from tuberculosis on January 21, 1950. Although 1949 was a very grim year during which he was capable of very little work, what he did achieve is of considerable interest. In May he contributed to a discussion in *Partisan Review* of the Bollinger Foundation's poetry award to the fascist and antiSemite, Ezra Pound. Orwell's attitude was that the award should go ahead but it had to be made clear how "disgusting" Pound's views were. He had read transcripts of Pound's wartime broadcasts and knew that on at least one occasion he had "approved the massacre of the East European Jews and warned American Jews that their turn was coming presently." As for Pound himself, Orwell had always thought him "an entirely spurious writer."[15]

Earlier in March, Orwell had written to the *News Chronicle* newspaper, appealing on behalf of a Spanish Republican, Enrique Mario Nadal, who was under sentence of death. Later in September he signed a statement that appeared in *Tribune* setting up a committee to help those Spaniards in exile or in prison, that is "the real Spain." The other signatories included Albert Camus, JeanPaul Sartre, Andre Gidé, Andre Breton and Stephen Spender.

Needless to say this was not the action of someone who had abandoned the left. His support for the Labour government and his hostility to Communism did lead him into a compromising relationship with the IRD however. What this should not detract from is that his indictment of Stalinism and its apologists has been wholly vindicated and there are unfortunately still too many on the left who cannot forgive this. Had he survived long enough to learn the real nature of the IRD, he would have, I am convinced, decisively broken with it.

One last point: while there is much to celebrate about Orwell and some to regret, he did have one gaping political flaw that requires mention. Orwell's attitude towards the equality of women was completely wrongheaded. While on so many questions he was better than men of his time and background on this particular question he was disappointingly conventional. Evidence of his sexism is overwhelming. He was one of those male socialists who opposed all oppression except that of women.

NOTES

1. D.J. Taylor, *Orwell: The Life* (New York: Holt, 2003); Gordon Bowker, *George Orwell* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1002); and Scott Lucas, *Orwell* (London: Manly Press, 2003).

2. George Orwell, *The Complete Works of George Orwell* (London: Secker and Warburg, 2000).

3. George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (New York: Vintage, 1986), pp. 38-43.

4. Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, p. 205.

5. George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (New York: Harvest, 1985), pp. 7 - 8.

6. Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, p. 140.

7. Michael Shelden, *Orwell: The Authorized Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), p. 295.

8. George Orwell, "Patriots and Revolutionaries," in Victor Gollancz, ed. *The Betrayal of the Left* (London: Left Book Club, 1941), p. 245.

9. See John Newsinger, "The American Connection: George Orwell, Literary Trotskyism and the New York Intellectuals," *Labour History Review*, no. 64 (1999).

10. George Orwell, *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters, Vol. 3* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1970), pp. 457-458.

11. George Orwell, "Towards European Unity," *Partisan Review*, Vol. 14, no. 4 (JulyAugust 1947), pp. 346351.

12. George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four* (New York: Signet, 1999), pp. 229-230.

13. George Orwell, *All Propaganda is Lies, 1941-1942* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1998), p. 506.

14. For the Information Research Department, see Paul Lashmar and James Oliver, *Britain's Secret Propaganda War, 1948-1977* (London: Sutton, 1998).

15. George Orwell, *Our Job is to Make Life Worth Living, 1949-1950* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1998), pp. 100-102.

Stephen Jay Gould: An Appreciation

CLIVE BRADLEY

STEPHEN JAY GOULD, THE PALAEONTOLOGIST AND SCIENCE WRITER who died last year, wrote — brilliantly — on a bewildering series of subjects, but he is perhaps best known for his contribution to four: general evolutionary theory; the sociobiology debate; the relationship between science and religion; and the study (or critique of it) of intelligence testing.

This article will attempt mainly to introduce these debates to readers unfamiliar with them, and to summarize what Gould had to say. It is written by someone with no academic background in the natural sciences, but who came to admire Gould enormously as, at least implicitly, though often more than that, a socialist, even (broadly) Marxist scientist. Perhaps, indeed, this is an underlying and more general issue that Gould addressed and illuminated: whether the notion of a "socialist scientist" is not properly speaking false, or oxymoronic. Science, surely, is science; and attempts to box it into socialist or Marxist frameworks sound more like the appalling practices of the Soviet Union than much else. Gould, and in this is he was by no means alone, argued however for understanding science, like everything else, in its social and historical context.

The child of Jewish members of the Communist Party, Gould was politically engaged, beginning in the 1960s with involvement in Science for the People. His colleague, geneticist Richard Lewontin, is probably more overtly political, and writes with a harder ideological edge. But Gould was more well known (and a better writer); and so, for instance, one popular account of recent debates in science lumps one whole "camp" together as "Gouldians" (against the "Dawkinsians").[1] "Gouldism," in this simplification, stood for the social engagement of science, against racism, against genetic determinism, against science having ideas above its station — the recognition of the value of other areas of human enquiry, like social science, and indeed religion. This not an entirely accurate summary of a complex debate; but it captures an important truth about what Gould stood for, and was seen to stand for.[2]

Human Capacity (1): Sociobiology

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, CONNECTING threads between the different areas of controversy within which Gould was engaged. Perhaps that which most clearly reveals the overt and more subtextual issues of significance is the so-called sociobiology debate, which more recently has morphed into a debate about "evolutionary psychology." In truth, this entails an area outside, if not wholly, Gould's specific areas of academic expertise (which were palaeontology and geology) — but it was typical of the man not to confine himself to fossilised snails and rocks, and the debate will serve as a point of departure.

"Sociobiology" as a discipline launched itself on the world with a book of that name by Harvard entomologist EO Wilson in 1975.[3] Probably, had it not included a final chapter on human beings, Wilson's magnum opus would have been seen as a stuffy old text book. The theory built on work within evolutionary biology, and in particular what had come to be known as the "neo-Darwinian synthesis." The synthesis in question was between Darwin's theory of natural selection, and Mendelian genetics (which, odd as it seems today, were not immediately noticed to work well together). The basic underlying idea is best known to the general public by the name given to it (in a book

CLIVE BRADLEY *is a regular contributor to* Workers' Liberty *(UK). He has written extensively on the politics of militant Islam.*

published in 1976) by Richard Dawkins: the selfish gene.[4]

A great deal of argument has hinged around what precisely was meant by this theory. Put very simply, the theory was this: evolution occurs, fundamentally, at the genetic level — it is the product of genetic mutations which have effects at the level of the "phenotype" (the external forms and behaviors of an organism), which either contribute to or inhibit the organism's survival — or rather, if they contribute the organism will survive, and so this effect (trait, phenotype) will be passed down through generations, squeezing out members of the same species who lack it. Neo-Darwinism superseded, and sharply criticized, a version of evolutionary theory that saw it operate at the level of the species (or group).[5]

Against such woolly notions, selfish-gene theory saw itself as hard science. The gene is primary. Genes have no purpose other than replication. What enables replication will serve the interests, so to speak, of the gene. Everything about a species, from its appearance to its habits, even apparent altruism, has to be understood in this framework: a bird, for instance, might sacrifice itself for the flock, but only because by saving its genetic relatives, the gene saves, in effect, itself (copies of it). In particular, this framework focuses attention on the mating habits of organisms, on the "reproductive strategies" they employ — reproduction being, if you will, evolution's coal face. Fundamentally, an organism's behavior is shaped by the drive to reproduce, that is, for genes to replicate across generations. As Dawkins controversially put it: "We [he was referring to human beings] are survival machines — robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes."[6]

Around all this general theory much anger was to be expressed.[7] But in the first place, what made the question a political one — and, it turned out, political dynamite — was Wilson's decision to speculate about the applicability of what he called "sociobiology" to human society.[8] A Sociobiology Study Group, involving Lewontin especially, declared Wilson's theory, among other things, racist. It was one thing to define the behavior of non-human animals as determined by the replicative interests of genetic biology, quite another to wonder if this was true of human beings. Sociobiology was seen as the successor to, and reappearance of, earlier forms of biological determinism, which had, of course, buttressed racism and sexism, and in their most extreme form resulted in Nazi genocide.

It should be understood that sociobiology, if it is/was genetic determinist (and I will examine the arguments in a moment), it was never so in the obvious sense, that associated with the more recent discipline of behavior genetics, which looks for specific genes on specific chromosomes and attributes to them specific effects (genes for alcoholism, homosexuality, violence, etc). Sociobiology is interested not in any gene in particular, but in *evolved behavior*. It is based on the assumption that if an animal behaves in a certain way — if its social structures (ant hills, prides of lions etc) are of a particular type, they are so because these have proved evolutionarily successful, and so underlying them there is a particular genetic evolution. But it is the study of how particular behavior might have been of evolutionary advantage; sociobiologists couldn't care less about locating the gene in question. What Gould et al. identified as dangerous in applying this approach to human society is obvious. It explained — and implicitly therefore justified[9] — current social arrangements as the result of evolutionary pressures; so, for instance, women could be said to occupy particular social positions as a result of evolution, not contingent social and historical circumstances; the same could be true of black people, and so on. There was more to it, but this was the gist of the argument.

Gould addressed sociobiology repeatedly; though he did not write a book devoted to the question, *An Urchin in the Storm* in particular contains a number of essays on the theme.[10] Lewontin, the British biologist Steven Rose, and others, have attempted to develop, in riposte to it, ideas about "dialectical" biology, etc.[11] Gould, characteristically, rarely ventured into such waters very directly. But he shared the general framework of other critics of Wilson and his successors. I will leave the argument regarding the nature of evolution as a whole to a later section. As regards human beings, the argument was, essentially, straightforwardly this: that sociobiology was a pseudoscience, claiming scientific knowledge but on the basis of unprovable assumptions, unprovable claims — assumptions and claims rooted in prejudices about *contemporary society*, which are then read back into nature and the evolutionary process. Human beings, however, are far too complex to understand in this simplistic way.

Darwin's co-thinker, Alfred Russel Wallace, who independently came up with the theory of natural selection, unlike Darwin baulked at applying it to the evolution of the human mind. The mind, he thought, was so extraordinarily complex that it had to be explained by something else; Wallace thought God. Gould agreed that there was much in the complex workings of the mind — and by extension, human society in general — which could not be explained by evolution in a one-plus-one sense.[12] He had an answer to the general theoretical issue this implied, as we shall see; the point here is that some phenomena, like the mind, can develop their own momentum, so to speak. Not every aspect of the human mind, or human behavior, or social organization, can be reduced to this or that evolutionary advantage — which in any case is only guessed at retrospectively, inferred from modern facts without real evidence. Gould thought this observation held quite generally. For human society, contrary to the assertions of sociobiology, it held with a vengeance. To understand such complex things, we need other intellectual disciplines than biology.

"Human sociobiology," in effect, mutated over the years into so-called "evolutionary psychology." [13] Indeed, this school forms part of a larger trend, described by Gould and his broad cothinkers as "ultra-Darwinism," "Darwinian fundamentalism," and such like. Darwinism, indeed, has become a kind of meta-narrative deemed applicable to all manner of phenomena, in a period when meta-narratives have been rejected as unfashionable. The philosopher Daniel Dennett calls natural selection a "universal acid" that can eat through — oddly, he means "explain" — everything, a theory with unlimited explanatory power.[14] Gould remained hostile to these generalized, and often ideological developments; he contributed to a volume of "arguments against evolutionary psychology" published in 2000 (his article being largely a refutation of a polemic against him by Dennett).[15]

Evolutionary psychology in its crudest manifestations has infiltrated popular culture, and in that form, unquestionably, serves to reinforce all manner of reactionary notions, especially in sexual politics. Homo sapiens, it is claimed, finished evolving in the paleolithic period: as a species, we are evolved to live hunter-gathering lifestyles, in which men hunt, and women gather. These supposed facts are used to explain, in the name of one British television documentary, for instance, "why men don't iron." Faced with such stuff, it is hardly surprising that feminists and leftists in a number of spheres have seen it as a political and moral obligation to challenge this latter-day sociobiology as much as they did its predecessor.[16]

But embittered though this particular dispute has remained, there does seem to have been some degree of (relative) synthesis. Both sides are no doubt unwilling to admit to shifting ground; but it seems to me that both sides have shifted. When the opponents of sociobiology attempted to enlist the support of Noam Chomsky in the 1970s, although politically he shared many of their concerns, he rejected their dismissal of the concept of human nature.[17] Opposition to sociobiology could not, for Chomsky, take the form of pure social constructivism and cultural relativism. Nearly thirty years on, I think few on the antisociobiology side would dispute that the human mind, and human culture, are the products of evolution. The argument is about how, and to what extent, rather than whether this is true. As Gould put it:

> Humans are animals and the mind evolved; therefore, all curious people must support the quest for an evolutionary psychology. But the movement that has commandeered this name adopts a fatally restrictive view of the meaning and range of evolutionary explanation.[18]

On the other hand, the evolutionary psychologists themselves have attempted to rescue their youthful self-styled science from the accusations of sexism, etc., leveled at it. This may be, as Gould and others would have it, because of the need to distance themselves from sociobiology. But it is also because the polemics of Gould, Lewontin et al. plainly had an effect.

This fact confuses perception of past debates. The advocates of evolutionary psychology, selfish gene-theory, etc, can point to their many statements denying those evils of which they have been accused, or to modified and more sophisticated versions of their theories, and claim that the opponents of sociobiology were misguided, if not ranting theoretical luddites, all along. But this would be to see science as the purely ivory tower activity Gould was always at pains to remind us it is not. In the view of this writer, at least, there are aspects to evolutionary psychology, and even sociobiology, which require reassessment and a closer look; the theories have moved on in thirty years.[19] But they would have been unlikely to have done so without the polemical engagement of Gould and others.

And a great deal of what Gould, Lewontin, etc, opposed is only a little less present in the work of a writer like Steven Pinker, evolutionary psychology's top PR man and polemical scrapper. Pinker's most recent book is full of idiotic suggestions, not least that it doesn't make much difference how you bring up your children, since most of their behavior is genetically-programmed anyway.[20] He spends some time defending a truly execrable tome entitled *A Natural History of Rape*,[21] which exhibits every staggering arrogance and inanity of sociobiology at its worst, in spades.

The battle Gould was waging is far from over. Evolutionary psychology — wearing its more reactionary face — is probably in the ascendant.

The Nature and Mechanisms of Evolution

THE ISSUES RAISED IN THIS DEBATE about human beings are echoes of underlying questions to do with evolutionary theory as a whole. It is in this sphere, as a scientist, that Gould made his most important contribution. There are several areas most closely associated with him. One, which clearly relates to the issues described above, concerns what Gould called "the adaptationist program," the tendency to make speculative deductions about the adaptive origins of the features of organisms, which amount to no more than "just so stories" in the style of Rudyard Kipling. The other, which is perhaps more famously linked to his name, is a challenge to the "gradualist" assumptions of most Darwinians, and the claim that evolution proceeds not bit-by-bit, but in sudden bursts. This is the theory of "punctuated equilibria" which he developed with fellow-palaeontologist Niles Eldredge.

> Gould agreed that there was much in the complex workings of the mind — and by extension, human society in general — which could not be explained by evolution in a one-plus-one sense.

Gould and Eldredge, as specialists in fossils (Gould's own area was snails), were professionally outside the mainstream of evolutionary theory before the 1970s. Most Darwinists studied insects or the behavior of living animals, or they were high theorists, developing mathematical models. Selfish gene theory, and a host of important theoretical developments associated with it (like "kinship selection," the selfish gene explanation for altruism), were fundamentally mathematical. Gould and Eldredge were more hands-on — Eldredge calls himself a "naturalist." [22] As palaeontologists they were aware of a huge problem for Darwinist theory, expressed in the fossil record. If natural selection operates in the gradual, bit-by-bit change/mutation/adaptation fashion implied by the theory, you would expect to find fossils expressing this gradual change over time. But, on the contrary, the fossil record revealed that species could remain almost completely constant and unchanging for millions of years, with no evidence of anything happening; and then — suddenly by geological standards —

there would be rapid evolutionary change, new species come into being. Evolution was not a long, gradual shift across aeons: it was very, very long periods of "stasis" followed by rapid change: punctuated equilibria.

Controversy still rages about this theoretical innovation, though its nature has shifted somewhat. Dennett, who devotes a considerable part of *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* to an attack on Gould, essentially claims that there is hardly anything of interest in the theory anyway, and it is only Gould's tendency to self-publicize which has ensured its notoriety.[23] However, Eldredge seems fairly convinced they had something important to say, and the accusation seems less persuasive in his regard. "Gould and I were regularly derided and dismissed as neo-saltationists for many years . . ." he writes.[24] ("Saltationism" is the discredited theory that new species literally pop into being in a single generation). There is an endnote in *The Selfish Gene* where Dawkins virtually claims to have come up with the idea of punctuated equilibria independently, adding: "I have since . . . become somewhat petulant — perhaps too much so — over the way the theory . . . has been oversold."[25] Andrew Brown comments: "A measure of the theory's success is that its opponents now deny there was anything new or interesting about it."[26]

Dawkins devotes a chapter of *The Blind Watchmaker* to an attack on the Gould/Eldredge theory.[27] He largely ignores the two central points of it — the fact of stasis, and the need to explain speciation (the division of a lineage into distinct species: neo-Darwinism implicitly shows no interest in species, and describes a natural world in which there is a sort of continuum of small variations). Instead, he focuses on the "saltationist" side to the question, charging Gould with confusion on the matter: Gould's "leaps" are still very, very slow on a human timescale.

It seems some of the heat was turned up in this debate by Gould's decision to challenge the gradualist starting-point more generally. "If gradualism is more a product of Western thought than a fact of nature," he wrote, "then we should consider alternative philosophies of change to enlarge our realm of constraining prejudices. In the Soviet Union, for example, scientists are trained with a very different philosophy . . . the so-called dialectical laws . . ." This was not a plea for Stalinist philosophy in science: "The dialectical laws express an ideology quite openly; our Western preference for gradualism does the same thing more subtly."[28] It was in the context of this debate that Gould remembered that he "learned his Marxism at his daddy's knee" — his father being a member of the Communist Party. This kind of stuff was a red rag to a bull. Eldredge recalls:

> As if we had laid our souls bare in *True Confessions*, punctuated equilibria was seized upon as a Marxist tract, plain and simple. Leading the charge was . . . British paleontologist Lambert Beverly Halstead — who, I am told, was a Marxist himself in his student days. Having seen the light, and knowing a Marxist (especially a supposedly self-confessed one), Halstead wrote to *Nature* with an astounding proposition: "Her Majesty's schoolchildren were being subjected to Marxist propaganda as they viewed the newly renovated dinosaur exhibit at the Natural History Museum . . ."[29]

In fact, Halstead was confusing punctuated equilbria with cladistics, a system of classifying evolutionary lineages. But this gives some flavor of the nature of the controversy at the time.

Similar politicised controversies surrounded other of Gould's innovations. In 1979, he presented a paper jointly written with Lewontin to a Royal Society conference, entitled "The Spandrels of San Marco."[30] (Lewontin couldn't be there because he has a problem with air travel.) Spandrels are an architectural feature, exhibited in a church in San Marco, Italy, which look as though they are part of the basic design. In fact they are not: they are a consequence of something else. Gould and Lewontin asked whether this was not true of evolutionary features, of supposed "adaptations." The adaptatist program looked to explain everything by some imagined evolutionary advantage. Suppose, though, there was no simple causality in this way — things "just happen?" Or they happen as a consequence of something else. Later, with Elizabeth Vrba, Gould coined the term "exaptation" to elaborate on this theme. Evolution sees "aptations," he argued; there are the familiar "adaptations," but there are also "exaptations," in which a trait that evolved due to one evolutionary pressure turns out to have a different use entirely — perhaps because the environment abruptly changes, and a trait suddenly comes into its own. A good example of exaptation would be the human mind: it evolved through whatever evolutionary pressures, but its current functions and attributes can't be reduced to those pressures; and having adapted, its use can become progressively extended, without reference to the original adaptive pressures.

Underlying all these things, plainly, is a dissatisfaction with the explanatory power of neo-Darwinism alone. To Gould, it seemed that mainstream evolutionary theory presented a picture of the gradual accumulation of change that was contradicted by the evidence, and explained much less that it seemed — or, perhaps, explained too much. For Gould, a very great deal of natural history was the result of pure chance, contingent circumstance. At heart, here, I think there is a concern to see evolution *as history*, rather than an abstract model — to identify and explain the actual shape of evolutionary history; in large part that Gould's sphere, palaeontology, is a historical science, accounts for this. Gould was impatient with explanations that focused only on one area of causality, and appealed — in the spirit of Darwin, he often said — for "pluralism."

The theme of contingency was one he returned to repeatedly. Gould, for instance, immediately embraced the theory that dinosaurs were wiped out by a meteor 65 million years ago, seeing it as a classic example of mere chance determining the shape of evolution.

There is an issue at the center of this that was crucial to Gould's worldview and politics. His book *Wonderful Life*, more than any other, spells out the meaning of all this.[31] The book describes the discovery and later reinvestigation of the fossils of the Burgess Shale in Canada, which date from the very beginnings of multicellular life, the "Cambrian explosion" of 580 million years ago. The extraordinary thing about the Burgess fauna, it turned out, is that many of them were bizarre organisms bearing no relation to anything that exists today. The lineage on which all living beings rest derives from only one of several possibilities which existed in the Cambrian era; the others just died out. But why they died out, and that which produced insects, mammals, etc survived, was the purest chance.

You press the rewind button and, making sure you thoroughly erase everything that actually happened, go back to any time and place in the past — say, to the seas of the Burgess Shale. Then let the tape run again . . . If each replay strongly resembles life's actual pathway, then we must conclude that what actually happened pretty much had to occur. But suppose the experimental versions all yield sensible results strikingly different from the actual path of life? What could we then say about the predictability of self-conscious intelligence? or of mammals? or of vertebrates? or of life on land? or simply of multicellular persistence for 600 million difficult years?[32]

Most, though not all, evolutionists would say they share this vision of history, and of humanity's place in it: there was absolutely nothing inevitable about the appearance of human beings, or even of intelligent life. But Gould's insistence on it was particularly sharp, and with a particularly political edge. Against any residual ideas we might have of a "chain of being," or a ladder of progress — ideas informed by a historical era in which progress meant imperialism, and the chain of being was racist — Gould defined humanity as an accident; indeed, for Gould even the notion that life became gradually more complex over time is a statistical illusion: the vast bulk of organic matter on earth is still bacteria.[33]

As Copernicus and Galileo dethroned the earth from the center of the universe, Darwin removed humanity from the center of nature. Gould wanted us to see how profound this was. We are an accidental little species, not yet even around for very long.

There are biologists, and other scientists, who reject this vision, who see complexity as the result of the natural organization of things — and complex systems, including life, intelligence, etc, as derived from the patterns formed by "random" chaos.[34] Gould didn't address himself to these new scientific theories, as far as I know. In any case, his sharp opposition to any notion of progress did not lead him to indifference on social questions — on the contrary.

Human Capacity (2): Intelligence

ON THE CONTRARY. GOULD, IT MUST BE REMEMBERED, was professor of Zoology and Geology at Harvard: it would be hard to imagine a more cloistered environment. Yet he chose to climb down from his ivory tower and deliver a blistering polemical critique of intelligence testing, with *The Mismeasure of Man*, first published in 1981, and then in second edition in 1996.[35] He takes inspiration from Darwin himself: "If the misery of our poor," Gould quotes him, "be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin." He sets out to show us how great, indeed, it is. Gould traces the whole history of intelligence testing, up to the IQ test itself, condemning it as an exercise in racism. His target is the "hereditarian" theory of IQ, that is, that intelligence is largely inherited, and that "intelligence" can be tested for.

For Gould, a great deal of natural history was the result of pure chance, contingent circumstance.

One thing illustrates a more general feature of Gould: in describing "state of the art" science in the past, and revealing the absurdity of its assumptions — the transparent prejudice — he warns us not to be complacent about our assumptions today. I will mention here three features of this powerful, moving book which bear special attention.[36]

In the First World War, Harvard psychologist Robert M Yerkes carried out a series of tests on American soldiers. These were of a similar nature to the tests imposed on new immigrants to the U.S. — which, notoriously, had "proven" that immigrants from southern Europe and elsewhere were extremely stupid. Yerkes tests showed that the average mental age of white Americans was slightly above moronity. Gould describes the significance of these findings: they became "a rallying point for eugenicists who predicted doom . . . caused by the unconstrained breeding of the poor and feebleminded, the spread of Negro blood through miscegenation, and the swamping of an intelligent native stock by the immigrant dregs of southern and eastern Europe."[37]

Gould subjects Yerkes' tests to an intensive critique, describing the spurious contents of the tests themselves, the difficult conditions — for the testees — under which they were set, and the fiddling, in effect, of the results to conform to prior prejudices (this latter being a feature of all intelligence testing). He also got some of his students at Harvard to sit the tests, and although they did fairly well, some "would have been fit only for the duties of a buck private."

He goes on to examine the core issue behind intelligence testing, the notion of "intelligence" itself. Modern tests look for "general intelligence," called "g," which is derived from a mathematical analysis performed on the results obtained on more specific areas of intelligence (verbal, spatial, etc). Gould calls this "reification": this "g" exists only as a statistical concept, but it is treated as if it were a real thing, which can then be used to divide and stratify human beings.[38]

It is not a question of rejecting all notions of intelligence. Gould does not deny that some people are better than other people at some things. But why not simply accept that some people are good at math, or verbally, etc; why try to find some overarching "intelligence?" Nor is it a question of denying that there may be some inherited aspect to people's particular talents. But, first, there is a common confusion in which the claim that, say, 80 percent of intelligence is "inherited" is taken to mean that in each individual there is only about a fifth which is environmentally shaped. In fact, it means that in 80 percent of cases there is a hereditary factor, which is entirely different. Gould was anxious that such statistics be understood. Second, proving that there is an inherited aspect to something tells us very little about how to address it. As Gould liked to point out, short sightedness is 100 percent hereditary, but can be entirely corrected for by wearing glasses.

The second edition of *The Mismeasure of Man* includes a review of *The Bell Curve* by Herrnstein and Murray, that notorious book which claims African-Americans are less intelligent than white. Gould destroys their argument. Simply, and in a few terse pages, he tears apart the very fabric of it. Revisiting the basic arguments of *The Mismeasure*, he concludes:

> . . . if Herrnstein and Murray are wrong about IQ as an immutable thing in the head, with humans graded in a single scale of general capacity, leaving large numbers of custodial incompetents at the bottom, then the model that generates their gloomy vision collapses, and the wonderful variousness of human abilities, properly nurtured, reemerges. We must fight the doctrine of *The Bell Curve* both because it is wrong and because it will, if activated, cut off proper nurturance of everyone's intelligence. Of course we can't all be rocket scientists or brain surgeons . . . but those who can't might be rock musicians or professional athletes.[39]

Non-overlapping Magisteria

In a sense, *The Mismeasure of Man* is a study in the arrogance of science — in this case the presumption of some scientists to be able to quantify something as elusive and delicate as "intelligence." The concern runs through Gould's work. And in one of his last books, he attempts to address more precisely that which is the proper sphere of science, and that which is not. He does so by examining the relationship of science to religion.

His conclusion is that are strict limits to the proper sphere of both, which he calls Non Overlapping Magisteria (NOMA). As he puts it, religion concerns the rock of ages, science the ages of rocks.[40]

Gould was, of course, a foremost opponent of so-called "creation science," and champion of the teaching of Darwin in schools. He was a witness in the so-called Scopes II trial in 1981, which found the Arkansas equal time law unconstitutional. One side to NOMA is to address what's different between fundamentalists who want to impose their superstitions on the whole of society, and the believers (of whatever faith) who have more modest, or personal-spiritual ambitions. The other is to challenge the tendency of modern science (and perhaps in particular in the form of popular science paperbacks) to claim to be providing universal answers to questions which are not really its business. Science, for Gould, can't tell us the meaning of life, and shouldn't try. Religion can't tell us about the natural universe and shouldn't try.

There is, here, an interesting distinction between Gould and his long-time opponent Richard Dawkins. Dawkins is a militant atheist, who champions science as precisely an alternative to any form of religion. He sees the two as sharply and irreconcilably opposed. Gould is no less atheistic; but his attitude to religion is different nonetheless. For one thing, he sees it much less as a purely intellectual pursuit, as though religious fundamentalists can be understood simply as people who have made bewildering intellectual decisions: they are a *social* phenomenon, requiring a social analysis.

A good example of this concern to understand, rather than simply condemn, his enemy, comes in Gould's account of the original Scopes trial, in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925. John Scopes, a high school teacher, was taken to court for teaching Darwin to his students. The prosecution was initially successful, though it marked the end in practice of Tennessee's antievolution law. Attacking Scopes and Darwin was the populist politician William Jennings Bryan. According to Gould, in addition to the more obvious religious objections to Darwin, Bryan had other concerns. He wrote, for example, in *Prince of Peace* (1904): "The Darwinian theory represents man as reaching his present perfection by the law of hate — the merciless law by which the strong crowd out and kill the weak."[41] Later, he told sociologist EA Ross that "such a conception of man's origin would weaken the cause of democracy and strengthen class pride and the power of wealth." (154-5) Examining the textbook on evolution, written by G W Hunter, which Scopes had used for his teaching, Gould found much to support Bryan's concern. For example:

> Just as certain animals or plants become parasitic on other plants or animals, these [poor] families have become parasitic on society. They not only do harm to others by corrupting, stealing, or spreading disease, but they are actually protected and cared for out of public money . . . If such people were lower animals, we would probably kill them to prevent them from spreading.[42]

And Hunter goes on:

> . . . there exist upon the earth five races . . . of man, each very different . . . These are the Ethiopian or Negro type . . . ; the Malay [etc] . . . and finally, the highest type of all, the Caucasians, represented by the civilised white inhabitants of Europe and America.[43]

Such scientific racism was par for the course in the 1920s (indeed, until after WWII). And perhaps Gould is giving Bryan too much credit. But it is typical of Gould to want to see the other side, to see if what had been involved in Scopes was simply Bible-bashing morons against the forces of enlightenment. The political use to which Darwinism was then, if only partly, being put, is of course another warning for today.

Still, with the concept of NOMA Gould bends over too far in attempting to find some sort of compromise with religion. He spends some time proving that even the Vatican accepts that there is a field of natural science into which theologians should not tread. But this, plainly, is the result of a long battle historically; and it is not only fundamentalists who are inclined to be less compromising than the Catholic hierarchy. Gould wants to preserve "facts" and "values" in separate spheres. But as Kenan Malik puts it: "But if our values do not emerge from the facts of our existence, whence do they derive? Unless we wish to believe that values are simply plucked out of the sky, then we must accept that there must be some relationship between the kind of values that we hold . . . and the kind of world in which we live."[44] If we are to base our view of the universe on the centrality of human inquiry, it is not easy to see how this can be reconciled to notions of "revelation." An individual might choose to leave unanswered the question whether scientific study of the universe requires a decision about God. But ultimately, it does. It is not an arbitrary, or purely personal issue — whether there is some intelligence responsible for, or guiding, or even as a "first cause" creator of, the cosmos, or not. It cuts to the heart of what science is.

THE CONCERN WITH DEFINING, and limiting, science to its proper place is one of the threads which ties Gould's work together. We live in a period when, in the Western world at least, religion has waned perhaps terminally — although not, of course, in the United States itself. Science, also, has less of the prestige it used to have. As recently as the 1960s, science and technology were seen to carry the promise of progress, expressed for instance in the space program. There had always been another, more suspicious and negative attitude to science — a fear of its dark side that led, among other things, to atomic bombs and Nazi death camps.

In the past couple of decades, the dark side, and the fear, has grown more prominent. While on the one hand, genetic science, the Human Genome Project and all the rest promise great advances, people are afraid: they are afraid of scientists "playing god," of GM foods, of weapons of mass destruction. There is a side to the global justice movement that fears and rejects the dark side of science. At the same time, paradoxically, there is a huge growth in "popular science." Books on cosmology are best sellers — *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking (who must be the first celebrity cosmologist) is only the best known. Physics and biology fill large shelves in bookshops. Interesting, chemistry doesn't seem to have inspired any blockbuster hits. Perhaps it's too prosaic: while physics can offer insight, or so it claims, into the very origins of the universe, biology can tell us, or so it claims, about how life works. These are big questions, The Big Questions. They help to fill a void.

Gould occupies an interesting place in all this. One of the most popular of science writers, much of his work is a warning against his own disciplines getting too big for their boots, a pooh-poohing of scientific pretension. At the same time, like Dawkins, he offers wonderful, inspiring insight into the power of science to explain great

The sheer range of Gould's reading must have infuriated his academic rivals — not to mention the sales of his books.

mysteries. Gould's columns for *Natural History* magazine often began from some small biological oddity, gradually moving from there to illuminate a bigger question. He was a consummate teacher.

His detractors considered him a self-publicist, and utterly confused. British evolutionist John Maynard Smith once claimed: "the evolutionary biologists with whom I have discussed his work tend to see him as a man whose ideas are so confused as to be hardly worth bothering with."[45] The sheer range of Gould's reading, one imagines, must have infuriated his academic rivals — not to mention the sales of his books. For sure, as in any controversy, there have been exaggerations and misunderstandings in those Gould participated in, and he played his part. But he stood on the side of fighting for democracy and social justice, and against oppression, and educated thousands of his readers in that spirit, and that is not a negligible thing.

Shortly before he died he completed his monumental *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, a review of which is outside the scope of this article. Clearly, Gould wanted to be remembered as a theorist, not only a popular essayist and polemicist. His theoretical contribution was surely formidable. But what, I think, will stick most in the mind of the general public is Gould's humanism and humanity. In a review of *Not In Our Genes* by Lewontin, Rose and Leon Kamin (whose book on IQ informed Gould's), he made this final comment, which can stand as a statement on his work, too:

> Groucho Marx caught the spirit of academic pettiness well when he delivered his inaugural address in song as president of Darwin (or was it Huxley) College in *Horsefeathers*: "Whatever it is, I'm against it." By contrast, Lewontin, Rose and Kamin have entered a prime area of academic debunking and emerged with a positive program. Indeed, they are calling for no less than a revolution in philosophy. They are also not unmindful of that oldest chestnut in the Marxist pantheon (Karl this time), the last thesis on Feuerbach: philosophers thus far have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.[46]

NOTES

1. Andrew Brown, *The Darwin Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999). But see also, for example, Kim Sterelny, *Dawkins vs. Gould* (London: Icon, 2001).

2. The precise nature of the ideology of Lewontin and others around him, and Gould for that matter, is an interesting question. There is a soft-Stalinist/Mao-oid drift to some of the work of Lewontin; Gould, politically, seems to have seen himself much more as a left-liberal with socialist leanings.

3. Edward O Wilson, *Sociobiology: the new synthesis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

4. Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene,* 2nd edition (Oxford University Press 1989, 1st ed published 1976).

5. Group selection theory more recently has made something of a comeback. See Elliott Sober and David Sloan Wilson, *Unto Others: the evolution and psychology of unselfish behavior* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

6. Dawkins.

7. There are many useful introductions to this debate. In addition to the references above, see in particular Ullica Segerstrale, *Defenders of the Truth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000). Although it focuses on more recent evolutionary psychology, Steven Rose and Hilary Rose, *Alas Poor Darwin* (London: Jonathon Cape, 2000), is an excellent introduction. See also Kenan Malik, *Man, Beast and Zombie* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2000).

8. Wilson, like Gould and Lewontin, was working at Harvard (he had been Lewontin's sponsor in the past). He probably should have known that these radical scientists, who were involved in protests against the war in Vietnam, who had been radicalized by the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and so on, would detect the resurgence of old-fashioned biological determinism in his speculations. Wilson has always acted the bemused, hurt professor: I don't know how genuine this is. Wilson himself is politically a liberal. See, for instance, *On Human Nature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1978).

9. Sociobiologists are quick to assert, in this context, the "naturalistic fallacy," falsely deriving "ought" from a biological "is." Gould also, in a different context, makes reference to

this argument. In much human sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, unfortunately, it is hard to see how ought is not being derived from is (or even is from ought . . .).

10. Stephen Jay Gould, *An Urchin In the Storm* (London: Penguin, 1987).

11. See especially, Steven Rose, *Lifelines*, (London: Penguin, 1997), Richard Lewontin, *The Doctrine of DNA* (London: Penguin, 1991).

12. See, for instance, "Natural Selection and the Human Brain: Darwin vs Wallace, in *The Panda's Thumb*.

13. The standard text is Jerome H Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, *The Adapted Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). But there is a stack of other stuff; see especially, Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (London: Penguin, 1997), and *The Blank Slate* (London: Penguin, 2002). For a critique, see Rose and Rose. An interesting critique from a different perspective is in Steven Mithen, *The Pre-History of the Mind* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).

14. Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 1995).

15. Rose and Rose.

16. A feminist critique can be found in Lynn Segal, *Why Feminism?*

17. Segerstrale.

18. Stephen Jay Gould, "More Things in Heaven and Earth," in Rose and Rose, p 98. A taste of the loathing for Gould in some quarters can be gained from an incident involving the founders of Evolutionary Psychology, Tooby and Cosmides. In 1997, in response to articles by Gould, they wrote an attack so blistering and abusive that the *New York Review of Books* refused to print it. Quote: "his essays become revealed as mini-theatricals carefully staged for purposes of self-aggrandisement" etc. Brown, pp 150-151.

19. More interesting and sophisticated version of evolutionary psychology include Geoffrey Miller, *The Mating Mind* (New York: Random House, 2001). There are also attempts to "reclaim" evolutionary psychology and sociobiology for the left. See especially Chris Knight, *Blood Relations: menstruation and the origin of culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), and Marek Kohn, *As We Know It: coming to terms with an evolved mind* (London: Granta, 1999).

20. Pinker, *The Blank Slate*.

21. Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer, *A Natural History of Rape* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

22. Niles Eldregde, *Reinventing Darwin* (Phoenix: Giant, 1995).

23. Dennett.

24. Eldredge, p 100.

25. Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene,* 2nd edition, p 287.

26. Brown, p 63.

27. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: Longman, 1986).

28. Stephen Jay Gould, "The Episodic Nature of Evolutionary Change" in *The Panda's Thumb* (London: Penguin, 1980), pp 153-4.

29. Eldredge, p 102.

30. Stephen J Gould and Richard C Lewotin, "The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: a critique of the adaptationist programe," in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, Series B, Vol. 205, no. 1161 (1979).

31. Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (London: Penguin, 1991); originally published by Century Hutchinson in 1989.

32. Gould, *Wonderful Life*, pp 48-50.

33. Stephen Jay Gould, *Life's Grandeur*, Jonathon Cape 1996, published in the United States as *Full House*.

34. Among the work in this field, see Stuart Kauffman. *At Home in the Universe* (New York: Viking, 1995), and for an excellent survey of this and other debates, George Johnson, *Fire in the Mind* (London: Penguin, 1997).

35. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 2nd edition (London: Penguin, 1996).

36. As an interesting aside, Lewontin, in his review of *The Mismeasure* . . . criticized it for being too untheoretical, and for drawing too heavily on American experience, which overemphasized the specifically racist content of intelligence testing. See Lewontin, "The Inferiority Complex" in *It Ian't necessarily So* (London: Granta, 2000).

37. Lewontin, "The Inferiority Complex," p 226.

38. There is an important issue here of more general applicability. In behavior genetics, many attributes, from intelligence to homosexuality to obesity to violence, are treated as "things" in this way, easily definable quantities for which a gene can be identified. But what, for example, is "violence?" The term covers many things.

39. Lewontin, "The Inferiority Complex," pp 377-8.

40. Stephen Jay Gould, *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1999).

41. Quoted in Gould, *Rocks of Ages*, p 154-155.

42. Gould, *Rocks of Ages*, pp 167-8.

43. Gould, *Rocks of Ages*, pp 168.

44. Kenan Malik, review of *Rock of Ages* in *New Statesman,* February 19, 2001.

45. Quoted in Brown.

46. Stephen Jay Gould, "Nurturing Nature" in *An Urchin in the Storm*, p 154.

The Minorities "Question"
Does the Left Have Answers?

Martin Oppenheimer

Ethnic and religious conflict in the world persists and deepens. The oppression of minorities in even liberal democracies continues. The movements of antimodernity and antisecularism, and their political parties, flourish while humanist and internationalist movements and parties barely survive. This in the face of ever-greater global economic integration, and considerable political integration as well. It appears that Marx and Engels' prediction in the *Manifesto* that "All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away," and their prognosis for progress via a bourgeoisie that would draw all nations into a secular "civilization," has become a Chimera.

But Marxists, by whatever definition, had come to understand long ago that things were more complicated. Two interrelated issues, the nation, and minorities within nations, have been at the center of Marxian, and more broadly, leftist or socialist debates for more than a century. The contested terrain has been the relative importance of class or economic variables versus nationality, ethnic, racial, religious and cultural variables. Parties and, in a few instances, states based (at least in their rhetoric) on Marxist theory have had to confront these issues "on the ground." The present essay will briefly survey the important Marxian analyses that have attempted to come to terms with them, and will conclude by trying to answer the question of whether or not there is any value today in utilizing Marxian theory and method in dealing with this complex subject.

We begin by stating the obvious: In today's world there are no longer any countries that are ethnically homogeneous. In no country do ethnic minorities share proportionally in the distribution of resources. And, less obvious, all states have "agendas" (open or hidden) regarding domestic minority groups.

Since minorities are always disadvantaged relative to the dominant ethnic group (except of course when a minority, for example, the white Anglo-Saxon group of a particular religion, *is* the dominant ethnic group), they will invariably mobilize at some point around nationalist or separatist slogans as one of their major political tendencies. (The other is the dream, or illusion, of integration.) Conversely, the dominant ethnicity perpetually resists equalization of resources, which would imply the full integration of the minority, because such integration (in the economy, in the political structure, and in "society" or the aristocracy) cannot be accommodated without profound alterations in the class structure, in political institutions and in elite social institutions. Each of these involves vested interests that can at best only partially accommodate the demands, and the largescale personal participation, of subordinate ethnic groups. Hence all states, which exist to protect such vested interests (a fundamental assumption of Marxism), have an ethnic agenda or program. All states are, as Omi and Winant put it, "racial states."

The class structure in its concrete, daily, visible form translates into the workings of the labor market and the occupational system. Disadvantage means that even when a subordinate minority has the same access to the set of occupations in the labor market as the dominant group, which to an extent is true in most modern capitalist societies, they do not share equal incomes and equal

Martin Oppenheimer *is the author of* White Collar Politics *(1985),* The State in Modern Society *(2000) and other works. He is an emeritus professor of sociology at Rutgers University, and an editor of* Critical Sociology.

positions of power. Generally, minorities have an occupational distribution that is inferior, as measured by the income, wealth and power this distribution generates. This has been basically true for virtually all written history, that is, the history of class societies, and it remains true today throughout the entire world.

The Prism of Class

MOST OF THE LEFT has traditionally viewed virtually all forms of the minority question (including the issue of minority nationalities) through the prism of class. Marx and Engels' quotation is symptomatic of the perspective that the problems of minority nationalities, and minorities generally, are transitional phenomena that would disappear with the internationalization of economic relations, and with the growth of a proletarian internationalism that would inevitably arise to combat imperialism, and overcome attempts by bourgeois powers to fan the flames of nationalism in order to divide the working class. But the historical development of international capitalism has in fact led to the opposite.

> Two interrelated issues, the nation, and minorities within nations, have been at the center of Marxian and, more broadly, leftist or socialist debates for more than a century.

As Trevor Purvis accurately summarizes the dilemma, "Capitalism and modernity lend a profound transient unstable quality to social life," so that even as "all that is solid melts into air," the nation "becomes the symbolic, institutional and practical site for the (re)imposition of some regularity and stability." In short, ethnocentrism (including national chauvinism, xenophobia, racism, antiimmigrant sentiment and so on) constitutes an island of psychological safety in a sea of uncertainty, the dissolution of traditional community and family relationships, rapid and frightening social change. "The failings of Marxism in dealing effectively with the national question," Purvis goes on, "have stemmed, at least in part, from an unwillingness to grant an adequate measure of autonomy to social relations of identity" that are not simply reducible to economic relations. Rather, such identity issues as race, nationality, religion and gender must be integrated into, and must inform and be informed by, class analysis.

It follows that since the state (not only the capitalist state) functions to assure the long-term survival of a dominant class, then the state must necessarily develop strategies to "deal" with subordinate classes *and* subordinate minorities (hence the conception that states have racial agendas). But states differ in their agendas because their class societies differ in the nature of their short-term projects. These projects range from coping with immediate economic crises (often accompanied by the rise of radical mass movements), nation-building (creating a unified nation out of disparate ethnicities), rationalizing a society with vestiges of precapitalist relations, the creation or reinforcement of an occupational structure that guarantees an adequate supply of cheap labor and a reserve army that functions to suppress wages, and insuring the continuation of internal divisions within the working class.

Many of these projects interact with one another, and historically have led to, or reinforced, the scapegoating of some minority, discrimination and quasi-castelike separation between different groups (segregated labor markets, housing, schooling, exclusion from politics, the geographic marginalization of minority ethnicities, etc.). The debates about these (often covert) agendas are expressed in a variety of ideological terms, ranging from the crudest racism all the way to support for civil rights in a society that requires a relatively rational exploitation of human resources and a minimization of conflict. These debates are mirrored by debates within the subordinate minority community as to the causes of, and solutions to, their "problem."

Authoritarian Solutions

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT agendas that modern capitalist states use to "deal" with their ethnic minorities? The fascist or Nazi state comes to power in a period of acute capitalist crisis. Mass movements of a fascist type promote a "solution" to this crisis by scapegoating one or more minorities and mobilizing the nation for war. The two are interrelated: mobilization requires national unity, and minorities potentially stand in the way. They are de facto enemy aliens and, together with political dissidents, are doomed to imprisonment and, at the extreme, physical extinction. For the Nazis, racism and specifically anti-Semitism were part of the program from the first. The demonization and dehumanization of an enemy is not unique to fascism, but it is significantly more pronounced because there are no forces within the country that might call for a moderation of such extreme measures.

The authoritarian states typical of the Third World present a more varied picture. The fundamental problem is that many now independent nations were once colonies whose borders were drawn by the European powers without regard to ethnic differences. The agenda of the new rulers, in their drive to modernize, requires what is loosely termed "nation-building." Minority nationalities' strivings for autonomy imply a splintering of the new nation that cannot be tolerated by the nation-building strategy. Hence attempts at their suppression, and long-term conflicts, are inevitable.

A historically different problem with many of the same consequences was the breakup of ancient empires that had always been multiethnic. These sprawling feudal powers (such as the Ottoman, the Russian, the Austro-Hungarian) ultimately proved incapable of competing (in the military, among other areas) with more efficient (and usually more homogeneous) bourgeois nations, and they collapsed. Austria-Hungary was carved up into "modern" nations (quite imperfectly, since bitter conflicts in the Balkans between and within nations continue) and the Ottoman Empire into one semimodern nation and numerous colonies under the domination of the victors of World War I. In all probability, only the 1917 Soviet revolution prevented the complete disintegration of the Czarist Empire, a centrifugal process that resumed with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

This is not to say that the former large multiethnic states or colonies (like India) were societies of peaceful ethnic coexistence, since even in those days minority ethnicities occupied subordinate positions and consequently organized movements for autonomy, or indeed, total independence. But they were at least tokenly tolerated and integrated, and sometimes given some local autonomy. Once the overall structure collapsed, or was abandoned (as in many colonies), minority nationalities felt they had a license to become self-determining (provided to them by both President Woodrow Wilson and V.I. Lenin). The resulting chaos made it almost inevitable that new states would suppress further expressions that might lead to more civil war and breakups.

The first real genocide of the twentieth century was the virtual extermination of the Armenians by Turkey. Nearly 2 million Armenians were killed between 1915 and 1923, including most of the 200,000 or so Armenians who had been drafted into the Turkish army. The nationalist spirit of the "Young Turks," who were bent on creating a unified modern nation uncluttered by minorities, was part of the equation. Turkey today continues to be plagued by internal unrest, mainly in Kurdish regions. Since 1992 between 2.5 and 5 million Kurds have been forcibly expelled from their homelands and scattered into cities as part of a long-term strategy of what amounts to "ethnocide:" the deliberate attempt to destroy an entire culture without necessarily exterminating its people.

Labor Power

IN MANY THIRD WORLD countries today the issue is not nation-building, with the associated need to eliminate "troublesome" minority nationalities. Instead, it is the need to sustain minorities (mainly the aboriginal population) as a source of cheap labor to work on plantations, in mines and otherwise to supply marginal labor. But "marginal" is only the appearance, since "the immiserated are . . . central to the capitalist productive process . . . " (Cockcroft, 1983: 233) because their participation at the lower levels of the global economy is essential, not only as household servants for the local bourgeoisie, but more importantly as workers in the sweatshop system. At the same time, of course, insofar as these groups live on their traditional lands and maintain their own languages, religions, etc., they continue to constitute a threat to the stability of the existing social order, in large part because of their oppressed and exploited status.

Sprawling feudal powers, such as the Ottoman, Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, ultimately proved incapable of competing with more efficient bourgeois nations.

Extermination is no longer an acceptable policy for modern bourgeois states, even though their histories have often been virtually genocidal with respect to native populations, and even though they may tolerate it in other states. But the pattern of the old empires, where minorities were able to obtain some minimal cultural and political autonomy, is equally unacceptable, and secession has really not been permitted in any modern state. Neither outright repression, nor independent existence, are consistent with the economic project of modern capitalism, which requires that political units be unified and that capitalists have access to a wide range of labor power that is organized on a rational rather than on a segregated basis. Sooner or later, willingly or not, modern capitalism requires integration, be it ever so imperfect. In any case, minorities demand it as one of their several political demands, and social peace (a prerequisite for a positive investment climate) also requires it.

The range of options and debates concerning the degree to which minorities are to be integrated within the liberal bourgeois state, and how this is to take place, is quite extensive, however. Moreover, these debates fluctuate over time between acceptance of minorities (and immigrants), and hostility (and exclusionary policies). Full integration is excluded because too many vested interests would be challenged. But more to the point, the need for particular kinds of labor power is a powerful determinant of state strategy, especially the rules governing immigration and citizenship. In past centuries, slavery and indentured servitude were sometimes used to provide cheap labor, and although these are illegal today, they are still practiced in some form on the margins of the economy even in modern industrialized countries.

Poverty-stricken Third World people are "pushed" to seek work in the industrial countries, which seek such workers to augment their own labor forces in sectors of the economy ranging from farm labor to meat packing to information technology. During boom periods skilled workers and carefully selected unskilled workers (for example, domestics) are encouraged. During periods of economic woe, "underpaid migrant workers . . . become an important resource for employers" in order to cut costs and undermine domestic labor standards. (Cockcroft, 1986:15)

The stigmatization of some groups forces them into sectors of the economy associated with "dirty work" (dishwashers, healthcare aides, garbage collection, gardening and of course sweatshop labor) and in many instances into niches of the economy that are necessary but not sufficiently profitable to attract major investment (neighborhood merchants, pawnbrokers, lower echelon motels, gas stations, niche ethnic markets such as hairdressing, funeral parlors and so on) Thus the subordinate status of minorities is functional to the class structure. Bigotry rationalizes discrimination, which turns victims into sources of cheap labor.

A certain level of un- and underemployment is functional as a threat to the employed in order to keep labor costs down. And the larger social order requires scapegoats to divert the attention of broader layers of dissatisfied people away from the real source of their troubles. When the media constantly connect the "dysfunctional" behaviors of the poor and the unemployed to minority and immigrant status, scapegoating is accomplished and bigotry is reinforced. And when minorities come to see other minorities as their main enemies, scapegoating works to divert attention from the real problem.

Modern parliamentary states also vary in their historical traditions, which become political weapons in the service of one or another agenda. There are states that base citizenship on membership in the ethnicity, the "Volk," on the law of blood, so that there is a legal "right of return" for those who belong. This can then become the rationale to exclude others. Other countries, such as France, are committed to a form of secularism in which to be a citizen means to be totally integrated. This implies censure, and even persecution, of ethnicities (e.g. Muslims) when they become inconvenient with respect to the labor market. In a period of labor surplus, it is virtually inevitable that people of both native and foreign-born extraction will suffer disproportionally from unemployment, especially among youths, and that crime will increase. This in turn becomes the rationale for scapegoating the immigrant, while the native becomes vulnerable to racist and neo-Nazi propaganda.

In still other countries that are nations of immigrants, like the United States and Canada, policy straddles the fence between integration and cultural pluralism, with debates about the meaning of these concepts a constant. Such debates are increasing in other countries as the number of immigrants increases. Nations of immigrants are also societies complicated by the presence of aborigines (true as well in many Latin American countries), who live on the very bottom rungs of the economic structure.

Colonial conquest has resulted in the colonizers becoming more numerous than the original inhabitants. These have been driven off their lands and turned into a marginal sub- or lumpenproletariat of day laborers, or forced to scratch out a miserable existence on marginal lands, or herded into reserves (or refugee camps) to make their livings, at best, as anthropological or touristic curiosities. Today such groups constitute, today, the absolutely poorest populations in the world. It is difficult to find any positive function for such immiseration, even within capitalism, aside from the very minimal benefit to the better-off citizenry of having access to an unending supply of cheap domestics.

2.

WHAT ANSWERS HAS THE radical movement provided to the minorities question? Let it be said at the outset that we have no examples of a socialist state to guide us. The Soviet Union, despite its Marxist and socialist rhetoric, was a society dominated by a bureaucratic ruling class, and lacking the kinds of democratic institutions (including at the workplace) advocated by Marx and the First and Second Internationals. However, it did have a supposedly positive policy towards minority nationalities, encoded in Soviet law, and based, at least in theory, on the actual writings of Lenin, Stalin and (according to them) conforming to Marxist principles.

In 1914 Lenin wrote an essay, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," in which he attacked the position of others within the broader European socialist movement, most particularly Rosa Luxemburg, on the subject of minority nationalities. Lenin viewed the national state as the form of political structure under which capitalism can best develop. He advocated both the independence of nations that find themselves subordinated to larger national bodies, as under Czarism, and nationalities subject to colonial masters, because, like Marx, he saw the historical struggle against feudal restrictions and colonialism as a progressive struggle. However, in common with most other Marxists, Lenin did not separate the "minorities" as contrasted to the "minority nationalities" question. They were treated as if they were synonymous. This was to lead to some serious problems, as we shall see.

Self-Determination

LENIN DREW A DISTINCTION between two periods of capitalism that are quite different as far as nationalism is concerned. First is the "period of the downfall of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of bourgeois-democratic society." Here self-determination is a progressive demand, laying the foundation for modern capitalism and the accompanying development of the working class. This stage implies "the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants . . . into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general and for national rights in particular." (Lenin, 556-57) The independent state, freed of its colonial and feudal shackles, is the form in which the "freest, widest and speediest development of capitalism" can take place, Lenin said. But later we have "the period of definitely-crystallized capitalist states . . . with a strongly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie." Now there are nations "that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse . . . [pushing] into the forefront the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international labor movement." At this point the proletariat must evaluate "every national demand . . . from the angle of the class struggle of the workers." (564)

What answers has the radical movement provided to the minorities question? Let it be said at the outset that we have no examples of a socialist state to guide us.

Lenin's view pretty much echoed the resolution of the London International Socialist Labour and Trade Union Congress of 1896, which similarly supported the right of self-determination of all nations, but also called on the workers of all countries to unite in order to defeat international capitalism.

Rosa Luxemburg attacked this argument, as Lenin himself points out, because in her analysis, the "right to self-determination" of small nations "is rendered illusory by the development of the great capitalist powers and by imperialism." (554) In brief, Lenin's two stages had been merged into one in the period of late capitalism. But she also attacked Lenin's formulation as overly rigid. Even Marx and Engels, who supported the Polish and Hungarian movements for independence, did not support others when they believed that such movements objectively aided a great power (Russia), which they saw as the main obstacle to all progress. But by Luxemburg's time, she thought, the period of bourgeois democratic revolutions had passed, and the Polish nobility and bourgeoisie had become dependent on Russian capitalism for its markets.

Luxemburg extended her argument from the Polish case to all independence movements, since real liberation, in the era of globalization as we might say, had surely made smaller and newer nations politically impotent. (Purvis, 220) Unlike Lenin, she paid little attention to the colonial world, but her logic would have led her to support national liberation movements only to the extent that their programs advocated the abolition of class oppression. For Luxemburg, "any positive evaluation of a national movement would depend on whether its success could potentially guarantee the sovereignty necessary for national autonomy as well as the creation of a political arena that would further the possibilities of building international class consciousness amongst the working class." (Bronner, 18)

Luxemburg strenuously objected to the simplistic slogan of "the right of self-determination" because it failed to connect with working class politics and with the goal of socialism. The Wilsonian slogan of self-determination would divert the proletariat from thinking internationally. In a number of national independence movements in the colonial world these two different approaches, both claiming a Marxist pedigree, would cause bitter divisions between those forces advocating a minimalist program of independence, with discussion of a socialist program put off to the future, and those promoting a program of independence and socialism at the same time.*

Bauer's Theories

LENIN'S LONG ESSAY, though primarily aimed at Luxemburg, also tangentially attacks the Austro-Hungarian Marxist Otto Bauer as opportunistic and, perhaps worse, basing his theory on psychology. The Austro-Hungarian Empire surely presented a multiethnic picture rivaling the Russian for complexity and diversity. But in Austria-Hungary the social-democratic movement was organized on a mass basis and advocated evolutionary change through parliament; Lenin's party on the other hand was a centralized vanguard revolutionary party.

The nationalities problem was similar in both countries, but the Bolsheviks feared the centrifugal dangers of granting autonomy to the different ethnic constituencies of the party (for example, the Jewish Bund), even though Lenin advocated self-determination for minority nationalities, while the Austrian party was prepared to accept, or perhaps was forced to concede, that national differences within the Empire logically implied a social-democratic party with considerable rights for different nationality groups within the party. The contradiction between the Bolshevik program, and its centralized internal structure, would become clear later on under Stalin.

Bauer did not advocate self-determination, that is, independence, for the different minority nationalities within the Hapsburg Empire. Such small states could not be economically or politically viable. More importantly, he felt this format would be too divisive and would lead to territorial conflicts, as indeed it has. Instead, he persuaded the Austrian Social-Democratic Party to advocate a program of "national-cultural autonomy" in which different communities sharing particular historical experiences and developing a common consciousness, or character (hence Lenin's charge that Bauer's theory had a psychological basis), would be able to coexist in a democratic federation.

These national communities would be autonomous in cultural matters and would be protected from the domination of any one larger nationality; there would not even be a national "official" language. But this did not mean the end of the socialist project. On the contrary: it was important to understand that national or cultural differences "modulate" the way workers encounter the capitalist system, so that if they are not to be pushed "into the arms of nationalism" the socialist movement needed to be both internationalist and multinationalist, that is, recognize and legitimate workers' membership in different cultural communities. (Forman, 106) Thus Bauer recognized what many socialists did not: simplistic calls for proletarian solidarity, or programs that promoted full integration for minorities without what might be called "cultural pluralism," would fall on deaf ears.

Neither Luxemburg's rejection of the slogan of self-determination in favor of a straight-forward call for international proletarian solidarity, nor Bauer's middle-of-the-road theory of cultural autonomy worked out. The internationalism of the Second International collapsed with the beginning of World War I. The collapse of the Hapsburg Empire and its division into separate states put an end to Bauer's dream, although he himself remained active in the Austrian socialist movement after the war. He died in 1938, the same year Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany. But did Lenin's strategy do any better?

*In the Algerian war of independence against France, two liberation movements contested for dominance, the FLN, which became victorious, called for a movement that muted internal class differences, while the MNA, which lost out, advocated an explicitly socialist perspective. In the Spanish civil war, a similar conflict within the Loyalist side took place, with Communists and socialists opting for a minimalist anti-fascist program, while Trotskyists and anarchists advocated a more radical anticapitalist program as part of the anti-fascist struggle. Much later, different factions within black nationalism in the U.S. would also echo this debate, in the form of the conflict between "cultural nationalists" (minimalists) and "radical nationalists" (maximalists). Once upon a time there was, similarly a conflict between "bourgeois" (minimalist) Zionists and socialist or labor Zionists, who advocated an Israel structured on socialist principles.

Stalin's Repudiation

NATIONS WITHIN LARGER NATIONS, Lenin and Stalin both insisted, had the right to federation status, or to regional autonomy (both later incorporated into the Soviet Union's structure) but also the right to secede. Stalin's famous essay "Marxism and the National Question" actually preceded Lenin's major piece, but it was significantly based on Lenin's earlier pronouncements. In this essay, Stalin said that "no one (has) the right *forcibly* to interfere in the life of the nation, to *destroy* its schools and other institutions, to *violate* its habits and customs, to *repress* its language, or *curtail* its rights," a sentiment that, history would show, would be completely contradicted once Stalin gained full power. (Forman, 129)

> Otto Bauer recognized what many socialists did not: calls for proletarian solidarity, or programs that promoted full integration for minorities without what might be called "cultural pluralism," would fall on deaf ears.

The slogan of self-determination for subject nations worked all too well as the civil war that accompanied the establishment of the Soviet state developed. Finland proclaimed independence in April 1917, even before the Revolution. By the end of 1918, Forman tells us, thirteen new states had been created in a centrifugal process not unlike that of the early 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet regime. " . . . claims for a right to self-determination came into conflict with the revolution itself . . . Most . . . of the regimes ruling the new states were anti-socialist," and so they became bases for Western intervention (Forman, 132). In 1920 Stalin repudiated the principle of secession. He began to rapidly subordinate the structures and cultures of the Soviet Union's "autonomous" republics to the need to create a cohesive, overarching "socialist" state, one that was by then suffering isolation in the absence of revolution in the West. Soon the Third or Communist International would begin to mold its member parties throughout the world to fit the foreign policy needs of the Soviet Union, as interpreted by Stalin and his bureaucracy. And that included, quite importantly, these parties' positions on the minorities in their own countries.

By the early 1930s Stalin and his colleagues had reversed the old socialist dictum that the national question had to be seen in socialist terms. Instead, "socialism" as practiced in the Soviet Union had become synonymous with national unity, basically what we now call nation-building. This permitted Stalin to deal with national minorities depending on their degree of loyalty. The consequence was that over the years tens to hundreds of thousands of people of specific nationalities (Cossacks, Ukrainians, Estonians, Volga Germans and others) were murdered or intentionally starved to death, or sent into internal exile under the most dire conditions. Interspersed throughout the period since 1917 was an on-again, off-again policy of outright anti-Semitism, even though an autonomous republic, Birobidjan, was set up for Jews (albeit in Siberia) in which the Yiddish language survived.

In sum, Stalinist policy towards minorities failed to "solve" the nationalities "question." Propaganda campaigns against racism, which was held to be a symptom of capitalist decadence, failed to eradicate racist outbreaks against visiting African students or, in the German Democratic Republic, attacks on Vietnamese guest workers. Due to its repressive and manipulative character, Stalinism succeeded in driving the quest for genuine self-determination and equality by minorities underground. When the Stalin bureaucracy then collapsed, a storm of secessionist movements was unleashed. Many of these movements soon became ultranationalist and quasi-fascist, resulting in the persecution of minorities within the secessionist states themselves. Stalin's legacy, therefore, continues to haunt the peoples of the former Soviet Union long after the death of the USSR.

3.

The United States as a nation of immigrants also contains within its borders two very large "racial" immigrant minorities, African-Americans and Mexican-Americans (by far the largest group of Hispanic background). In the period during which leftist movements were significant, that is, prior to the end of World War II, the African-American minority was central to any discussion of minorities within the socialist and communist left.

The "Negro question" involved two interrelated issues: What were the "Negroes," that is, were they a *national* minority, or a minority but not a nationality; and, flowing from the first, what did the left pose as a "solution" to "the problem"? The problem that these questions were intended to confront was of course the fact that blacks were still segregated in much of the country, and discriminated against in all of it. What most (not all) elements of the left shared was a traditional opposition to this situation based on the humanist assumption of the unity of all people, particularly all workers, and consequently a desire to recruit the black "masses" to a socialist perspective.

Black members of the Socialist Party such as W.E.B. DuBois and, later, A. Philip Randolph (to mention two of the best-known) were important in trying to promote this commitment. DuBois, one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, joined the Socialist Party in 1911, having famously declared, a few years earlier, that in the socialist trend "lies the one great hope of the Negro American" (Meier, 64). But he quit the party a year later, discouraged at its lack of militancy on the issue. Randolph worked for Socialist candidates and himself got 200,000 votes as Socialist candidate for New York state comptroller in 1920, but then also withdrew from the party. In 1925 he began to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, which would become a mainstay of civil rights efforts for many years.

The Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs' day did not consider blacks a special issue requiring particular attention. In the era of large-scale immigration, the party contained within its structure a series of foreign-language federations in order to recruit those who had been radicals in the old country, as well as to expand membership from the ranks of the downtrodden and exploited immigrant workers. By 1917 some 40 percent of the party's 80,000 members belonged to foreign language groups. Although the Socialist International, at its Stuttgart Congress in 1907, had opposed immigration restrictions based on race or ethnicity, the American party was not unified on the immigration issue, with some advocating limits, and was particularly hostile to Asian immigration.

Members' opinions about blacks "ranged all the way from the militant views of William English Walling, a Socialist founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to the white supremacy of Victor Berger." (Shannon, 50) In some Southern states blacks were segregated in separate locals. Officially, however, the party's view was that discrimination was part and parcel of white capitalist America's attempt to divide the working class, and that the only solution was to unite under the banner of socialism. But "the party made no special effort to attract Negro members . . . " (Shannon, 52)

The Black Belt Thesis

In 1919 the left-wing of the Socialist Party, as well as most of the foreign-language federations, broke away ultimately to become the Communist Party. But no significant change in policy concerning blacks really took place until the Comintern (Third International) Resolution of 1928, by which time Stalin had gone a considerable distance in consolidating his control of the Soviet Union, its Communist Party, and the Comintern. The Comintern Congress decided that the American Party should reorient its policy, and should adopt Lenin and Stalin's approach to minority nationalities in the form of what was called "the Black Belt thesis," meaning "that blacks in the Black Belt South constituted a nation with the right to self-determination." (Horne, 203)

The Black Belt, this thesis held, was a virtual colony within the United States, and blacks had the right to establish their own state given that they lived on a contiguous territory, shared a historical tradition, and a culture, including a literature. This self-determination could be realized only in the course of a proletarian revolution, which would lead to the establishment of a "Negro Soviet Republic" in the predominantly black areas of the American South. James Allen, the most prominent Communist theoretician on this issue, proclaimed that "the plantation South has all the prerequisites for providing a 'Peasant War' as ally of the proletarian revolution" (Allen, 175). Since blacks would have to carry out the as yet incomplete bourgeois revolution in the South, this meant that their struggle for self-determination would assume the character of a national liberation movement. Allen denied, at the time, that migration into urban areas and to the North was sufficiently important to invalidate the thesis. Yet even as the depression began, the same year as the Comintern resolution, the Black Belt commenced melting away.

The early days of Communist reorientation were marked by the creation of several groups set up and run by them, notably the American Negro Labor Congress (actually the first move in this direction), in 1925 and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, in 1931. This was during the "hard" or "third" period of the Soviet state, during which the Communists set up dual or parallel organizations in opposition to liberal or socialist ones, on the principle, promoted by Stalin on a world-wide basis, that other organizations were "social-fascist," no better than fascists because they were deluding the masses by promoting reform measures such as the New Deal or, for that matter, integration. Leaders of reform organizations such as the NAACP were maligned. The result was that in the depth of the great depression, black membership was minuscule (Nolan, 100).

The bankruptcy of this approach became evident after the comprehensive defeat of the left in Germany in 1933 — in part due to the Communists' hostility to the German Social-Democratic Party, and the consequent failure of the German left to unite. A major change in the Communist position on "the Negro Question" then took place. The theory of self-determination was muted, though it did not disappear, and the period (1934-1945 with one interruption) of the broad front group dominated Communist strategy. In 1935 the Community Party was instrumental in organizing the National Negro Congress, which was intended to swallow, rather than compete, with the NAACP, and which involved many prominent black activists. A. Philip Randolph was elected the first chairman. The strategy of the broad antifascist, antiracist alliance attracted many blacks to the party, including many leading intellectuals such as Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright. It appeared that the theory that blacks were an oppressed nation within the United States had done little for the CP, although of course the idea of black nationalism as such long preceded the party's 1928 discovery of it.

Subsequently the party went through several more reversals: a reintroduction of the nation idea during the period of the Stalin-Hitler Pact (a new "hard line" period) during which black membership declined dramatically, a reversion to a much softer line that basically put "the Negro question" on the back burner during the war against the Nazis, a return to a harder line briefly after 1945, and by the mid-1950s, once again a more cooperative, collaborative position. The debate about why and how these fluctuations took place is outside the scope of this essay; what is clear is that although it was never as simple as a phone call from Moscow (there was always internal debate preceding a change in the party's position), the ultimate determinant of the party's policy on minorities in the U.S. (as well as on other issues) inevitably ended up reflecting the policies of the Soviet Union, which vacillated over the years depending on both internal political, and foreign policy, considerations. It was only after the death of Stalin and a general loosening of discipline both in the U.S. party and abroad, that the slogan of self-determination was finally abandoned and that the party accepted that " . . . the form of (the Negro struggle) under American conditions is integration" (Davis, 1956:16).

Black Power

THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT of the civil rights movement beginning in the mid-1950s provided a new context in which the now much reduced left might be able to grapple with the minorities issue. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. among others was influenced by socialist, as well as Gandhian, ideas. But by the mid 1960s the nonviolent movement appeared to have stalled. The white power structures of Northern urban areas were largely invulnerable to nonviolent protest, and black social democrats in the nonviolent, integrationist wing of black protest, such as Bayard Rustin and James Farmer, soon found themselves marginalized as the slogan "black power" became more popular. The headlines now featured the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party.

The slogan of black power has been interpreted to mean many different things, ranging from advocating a black republic in some part of the South, to Marcus Garvey's back to Africa movement, to the Nation of Islam's creation of small-scale black enterprises, to black economic and political control of black enclaves ("ghettos") in the larger cities to the promotion of black pride, knowledge of black history and black cultural institutions. The common thread has been emphasis on group solidarity, and the development of autonomous institutions, without regard, in most instances, to class differences. Implied, and often stated explicitly, is that black power means black nationalism, that is, the conception that blacks constitute a nation within a nation. However, few black nationalist organizations explicitly avowed a socialist program.

The Black Panther Party for Self Defense was formed in Oakland, California in 1966. Its program at first went only so far as to advocate the expropriation of businesses in black communities that failed to provide employment. By 1968, however, the organization was advocating "revolutionary nationalism" as against "cultural nationalism." By the former, Panther leader Huey P. Newton seemed to envision the abolition of capitalism altogether and the nationalization of industry. By the latter he meant a concentration on culture at the expense of a social program.

Similarly, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, centered in the auto plants of the Detroit area, was a proletarian organization that formed separate black caucuses within the various auto plants and United Automobile Workers Union locals, and advocated an explicitly socialist program that was influenced by a variety of leftist organizations with prior histories in Detroit. By the mid-1970s the Panther organization had disappeared as a viable force, the victim of outright police repression, endless court trials, schisms, and its own inability to overcome its lumpenproletarian background. Newton was murdered in a drug-related incident in 1989. As for the League, it too suffered from internal disputes and splits, and repression (some of it sponsored by the Auto Workers leadership). By the late 1980s it too was gone from the scene.

The white left played an ambiguous role in the histories of the BPP and the League. Many progressive whites were seduced by the military posturings of the Panthers and, while playing a useful role in fundraising for their many trials, failed to note the gradual slide of the organization into gangsterhood. The League, on the other hand, was if anything too much of an attraction to various leftist organizations, some of which began to see Detroit as America's Petrograd. But a great deal of serious education did take place around the League and its various branches, and many of its "graduates" went on to work in other progressive venues. Other elements of the more mainstream left wanted little if anything to do with the revolutionary, sometimes Maoist, rhetoric of any of these revolutionary nationalists. In any case, cultural nationalism bereft of any significant critique of capitalism (for example, the Nation of Islam) dominated, and still dominates, what remains of the black power message. The 1965 assassination of Malcolm X, who was reportedly moving leftward in his own political development, followed by that of Martin Luther King in 1968 just as he began to criticize the Vietnam War and move more specifically in a socialist direction, graphically illustrated the obstacles facing blacks with a serious commitment to an anti-capitalist analysis of racism.

4.

FOR REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISTS as well as other radical thinkers, the black power slogan is based on the theory that the black ghetto constitutes an internal colony, so that black power implies a national liberation movement similar to those in the former colonial world.

In the early 1960s, Harold Cruse tells us, "the new Afro-American nationalists began to see the domestic colonialist nature of the Negro's position in the United States." (Cruse, 433) This idea caught on: in what was arguably the most important manifesto outlining the black power ideology, Carmichael and Hamilton state quite bluntly that "black people in this country form a colony . . . they stand as colonial subjects in relation to the white society. Thus institutional racism has another name: colonialism." (5)

> Cultural nationalism bereft of any significant critique of capitalism dominates what remains of the black power message.

The specifics of this theory were elaborated by the sociologist Robert Blauner. He interpreted the then current riots, expressions of nationalism, and the movement for control of ghetto institutions "as responses to colonial status" (1969:393). Although not literally colonies, the black ghettos of the United States share some of the characteristics of classical colonies, especially "a relationship by which members of the colonized group tend to be administered by representatives of the dominant power." (396) As a first step in coping with this oppressive situation Blauner (together with many others) supported building a black political power base in order to promote community control of schools, control of anti-poverty programs and perhaps even creating indigenous police forces. White control of ghetto institutions should be withdrawn, and technical assistance provided "when asked for." Yet, Blauner admitted, it was doubtful that such programs by themselves would end the colonial status of the ghetto.

Today, when a dozen cities have black-dominated political structures, and a dozen black Congressional districts send black representatives to Washington, the weakness of the theory stands exposed. The colonial analogy was on target up to a point. The larger black ghettos export their labor (rather than raw materials) to work in the homes, factories, stores and offices of white society; their bourgeoisie is small and significantly dependent on outside capital and in the case of professionals, outside employment; the ghetto infrastructure of education, social welfare, policing and housing is controlled from the outside, and most important of all, there is virtually no black-owned major capitalist enterprise that could provide significant employment. Even the sweatshops are either owned by outsiders or are feeder plants (maquiladoras) for outside enterprises; even the drug trade is ultimately controlled from "downtown."

The internal colonialism theory, therefore, while accurately describing a certain reality, poses no solutions because it fails to deal with the absence of capital investment, much less black capital investment. Moreover, that reality misses the fact that many blacks have fled those parts of metropolitan areas that qualify as "ghettos," which means, practically, subtracting themselves from the pool of potential leaders.

Luxemburg's skepticism about the economic and political viability of small nations in the imperialist era is equally valid when it comes to the viability of the black ghetto: it is impotent in the era of globalization. Insofar as the internal colony model has relevance, one could say that the ghetto is another instance of "dependent development," or, a case of "the development of underdevelopment." The inner city poverty that we see is not the result of a lack of development: it is, rather, the consequence of a particular kind of development stemming from the workings of American capitalism in the era of globalization.

Real World Economics

THIS IS BASICALLY THE POINT made in a series of books by the sociologist William Julius Wilson. Economic forces that have little to do with racism as such do disproportionally negatively impact black communities (the definition of institutional racism in short). They do so because even as blacks migrated to the big cities from the post-slavery South (the melting black belt), these cities began to lose their industrial bases. The hard core of the black proletariat became concentrated in the very industries that were soon to move to the non-union South and offshore. The growth sectors in employment required educational levels not widely available in the ghetto, and/or were located outside the cities. The consequences are devastating: "High rates of joblessness trigger other neighborhood problems that undermine social organization, ranging from crime, gang violence, and drug trafficking to family breakup and problems in the organization of family life" (1996:21). In the framework of the concept of institutional racism, this has purposively little to do with what race or ethnicity happens to be affected. The victims could be, and often are, Latinos or even whites, though the latter are not impacted to the same degree. Conceivably there could even be white areas that resemble internal colonies to some degree.

The internal colonialism thesis, the related dependency thesis (the development of underdevelopment) and Wilson's thesis concerning the relationship between ghetto problems and deindustrialization are by no means incompatible. Indeed, when they are presented in an integrated way, as Manning Marable attempts to do in his appropriately titled *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, the reform proposals of moderate black power advocates as well as those of Wilson and other social democrats (basically advocating New Deal-style programs) seem less than adequate to overcome the workings of capitalism in the era of globalization. Blauner and Wilson in fact say as much. But their strategies differ: black power supporters talk of community power at a time when communities' power is diminishing, and left liberals talk of race-neutral programs that will help build coalitions for piece-meal change at a time when liberalism is close to politically impotent and the labor movement, its ally, is growing weaker by the day. Only Marable proposes an explicitly anticapitalist program, though of course he was preceded by a number of other black scholars such as DuBois and Oliver Cromwell Cox. Yet the progressive coalition he envisions to promote a more radical program seems even farther offstage than liberal reformism.

The issues that the left must confront in order to develop a strategy for answering the minorities "question" have historically been twofold: First, is the oppression of minorities in its many forms, including institutional racism, inherent in (that is, functional for) capitalism, or is it dysfunctional, an aberration, so that reforms within capitalism that will diminish if not solve "the problem" can be achieved? Second, in terms of analyzing the agents for change, are class and economic structures and movements subordinate to the force of race, ethnicity, and national identity, or is the race question subordinate to the class question, as C.L.R. James, the West Indian Marxist, among others, said?

The argument of the "dysfunctionalists" follows the tradition of mainstream sociologists of race relations in the U.S. In brief, modern capitalism, which is based on Enlightenment philosophy and the development of rational legal structures requires that status be assigned by achievement, or performance. Discrimination of any kind whatsoever is subversive of that agenda. It interferes with the efficient assignment of personnel to a broad array of tasks requiring different levels of talent and education. Since discrimination also generates discontent and protest, it tends to create disruptive situations that are not conducive to investment. Hence, the modernization of the South, including investment by Northern capital, together with black protest, virtually forced the South to abandon segregation in many of its institutions, most notably in its political structures. Inevitably the efficient development of capitalism will lead to continued progress, and doors and ceilings will be opened to provide equal opportunity to minority groups, women, etc.

Most if not all Marxists hold to a contrary theory, with some variations. For Cox, the divide and conquer thesis was paramount: "Today it is of vital consequence that black labor and white labor in the South be kept glaring at each other, for if they were permitted to come together in force and to identify their interests as workers, the difficulty of exploiting them would be increased be-

The precise articulation of class and minorities remains unresolved.

yond calculation." (487) Capitalist entrepreneurs have played the "race card" on innumerable occasions to undermine unionization campaigns, scapegoat blacks and other minorities, including immigrants, for economic troubles, and convince white workers to vote for conservative politicians and against their interests as workers.

But there is more: inasmuch as discrimination functions to exclude people from some kinds of jobs, it provides the mechanism to locate those people in lower-paid and less-skilled strata of the labor market that are necessary for the operation of the system; and, by maintaining unequal educational and job opportunities, to guarantee a "reserve army" of the un- and underemployed to act as a drag on the wages and working conditions of the employed. Discrimination, in short, functions to guarantee lower wages for all workers, not only minorities.

The labor market is at the same time *split* (meaning that two groups of workers doing the same work get different wages, so that the lower group in effect threatens the higher one, which hesitates to ask for more), *segregated* (meaning that different groups get locked into, and locked out of, different occupations, which assures their availability at a given wage, e.g. "women's jobs"); and *segmented* (meaning that different sectors of the economy require different types of workers at different wages, so that it is necessary to make such workers available via discrimination, e.g. fast-food workers or sweatshop workers).

As for the question of agency (class versus ethnicity as the paramount explanation for the "problem" and the organizing principle for mobilizing for change) no one on the left any longer proposes one to the exclusion of the other. C.L.R. James, who makes class the primary variable, says, for example, that " . . . to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental." (283)

Leftist Dilemmas

Two issues still remain to plague leftist theorists: can capitalism be reformed so that "the problem" can be significantly ameliorated without fundamental, revolutionary change? In which case, working through existing institutions for reform takes priority. Or is this not realistic, in which case a break with the system, and creating new political institutions oriented to more fundamental change makes sense. And, is "the problem" primarily attributable to racism and other forms of "sectoral" discrimination, so that mobilizing around race and ethnicity is key, or is class and economic structure the way to understand "the problem," so that organizing around class (that is, proletarian and interracial) lines is paramount?

There are four possible political strategies: reform plus ethnic/racial organizing (resembling much of what remains of the black power program); reform plus class organizing (Wilson and his moderate socialist allies); radical change plus ethnic/racial organizing (most black nationalism); and radical change plus class organizing (most Marxists). Reformist programs have achieved a great deal, but periodically run aground in the face of economic crisis and a consequent lack of funds for either investment (for the large-scale creation of jobs) or state programs (to build ghetto infrastructure).

On the other hand, radical proposals that challenge the present order, whether based on race/ethnic or on class mobilization, have become marginalized due to a combination of outright political repression, internal dissention, and the ability of the social system to coopt revolutionary leaders and programs and divert them into reform channels. Despite the system's periodic crises, it remains sufficiently flexible to balance the carrot and the stick, the need to maintain legitimacy via reform, and the ability to repress those forces that appear to be serious threats to the existing order. At least so far.

Does the left have answers to the minorities "question"? There have been analyses aplenty, and many strategic programs, dealing with situations as different as Austria-Hungary is different from the American South. None of these programs have had a chance to be put into practice. None have been fairly tested. We surely know that programs based solely on class, without attention to the special issues posed by minorities and minority nationalities are inadequate. The precise articulation of class and minorities remains unresolved. The problem today is that few are listening to proposals from any part of the left, including minority group radicals, despite the fact that day to day conditions for America's largest minorities, blacks and Latinos, are worsening (even as they are also worsening for large segments of the traditional white working class).

The task of the left (which of course includes minority participation) is to present, and help debate, the alternatives. But if the left fails to present positive social programs capable of attracting a following, then nationalist programs of the most regressive, opportunistic and antirationalistic kinds may prevail. But the same prospect holds true for the white working class. If a dynamic progressive political movement fails to appear in the era of capitalist crisis, a reactive, racist political movement will fill the vacuum (as it has in some European countries). Then the socialist dream of a proletariat unified to create a more humane society will have failed, at least for the foreseeable future.

REFERENCES

James S. Allen, *The Negro Question In the United States.* New York: International Publishers, 1936.

Robert Blauner, "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt," *Social Problems*, Vol. 16, no. 4 (Spring 1969).

Robert Blauner, *Racial Oppression in America.* New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Stephen Eric Bronner. *Rosa Luxemburg.* University Park.: Penn State University Press, 1997.

Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power.* New York: Random House, 1967.

James D. Cockcroft, *Mexico.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983.

James D. Cockcroft, *Outlaws In the Promised Land.* New York: Grove Press, 1986.

Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1948.

Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual.* New York: William Morrow, 1967.

Benjamin J. Davis *The Negro People On the March.* New York: New Century Publishers, 1956.

Michael Forman, *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement.* University Park: Penn State University Press, 1998.

Dan Georgakas, "League of Revolutionary Black Workers," in Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle and Dan Georgakas, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Left.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Gerald Horne, "The Red and the Black: The Communist Party and African-Americans in Historical Perspective," in Brown et al, eds., *New Studies in the Politics and Culture of American Communism.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1993.

C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution.* New York: Random House, 1963 [1938].

V.I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," in *Selected Works, II.* London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1947 [1914].

Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America.* Boston: South End Press, 2000.

August Meier, Elliot Rudwick and Francis L. Broderick, eds., *Black Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century* (2nd ed.). Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971.

William A. Nolan, *Communism Versus the Negro.* Chicago: Regnery, 1951.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States.* New York: Routledge, 1994.

Trevor Purvis, "Marxism and Nationalism," in Andrew Gamble, David Marsh and Tony Trent, eds., *Marxism and Social Science.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America.* New York: Macmillan, 1955.

Evan Stark, "A. Philip Randolph,"in Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle and Dan Georgakas, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Left.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, 2nd edition.

William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears.* New York: Random House, 1996.

You've Been Well Cared For

Betty Reid Mandell

I was sitting in the Homeless Unit of the Grove Hall Department of Transitional Assistance (welfare department) chatting with some women. One was living in a homeless shelter in Saugus, a town on the north shore of Massachusetts; the other was applying for shelter. They were ashamed to be here. They said that they had worked and held responsible jobs. Life had dealt them raw blows. One had to leave her job because of an injury to her spine that seemed to require endless treatment, and she did not know when she could return to work. The other had various medical problems. She was infuriated because the DTA worker was "jerking her around." She had an appointment for 9, and it was now 11 and they still hadn't seen her.

They cared deeply about their children. The woman who lived in Saugus was driving her daughter to Boston every day so the child would not have to switch schools. I told her that a recent federal law requires the home school district to provide transportation from the shelter to the child's home school. I pointed to the sign on the wall that told about this and urged her to call the number.

The woman who was being "jerked around" said in a resigned voice, "It's all downhill when you get old. I'm 45 and I don't think things will get any better." I protested, "Come on, I'm 78 and I'm not going downhill. I'm still here fighting." The women were amazed. "You're 78?" they said. "You've been well cared for. We've been battered around all our lives."

I've been thinking about that a lot. I think the women were implying that I had been treated better in life because I am white, while prejudice and discrimination against African-Americans had given them harsher treatment than I had faced. Was that true?

As a child, I didn't feel privileged. My father was one of the last homesteaders to get free land from the government, but he got the worst land — dry land in the prairies of Colorado where it seldom rained and the dust storms were so fierce that you literally couldn't see your hand in front of your face if you were outside, while the wind whipped sand through the cracks of the windows and doors. On a freezing winter day the car broke down coming home from the school, which was seven miles away, and we froze our fingers and toes walking home for two miles.

My parents lived in constant dread of the bank foreclosing on the mortgage, and one day they held an auction to sell off cattle and machinery so they could pay the mortgage. We were eager to watch the auction, but my parents made us go to school so we would not witness their humiliation.

Still, we kept the farm and somehow all four of us children went to a public college where the tuition was cheap. My sister and I raised and sold prize 4-H steers and saved the money for college. I pumped gas at a filling station during World War II, helped with bookkeeping at the gas station, typed letters for a local cattle rancher, and when I went to college, had a work-study job and a scholarship. I paid for my graduate school by part-time secretarial jobs and stints as a group work leader at the YMHA and Community Church in New York City. I didn't mind working, even enjoyed much of it, but I never felt that I had a privileged life.

Yet as I thought about it, I did get better breaks in life because of my white skin. When I read the history of the Homesteading Act, I

Betty Reid Mandell *is a member of the* New Politics *editorial board.*

learned that African-Americans were discriminated against and didn't get even the poor land that my father got.

The Mexican-American children whose family came to town to pick sugar beets attended my school, but they had to leave because their family moved on to other migratory work when the beets were pulled. My family were permanent residents and I could stay in school.

When I went to Grange Hall dances, I noticed that the two sons of the only African-American farmer in our neighborhood stood on the sidelines and never asked any of the white girls to dance. I would have been shocked if they had asked me to dance, but I think I would have been pleased too, because they were handsome and I had secretly wanted to get to know them. An unwritten community prejudice had kept us from getting to know one another. That was not privilege for me, since it kept me from living as full a life as I could have.

At college I joined a sorority that I later discovered did not allow African-Americans to become members. I tried to resign, but was told that no one was allowed to resign. Their racism was mandatory!

The parents of one of my best friends in college were living in a Japanese-American concentration camp, having been put there during World War II. I gave speeches against the injustice, and I knew that my parents were never under suspicion of being spies because their skins were white.

I taught at a state college and since I retired I have lived on my state pension, as well as Social Security. Many African-Americans weren't covered by Social Security because it did not cover domestic workers or agricultural workers for many years. Even when they were covered, they often received less money because the work had paid so little.

I have had health problems too, but the state health benefit, combined with Medicare, pays for almost all of my medical care and I can choose any health care provider I wish. I can get two, and even three, opinions before I undergo surgery. I know that I am privileged in this compared to Medicaid recipients, who have a limited choice of doctors and cannot get all the services they need, and compared to people who work in low-wage jobs that don't provide health insurance.

So yes, I have been privileged. Those women in the DTA office asked why I came to the office and did this kind of work. I told them that I had been a social work professor at Bridgewater State, and I believed in not only talking about my knowledge and beliefs, but acting on them. They commended me and said that it was good to stay active and involved. "It's sure better than sitting on the couch and clicking the remote."

I agreed. I am privileged to be able to use my knowledge to come to the DTA office and tell a homeless woman that she does not have to drive her child twenty miles to school and back every day, and that the school system is breaking the law if they don't pick the child up. I am privileged to know enough to go into a fair hearing with a woman and point out to the worker and the hearing officer that they are breaking the law by cutting off the woman's welfare benefits. I am privileged to help a woman apply for food stamps. And I am privileged to know the brave mothers who come to the DTA and keep their spirits up for the sake of their children.

Power and Democracy: More than a Reply to Michael Löwy

JOHN HOLLOWAY

MICHAEL LÖWY, IN HIS REVIEW OF MY BOOK, *Change the World Without Taking Power*, argues that "democracy should be a central aspect in all processes of social and political decision making, and particularly in a revolutionary process." I do not disagree with this, but I think it makes little sense unless we distinguish clearly between two senses of democracy. In this note, I shall develop this point and then return to Michael's specific criticisms.*

Power

OUR POWER IS NOT like the power of the powerful. Just the opposite.

Our power is the power to do, creative power. Our power to do is the power to produce and reproduce life, but also the power to do things differently, the power to change the world. This is the power that we feel after a good demonstration: a collective confidence that we can do things differently.

Our power is a collective power, a social power. Doing is central to our power, and it is impossible to imagine a doing that is not social, a doing that does not depend on the doing of others, in the past or in the present. Our doing is always part of a social flow of doing. The development of our power to do involves the explicit recognition of the sociality of our doing, involves in other words, a movement of bringing together, of asserting a social subjectivity, a creative We.

The power of the powerful is just the opposite. Behind their guns and their bombs is a movement of separation, of fragmentation. Capital is a movement of separation which fragments the sociality of doing. The capitalist takes that which the doers have done and says, "this is mine!" The capitalist breaks doing, separates the done from the doing and the doer, and with that, everything is broken, in every aspect of life. Above all, we are broken. We are broken as a social subject, shattered into millions of atomized individuals. And we are broken as individuals, deprived of our social subjectivity. Capital is the breaking of social doing, and when doing is broken, being comes to prevail, that which is rules.

We see the horrors of the world, the children dying, the poverty and injustice, the bombs falling and we scream "NO! That cannot be! We must change the world, make a different world." And they laugh: "you are just a handful of individuals. You cannot change the world because that is the way the world is, that is the way things are!"

They are wrong, of course. That which is is only because we have made it and continue to make it. That which is depends on our doing. Capital depends on us. Capitalism looks so stable, looks like something that is eternally. But capitalism is not. It exists only because we create it, not because we created it two hundred years ago, but because we created it today. The problem is not to destroy capitalism; the problem is to stop creating it.

The conflict between our power and theirs (our power-to-do and their power-over) is not just a conflict of power from below and power from above. Our power is the power of doing, of creation, of sociality. Their power is the power of

---

JOHN HOLLOWAY *is the author of* Change the World Without Taking Power *(2002) and the editor of* Zapatista! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico *(1998). His article "Change the World Without Taking Power: How Ridiculous! Or is it?" appeared in* New Politics*, no. 33.*

*I thank Michael very much for his review. But the explicit purpose of both the book and his review is to carry discussion further and that is the aim of this "more than a reply," written in the hope that he and others will take up the theme and develop it further.

separation, of individuality, of that which is. Our power dissolves, their power fixes. There are two quite different movements, two different logics, two different languages, two different ways of organizing.

It is important to recognize this, because they (the powerful, the capitalists) are constantly trying to draw us into their logic, their language, their way of thinking and doing. They do this in many different ways. One of the most important is through democracy, by inviting us to play their game of democracy.

Democracy

OUR DEMOCRACY IS NOT LIKE the democracy of the powerful. Just the opposite.

Just as there are two types of power, so there are two types of democracy: their democracy, the democracy of the powerful and our democracy, the democracy of resistance.

Representation is the principle of their democracy. Let someone take your place.

We take part in the decisions of the state, they say, by choosing our representatives. There is no other way, they say, because modern states are not like the cities of Greece: it would be impossible to fit fifty million or a hundred million people into one assembly, so the only way that democracy can work is by choosing our representatives in elections. Therefore in modern society, they say, democracy means representation. In elections we choose freely who will speak for us, who will represent us in parliament and form the government. If we do not like them, we can remove them after four years. By voting we participate in the government of the country. Representation is obviously democracy and democracy is obviously good, so we are told.

But why, then, do we feel excluded? Why, then, do we feel that we have no control over government? Why is it that, under Bush and Blair, democracy has become a weapon of mass destruction?

It is because representation excludes us instead of including us. In elections we choose someone to speak on our behalf, to take our place. We exclude ourselves. We create a separation between those who represent and those who are represented and we freeze it in time, giving it a duration, excluding ourselves as subjects until we have an opportunity to confirm the separation in the next elections. A world of politics is created, separate from the daily life of society, a world of politics populated by a distinct caste of politicians who speak their own language and have their own logic, the logic of power. It is not that they are absolutely separated from society and its antagonisms, for they have to worry about the next elections and opinion polls and organized pressure groups, but they see and hear only that which is translated into their world, their language, their logic. At the same time a parallel world is created, a theoretical, academic world which mirrors this separation between politics and society, the world of political science and political journalism which teaches us the peculiar language and logic of the politicians and helps us to see the world through their blind eyes.

Representation is part of the general process of separation that is capitalism. It is completely wrong to think of representative government as a challenge to capitalist rule or even as a potential challenge to capital. Representative democracy is not opposed to capital: rather it is an extension of capital, it projects the principle of capitalist domination into our opposition to capital. Representation builds upon the atomization of individuals (and the fetishization of time and space) which capital imposes. Representation separates representatives from represented, leaders from led, and imposes hierarchical structures. The left always accuse the leaders, the representatives, of betrayal: but there is no betrayal, or rather betrayal is not the act of the leaders but built into the very process of representation. We betray ourselves when we say to someone "you take my place, you speak on my behalf." The cry of the French students in 1968, "élections-trahison," had a profound truth, as the recent Argentinian elections have reminded us: the betrayal is in the electoral form itself.

But there is another type of democracy, a democracy that flourishes in moments of intense social resistance. "¡Que se vayan todos!" (Let them all go away!) The cry of the Argentinians is a cry against all politicians, against all who claim to represent us, to take our place. "Que se vayan todos" is a cry that echoes through the world, because everywhere there is hostility against professional politicians, against those contemptible people who claim to represent us, who claim to speak on our behalf.

It is not a cry against democracy, but a call for a different type of democracy, a democracy without representatives. The other side of the Argentinian "Que se vayan todos" is the creation of neighborhood councils, assemblies in which everyone can participate. These assemblies break with the logic of representation, for their aim is not the exercise or pursuit of power-over but the articulation of our power, power-to-do. This means that they are organized differently, with horizontality rather than verticality as a central principle, that they do not have the state as their point of reference, that they do not accept the boundaries of private property, that they do not accept the usual distinction between politics and society, that they have no space for professional politicians or parties.

The neighborhood councils of Argentina are of course part of a long tradition of council democracy that includes the Paris Commune, the soviets of 1905 and 1917, the councils in the Spanish Civil War, the village councils of the Zapatistas. There is no model to apply, for each wave of council democracy is an experiment, an attempt to develop adequate forms for the social self-determination of our social doing. Doing is central, which is why this form of democracy conflicts with private property and the idea of a capitalist economy, based as it is on the determination of our doing not by ourselves but by others. Democracy, our democracy, council democracy, is necessarily anti-capitalist, revolutionary, communist, just as revolution is necessarily democratic, council-democratic, or it is nothing.

Council democracy is simply making explicit the sociality of doing, weaving the many doings together, knitting the We in the We-Do. Representative democracy, as part of the movement of capitalism, attacks the We-Do (our common, creative doing), fragments the We in a multiplicity of I's, negates doing and puts being in its place: citizens do not do, they are.

So?

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN in practice? It does not necessarily mean to avoid all contact with representative democracy. We cannot avoid all contact with capitalist forms and there may be circumstances in which it makes sense to vote in elections. But we must not confuse the forms of domination with the forms of resistance: even if we decide for some reason to vote in elections, the elections do not cease to be a form of exclusion, of separation and fragmentation. One representative may perhaps be better than another, but there can be no radical change through representation.

The two forms of democracy are irreconcilable, just as the two forms of power are incompatible. This is important, because it is not a question of mixing the two forms, it is not a question of some sort of "participatory democracy" in which we participate in the functioning of the state, and it is not a reclaiming the state or making the state democratic or more democratic. Why not? Because the state is part of the network of capitalist domination; because the state is always an attempt to reconcile us with capitalism, that is, with the negation of self-determination. Our democracy cannot be understood as part of the state, because it is the dissolution of the state.

It is not a question of purity. It may be difficult to separate the two forms of power or the two forms of democracy completely. The Zapatistas are a case in point, as Michael points out. The hierarchical structure of an army sits uneasily with a system of communal council democracy, reconciled though they are by the principle of "mandar obedeciendo" (command while obeying). But one of the merits of the Zapatistas is that they have never sought to conceal or blur this tension, making it clear from the beginning that the aim of the army is to disappear.

To develop forms of democratic (council-democratic) organization that articulate individualized victims as collective social subjects, forms that articulate "poor me" as a We with confidence in the power of our own doing — that must be the aim, but that aim is always experimental, always a guiding star rather than a program, for there is no model.

Their power against ours, their democracy against ours. But they are stronger. Are we condemned to eternal opposition? Is there no hope that we can change the world, that we can create a different world?

There is hope. Capital depends upon us: if we do not create it, it will cease to exist. But that means that capital exists in constant flight from its dependence upon us: it flees, faster and faster — that is the essence of globalization. But it is a hopeless flight, for capital is a parasite and depends upon our doing and its conversion into alienated labor for its existence. As a result the constant flight of capital means a constant tendency to crisis. There is hope because crisis is at the heart of capital and we are that crisis.

One aspect of crisis at the moment is the existence of two huge cracks in capitalist domination. One of these cracks is the crisis of work. The other is the crisis of representation.

Representation always involves a distance between representatives and represented. In that sense, crisis is built in to the very nature of representation. But there is also a mechanism for resolving that crisis: in elections, the failure of representation is presented as the failure of one set of representatives. People vote for the other set of representatives and so the system is maintained.

Increasingly, however, representation is being rejected in many parts of the world. Globalization makes the distance between representatives and represented much more obvious, and this tendency is greatly intensified by the U.S. government's present policies of subordinating all governments directly to its will. There is a crisis of representative democracy, manifested in rising rates of abstention, in widespread cynicism and in the refusal of people to channel their protests through the traditional mechanisms of political parties. The distance between representatives and represented was nowhere more clear than in the movement against the invasion of Iraq.

In the face of this crisis, what do we do, what do we say? Do we try to get our representatives to be truly representative, to be truly responsive to the wishes of the electorate? Or do we say "Que se vayan todos," let them all go away, all representatives, all who want to take our place and speak on our behalf. The answer is obvious: "que se vayan todos!"

But this does not mean just abstentionism. It means trying to establish and extend oppositional spaces of real democracy, fissures of collective self-determination that accept no limits, no boundaries. Democracy, our democracy, is the struggle to create a self-determining society, a society, in other words, in which capital no longer exists. Democracy, our democracy, means revolution, not (or not just) revolution as a great event, but revolution as daily self-determination, daily rejection of capitalism, daily refusal to create capitalist domination.

On Michael's Comments

MICHAEL LÖWY AND I HAVE many loves in common: Bloch, Benjamin, the young Lukács, Adorno and more. And yet we disagree. Part of my argument is that to breathe life into the lungs of our dead loves, we must take them further politically than perhaps they wanted to go when alive. Our loves were revolutionary poets, both in their language but above all in their concepts. But the heart of revolutionary poetry, as Vaneigem points out, is council communism. And council communism is the ever-painful movement from the many I Ams towards the We Do. If we paint over our loves with the broad brush of an undifferentiated "democracy," as though all democracy meant simply the rule of the majority over the minority, then we are in danger of painting over the source of their poetry, we are in danger of painting them dead.

Just an answer to John Holloway

MICHAEL LÖWY

JOHN'S PAPER IS, AS THE TITLE SAYS, much more than an answer to my critical comments. I can agree with much that he has to say on capitalism, on "our" power and "theirs," and on democracy. By the way, I'm pleased that my remarks encouraged him to clarify his views on democracy, a concept that was somehow missing in his book. I like his definition of "our democracy" as the struggle to create a self-determining society, a society, in other words, in which capital no longer exists; I also like the project of a council democracy that is necessarily anti-capitalist, revolutionary, communist — in the original meaning of the word.

I can also agree with most of his critical remarks on really existing "representative democracy," a political system that is very little "representative" and even less democratic. I think John would agree with me that even this degraded form of "democracy" is preferable to dictatorship — as well known to all those who fought against fascism in Europe or against the military juntas in Latin America (not to speak of the bureaucratic regimes of the Stalinist model).

So where are the disagreements? John Holloway does not only criticize the existing forms of "representative democracy" — which are, as he emphasizes, in deep crisis and increasingly distrusted by the population — but the principle itself of representation. Let us forget for a moment our beloved thinkers — Benjamin, Bloch, the young Lukacs, Adorno — and have a look just at the great revolutionary events mentioned by John as exemples of our democracy, council democracy: the Paris Commune, the soviets of 1905 and 1917, the councils in the Spanish Civil War, the village councils of the zapatistas. As far as I can see, in all these events we have — under specific forms in each case — an association of direct and representative democracy, combining local general assemblies with the election of (revocable) delegates. This is inevitable if we want "our democracy" to have power-to-do not only in one factory, one neighborhood, one village, but on a whole region, a country, a continent.

As I had already mentioned in my review of John's book, the Paris Commune was a body composed of elected counselors — chosen by universal suffrage in each Parisian neighborhood (arrondissement); these representatives could be revoked by their voters. The Petersburg Soviet from 1905 (or 1917) was composed of delegates elected in each factory. Similar forms appeared in Spain — where the delegates elected to the Central Commitee of the Milicias ruled Barcelona during the first months after the uprising of July 1936 — and in Chiapas, more recently, when the indigenous communities elected an Insurgent Clandestine Revolutionary Committee, which is the legitimate leadership of the indigenous zapatista movement. In each case, representatives were elected to speak and act in the name of local assemblies. I'm not saying this is without its problems, but one thing is to try to solve the difficulties, by methods of democratic control over the elected representatives, and by a permanent struggle against bureaucratization, and a quite different is to try to do away with any form of representation — as Holloway seems to suggest. This, in my opinion, is no solution, but a blind alley.

Direct democracy through local assemblies is the best way of self-rule at the level of a factory, an university, a rural community or an urban barrio. But as soon as the movement goes beyond the local level, as soon as it becomes regional or national, forms of representation are necessary and inevitable. The challenge therefore is not to plead, in abstract, against representation as such, which can only disrupt the movement, but to find how to combine, in new and inventive ways, direct and

MICHAEL LÖWY'S *review of John Holloway's* Change the World Without Taking Power *(2002) appeared in* New Politics*, no. 35.*

representative democracy.

THIS LEADS US TO THE QUESTION of the state. I agree with John that the state is part of the network of capitalist domination, and cannot become an instrument for the true emancipation of the oppressed. The Paris Commune of 1871, according to Marx, was not a state anymore, but the begining of a new form of political organization, "the political form finally discovered that would permit to accomplish the economic emancipation of labor." In order to establish this new power, this "power from below," one cannot remain at the "horizontal" level of local assemblies, but has to build some sort of representative body, network or federation, based on direct democracy — or "council democracy" — that is able to deal with political and economical issues at the regional and national level.

And what about the "really existing state," the present degraded form of so-called representative democracy? According to John, revolutionaries do not necessarily avoid all contact with representative democracy: there are circumstances in which it makes sense to vote in elections. I think that there are many such circumstances, particularly in countries like Argentina, who went through many years of a murderous military dictatorship, and where people are keen to defend their democratic rights, whatever their limitations. Sure, they were fed up with their corrupt politicians and developed a remarkable popular insurrection at the end of 2001, under the slogan "¡Que se vayan todos!" (Let them all go away!) However, very few — less than in previous elections — followed the call of some sections of the left to abstain from the elections in 2003; they went massively to vote, and since there was no united alternative candidate of the left — unlike Bolivia, where the social movements and the socialist left unified around the radical peasant leader Evo Morales, and almost won the elections — they voted for another peronista leader.

To conclude: even the corrupted representative democracy we have at present is better than no democracy at all. But the aim of our struggle is an altogether different form of democracy, a revolutionary council democracy from below, combining direct and representative forms, and a new form of political power, leading to the suppression of the capitalist system.

In this way we can be faithful to revolutionary poetry and hope for a world where, as Baudelaire said, action and dream won't be opposed anymore.

LETTERS

Cuba

I WRITE AS A FRIEND OF CUBA, who has spent considerable time on the island researching and filming a documentary on its HIV community. The Cuba petition by Joanne Landy's Campaign for Peace and Democracy and Sam Farber's thoughtful interview (*New Politics* #35) both share a vision of a pure socialism, one that admits to no existing model nor recognizes any current-day practitioners. In the context of American intervention, with the lawless Bush administration decimating two previously sovereign nations and declaring publicly its intention to bring about similar regime change in Cuba, I believe such criticism is dangerous grandstanding.

Let me give just two reasons why I am a friend of Cuba, and how I believe criticism can better be raised.

I am a friend of Cuba because they have kept the AIDS rate low, well below one in 2000 members (.05 percent) of the adult population. At yearly national meetings, representatives of the various regions and social sectors openly debate and decide on policy governing treatment as well as prevention efforts. The right to health care is written into the Cuban constitution.

I am a friend of Cuba because the agricultural reforms implemented during the mid 1990s are working well, raising food production while bringing a large degree of self-management to those working the land. Now the majority of them are organized into co-operatives and collectives. Agricultural enterprises sell a percentage of their produce to the government at fixed prices for use in hospitals, schools, social institutions and work places where people are regularly fed. They bring the remainder into farmers' markets in the neighborhoods. Then, the collective makes decisions about how that additional money will be used or distributed. The land is officially owned by the state, in perpetuity, and cannot be sold for speculation.

To me, both of these — universal, publicly funded health care and collective ownership of the land — are examples that indicate a rare and desirable level of grassroots participation. Yet, Cuba is on the Bush administration's list of terrorist nations threatened with regime change.

James Cason, an employee of the Bush administration at the U.S. Interest Section, Havana, met with and offered resources and technical assistance to dissidents. Their resulting "speech" is not free. It is paid for by the U.S. government through "Track 2" of the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, the Torricelli Act. That legislation contains a stipulation that the United States will build "civil society" in order to cause the internal collapse of the Cuban revolution. Undoubtedly major multinational corporations would be delighted to fund a party in Cuba in the same way they fund two political parties here in the U.S. That party could provide large salaries to individuals and funding to propagandize the population about the benefits of privatization — privatized healthcare for people with AIDS, private ownership of the land, private schools and so on. Remember what happened when the Sandinistas participated in open elections in 1990. The U.S. promised development aid, and UNO candidates gave out sneakers. Nicaraguans voted for the soft right Chamorro, then the hard right Aleman took power. An upscale mall and luxury housing has been built in Managua. Clinics, schools and public transport deteriorated dramatically. Nicaraguans are not better off.

And let's not forget that free speech in the U.S. includes "rights" for corporations, such as preserving the right of Monsanto to sue a small dairy in Maine to try to prevent them from labeling their milk as free of BGH. The possibility that another immigration crisis would be used as a pretext for U.S. aggression really scared the Cuban leadership. I think that the message of the executions of three (of the eleven armed criminals who hijacked a local ferry) was for internal consumption. Only one member of the Cuban National Assembly spoke against increasing the number of capital crimes when it was debated about five years ago. The struggle against capital punishment in China, Indonesia and throughout the world, as well as a record number of executions in the U.S., is an important one. But unlike the governments of so many other nations, the Cuban government does not tolerate murders nor roving death squads. Cuba is a peaceful country. That impresses everyone who visits the island and is probably why the hard right here is so determined to maintain the ban on travel (even though the House voted yet again, for four years running, not to enforce those restrictions).

Judging societies that are struggling around issues of democracy and socialism in a world arguably now entirely controlled by corporations (which have their ideological home here and control state power in the U.S.), I believe, must be based on a broad array of criteria. The extent to which the population enjoys personal liberties is one criteria. We in the U.S. enjoy them to an extreme, like the liberty to sleep on the street. Human rights are another criteria, and human rights include the right to be healthy, educated and cultured as well as the right to participate in making the decisions that impact on one's quality of life. If you are poor, and the vast majority of people in the world are poor, it is much better to be poor in Cuba than in the U.S. or in Guatemala or in Indonesia or in Zimbabwe. You have basic services there, and you have dignity.

Set in an horizontal context — comparing Cuba with other Latin American nations and other developing nations today; or set in a vertical context — comparing Cuba as it had been under Spanish and then U.S. domination; or set in a diagonal context — considering the embargo and unprovoked U.S. aggression planned and perpetrated especially since the revolution by the elites of both political parties, Cuba is at the upper end of the curve.

I contend that the struggle of the Cuban people is a noble and heroic one — towards sovereignty, stability and the welfare of their people. They make mistakes, and I may dialog about those privately and thus hope to open opportunities for sincere debate over the issues of capital punishment and individual liberties. I imagine that the letter of criticism composed by Landy among others and signed by so many left stars might have been carried to one of the many gatherings during which Cuban militants and intellectuals listen to their international allies. I know it would have made an impact. I admire the Rev. Locus Walker for delivering an impassioned plea to renounce capital punishment in front of the gathered multitude in Revolution Square in Havana on May Day. But publicly criticizing Cuba in the U.S. corporate media (like the *New York Times*) gives their enemies opening to say, "You see, even the left condemns them." It gives them ammunition to step up their war against Cuba.

SUSAN METZ
New York City

Reply to Susan Metz

SUSAN METZ IS GENUINELY CONCERNED about the welfare of the Cuban people, and I have been generally sympathetic and supportive of the concrete projects in which she has been involved to alleviate the situation in Cuba.

However, Metz's politics regarding Cuba are a different matter altogether. Her letter reflects an approach that distances an important part of the left from democracy and what it means.

My objections to the Cuban regime have nothing to do with the "purity" of socialism. Socialism, by which I mean democratic control of the economy and society from below, cannot be anything other than "impure," because it will be made by plain people who are bound to make mistakes. But when Metz talks about the "Cuban people" and states that "they make mistakes," she fails to distinguish the Cuban people from the heads of the one party state, i.e. Fidel Castro and his close associates. These are the leaders who make all the important decisions in Cuba. Is Metz talking about the "mistakes" of the leaders, or is she talking about "mistakes" committed by the Cuban people?

Metz writes about the Cuban National Assembly "debating" capital punishment — an issue she glosses over. One might conclude that she is referring to a democratic body although, in fact, it is an institution controlled by the Communist Party. Susan praises the agricultural co-ops and collectives and says that "they are working well, raising food production." She does not mention the scarcity of the food supply in Cuba where people who have no access to dollars have a very difficult time surviving. Contrary to what she states, these new institutions are not examples of "self-management;" instead, they constitute an attempt by the government to *decentralize* bureaucratic and administrative tasks and to introduce elements of a profit sharing system. They are irrelevant to democracy because they make no contribution to popular self-determination or to a freer and richer *political* life in Cuban society.

Most serious of all is Metz's assumption that open, public criticism of the Cuban government "gives them [the U.S.] ammunition to step up their war against Cuba." This is an old moral blackmail technique that was most recently revived by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and that has been so destructive to the left's political and moral standing. If, according to Metz, we cannot openly and publicly criticize the Cuban government while defending Cuba's right to self-determination, then we might as well forget about revolutionary democratic socialism ever succeeding *anywhere*, no matter how economically developed a country might be. No socialism will ever come into being in any country without powerful enemies opposing it before and after victory. To assume otherwise is sheer fantasy. So if we follow Metz's approach, there will never be room for criticism after any revolution, no matter when and where it occurs.

Metz also minimizes the need to defend civil liberties by *counterposing* these liberties to what she calls "human rights," meaning social and economic rights, She sees "civil liberties" only in terms of preserving "personal freedoms," a vital necessity to avoid arbitrary arrests and other forms of harassment and oppression, and fails to see the crucial importance of civil liberties for the development of a workers' and popular democracy. If people do not have the freedom to organize independently from the state, which includes the right to freedom of speech, press and assembly, then one may as well forget about the development of genuine socialism. The left's traditional criticism of capitalist freedom as the freedom to sleep under the bridge was meant to point out that real democracy could not be achieved without economic as well as political democracy. It was not meant to advocate the elimination of the political rights and freedoms that were gained *against* the resistance of people in power. Metz uses the traditional left metaphor to justify the restriction and elimination of democratic political rights by the present Cuban government. Her statement about there not being death squads or disappearances in Cuba is disingenuous. When the state is free to legally imprison and execute whomever whenever it wishes, then there is no need for disappearances and death squads. Disappearances and death squads were superfluous when thousands of people were legally executed in the sixties and seventies (many of these executed people had not engaged in any armed or violent activity).

Metz writes that Cubans are doing better than other peoples and compares the island republic to countries such as Guatemala, Indonesia and Zimbabwe. The problem with that comparison is that the poor in Cuba were also doing better than the poor in those three countries *before* the 1959 Revolution.

Regarding the current situation in Cuba, Metz reduces Cuban political dissidence — still a marginal phenomenon — to U.S. financing. This financing and political interference is real and must be taken very seriously, but those receiving material aid from the United States (in the form of publishing facilities and financial assistance) should be dealt with politically and not through state repression. Even if the Cuban government would have been justified in taking retaliatory measures, the target should have been, as the Portuguese Communist Nobel Prize winner Jose Saramago pointed out, James Cason, the head of the U.S. diplomatic mission in Havana, who could have been declared persona non-grata, and not the Cuban dissidents who accepted material aid from him in a context where, because of state policy, access to faxes, computers, photocopy machines and so on were extremely hard to come by. To say that the Cuban political dissidents are mere agents of the U.S. is no different from saying that Western Communists who accepted help from the USSR were nothing else than agents of that country. As I made it clear in my interview, I do not at all agree with the general political direction of these dissidents and consider many of them political opponents.

THE SAD REALITY IS THAT at least since the seventies there has been widespread support for capitalism and the market within the Communist world, independently of the degree of direct political interference from the U.S., the Catholic Church or any other similar power. Accordingly, it is not the present dissidents who will lead the country in that direction once Fidel Castro passes from the scene. This will instead come from the Cuban "Boris Yeltsins" who already constitute an "invisible silent" party within the government bureaucracy and the Cuban Communist Party. These people already have a material base in the semi-private, semipublic "joint venture" sector of the economy, in which the armed forces, with their numerous profit making enterprises, currently play a key role. These are the people who will make deals with U.S. capital and even a section of Cuban capital in South Florida. Unfortunately, the Cuban government's current political monopoly makes it virtually impossible to start forging a popular resistance to that likely capitalist transition.

The Cuban government took advantage of the U.S. invasion of Iraq to crack down on the dissidents in the spring of 2003. The government very likely wanted to put a stop to any possibility that the political dissidents could ally themselves with popular discontent. Neither the Cuban government, nor many of us, expected the world wide negative response to that crackdown, a response that included important sections of the left.

In my *New Politics* interview, I overestimated the punitive measures that the Bush administration was likely to take in the immediate aftermath to Castro's spring crackdown. I expected the Bush administration to cut or restrict family remittances to Cuba, one of the principal sources of hard currency for that country. The administration chose not to move in that direction. Aside from a lot of rhetorical demagoguery and the expulsion of some Cuban diplomats stationed in the U.S., recent actions against the Cuban government have included continued financial support for domestic opponents of the Cuban regime, proposals for increasing funding for Radio Marti and the invisible TV Marti, and the establishment of a commission headed by Colin Powell and Mal Martinez to advise President Bush on a "democratic" transition in Cuba. More serious and pernicious measures adopted by the U.S. have made it more difficult for non-Cubans to travel to the island, by fining a greater number of Americans for illegally traveling to Cuba, and by denying many permits for tours to Cuba organized by professional, religious and other nonprofit associations. Nevertheless, the Cuban right-wing is angry with the Bush administration because it has not taken more aggressive and damaging actions against the Cuban government, for the administration's decision to prosecute hijackers, and especially for its refusal to provide refugee status to Cubans captured at sea before reaching the coast of Florida. It seems that, at least for the time being, the Bush Administration put a higher priority on its fear of an uncontrolled migration of refugees from Cuba than on its anti-Communism.

The Bush administration has also increased the number of legal visas granted to Cubans and has accused the Cuban government of delaying the necessary exit permits (ironically, back in the spring the Cuban government accused the United States of delaying the issuing of visas in order to build pressure against the Cuban government inside the island). It is interesting to note that there is no longer any talk among most of the Cuban right-wing about adopting the potentially most damaging measure of banning or restricting family remittances to Cuba. Meanwhile, both houses of Congress voted, by substantial majorities but short of the two-thirds necessary to override a presidential veto, to lift the ban on travel to Cuba.

Subsequently, leaders of a House-Senate conference committee removed the Cuba travel provision before the bill reached the President. Meanwhile, the Republican-dominated Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted, by a margin of 13 to 5, for separate new legislation scrapping the ban on travel to Cuba outright. This new bill may have the best chances for passage after the November 2004 general elections. None of this is to suggest that the danger of U.S. aggression against Cuba is over. On the contrary, U.S. aggression against Cuba is far from having come to an end. I simply want to underline that the "invasion scare" of last spring was not based on any evidence and was meant to silence critics of the Cuban government, particularly abroad. We must be always vigilant and continue to energetically protest the efforts of any administration, Republican or Democratic, to continue, let alone reinforce, the blockade and any other form of attack against Cuba's right to self-determination. However, illusions about the Cuban regime, such as those put forward by Susan Metz, not only do not help to achieve this goal, they are positively distracting and harmful.

SAMUEL FARBER

Israel and Palestine

Despite the grating and unfortunately familiar way in which it seems to erase Palestinians from history, I found Jason Schulman's article ("The Life and Death of Socialist Zionism," *NP* 35) extremely interesting. I appreciate the author's honest and meticulous grappling with the popular fantasy of Israel as a lapsed socialist utopia.

However, as someone accustomed to "reading" Zionism through the lens of its perceptions/non-perceptions of Palestinians, I found it striking that in the 23 pages of text, the word "Palestinian" appears only twice, and in each case is used only to refer to Jews. In this, Schulman's work seems to literally reenact a fundamental problem of Zionism.

I have seen elsewhere in Jason Schulman's work at least one marginal mention of the mass expulsion of roughly 90 percent of the Palestinians living in the area that was to become Israel. However, Israel's foundational event, famously praised by Chaim Weizmann as a "miraculous clearing of the land," goes entirely unmentioned in the article. Indeed, the only "expulsion" the piece observes is that of Jews from the Histradut.

The majority indigenous population of Palestine (Palestinians) appear only rarely and obliquely in the Schulman article, such as when it is noted that the Hashomer was created for "the protection and defense of the colonies from attack by their Arab neighbors." While Jews appear as diverse historical/political actors within a rich and varied vocabulary as Zionist laborers, immigrants of the Second Aliyah, Kibbutz farmers, Jewish workers, Yishuv leaders, settlers, Jewish colonists, the workers of Eretz Israel, Eastern European immigrants and so on, Palestinians appear in his analysis only as "Arabs" and are excluded from his considerations of the working classes of Palestine.

Israel's wresting of the land from Palestinians in 1947-49, and the subsequent occupations and annexations of 1967 — arguably the single most important facts in Israeli history — appear explicitly only once in a reference to welfare allocation to "Arabs in Occupied Palestine."

Jason Schulman may object that my critique is unfair in that the Palestinians were not the subject of his article. I would respond that my critique is important because the Palestinians were not the subject, or even a subject, of Zionism. I hope to point through what appears to be his own rhetorical continuation of this venerable Zionist tradition of eliding "Arabs" to the ongoing problem of Israel's relationship with Palestinians.

In some sense, this ethnonationalist machinery for negating Palestinians *is* Zionism, or at the very least is a consistent component of every significant, actually existing form of Zionism we have seen so far. These specific ideological processes of exclusion and demonization of Palestinians, devised in the first decades of the twentieth century, resulted in a horrific array of material and often criminal practices that continue to be implemented today.

While a century ago it may have been seen as acceptable to propose a project which completely ignores the wishes or even presence of an indigenous population, or entails the subjugation and dispossession of an entire people, today such a proposal would hopefully be rejected as morally reprehensible or even criminal (as an incitement to genocide). Is it appropriate for us today to examine the ideological narratives and projects of early Zionism as if they are morally neutral, or beyond our critical judgment, as if they are simply historical artifacts? It is clear from the most cursory historical understanding that Zionism — that set of narratives and procedures for installing an expansionist Jewish ethnonationalist state at the expense of and to the exclusion of an indigenous Palestinian majority — remains an active, functional system.

Is it appropriate to evaluate the ideological roots of Zionism solely in terms of the benefit sought by one ethnic group, when we know without a doubt that these benefits were won and are still being won at catastrophic cost to another ethnic group?

In light of the fact that these processes still play out today in the form of a variety of Israeli war crimes which cause enormous suffering to millions of Palestinians, how can we comment in any meaningful way on early Zionism without acknowledging the material effects these practices had and have on its object-victims?

It would seem to me that the uniquely contested nature of the historical narratives surrounding this conflict conveys a greater responsibility to historians, who are perhaps uniquely positioned to resolve some of the crucial questions political actors on the subject of Israel and the Palestinians must grapple with today.

It seems to me as well that the unresolved nature of the Zionist struggle for Jewish demographic supremacy and absolute control of the land, and the growing risk of massive ethnic cleansing or genocide which are inherent in this struggle, also convey a greater degree of moral responsibility to historians.

Certainly we are free to not acknowledge such a responsibility. But in doing so — in reiterating the narratives and practices of Zionism as if they involved only Jewish benefactors — are we not implicated in the very machinery of Zionism which continues to render its Palestinians object-victims invisible? And in focusing on the Jewish nationalist struggle's impact on Jews alone, as if Jews were the only concerned subjects, are we not subtly reiterating the Zionist mythology of a land without a people? Such a focus replaces a debunked literal absence of Palestinians with a more symbolic kind of lack, in which individual Jews and the Jewish people as a whole, endowed with supreme and unquestionably primary rights and needs, are juxtaposed with a depersonalized Arab whose needs and rights are at best secondary to those of Jews and at worst a political, moral and historical inconsequence.

THOMAS OLSON
New York City

Socialist Zionism

I found Jason Schulman's article on socialist Zionism (*NP* 35) interesting, but naive.

Zionism in pre-state Palestine consisted of statebuilding within a certain historical context, specifically, dependence on British power, financing from Jews in the diaspora and hostility from the surrounding Arabs. Under these circumstances, what chance was there for real socialist politics?

Why would socialist Zionists want to overthrow the same Jewish state they were trying to create? If they did try, would the British have allowed it? Would Jewish donors in the diaspora have raised capital for Jewish settlement of Palestine if it was led by socialist revolutionaries? And where were the Arab socialists that Jewish socialists could work with? Accusing Ben Gurion of putting nationalism before socialism is no great revelation. It was the only way the state of Israel could have come into existence.

Finally, Schulman cannot make his case by devoting only one paragraph to Hashomer Hatzair and none to Mapam, which was to the left of the Mapai and actually advocated for a binational workers state.

BENNETT MURASKIN
Parsippany, NJ

Response to Critics

TOM OLSON ARGUES that my article erases the Palestinians from history and critiques me for not mentioning the ethnic cleansing that was part and parcel of the founding of the state of Israel. I can only assume that Olson is not very familiar with *New Politics* or its readership. It is fair to assume that everyone who regularly reads *NP* — a journal of the democratic far left — is already aware of that particular world-historic crime and has seen articles in this journal regularly appear which are concerned with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. My article was on a different and relatively unexplored topic, and I saw no need to repeat what everyone on the radical left already knows about the Nakba. Apparently Olson believes that *every* article on Israel must first and foremost focus on the Palestinians. I don't.

The political position expressed in my article can only be considered Zionist if one has an overly broad definition of what Zionism is. Let my response to Bennett Muraskin make this plain. He accuses me of naiveté — after all, there was no way for Labor Zionists to put socialism before nationalism and expect to create a state. Well, of course — and this says very bad things about the Zionist project itself. A project that required taking money from the bourgeoisie, Jewish or not, and which came to its fruition through the ethnic cleansing of the indigenous population was not worth undertaking in the first place. Carving a Jewish state out of Germany after World War II might have been just; carving one out of Palestine was not. This does not mean that Israeli Jews have no right to national self-determinatiion, as some far-leftists would have it — but it does mean that one should recognize that the Zionist narrative of the founding of the state of Israel is an ideological fabrication.

As for the Mapam program for a supposed bi-national workers' state, thirty years ago the Israeli Marxist Moshé Machover pointed out that "those 'left-wing' Zionists who in 1946 proposed a 'binational' solution were careful to include the proviso that there would first have to be a period of 25 years of 'international trusteeship' over Palestine, during which time Jewish immigration would be encouraged so that the Jews would become the absolute majority. Then, the preservation of the Jews as the majority would be built into the constitution of the 'binational' state." (www.endpage.com/Archives/Subversive_Texts/Matzpen/stern.txt). Some "binationalism" that would have been.

JASON SCHULMAN
New York City

Words and Pictures

AS A LONG TIME but still relatively youthful subscriber to *New Politics*, I was delighted to read the new and long overdue feature, Words & Pictures, featuring cartoonist Ruben Bolling's uncompromisingly radical Lucky Ducky strip.

With a few moving images and crisp dialogue, Bolling deconstructs the class contradictions of contemporary American capitalism far more decisively than a mountain of obscurantist Lacanian lit crit theorists could ever manage. Yet after Seattle, and even more poignantly after September 11th, the need to reach out to a new generation of radicalizing younger readers is all the more pressing, and many left publications, *New Politics* included, have not always been completely successful in meeting this generation's aesthetic desires even as the corporate media saturates the airwaves with commodified and patriarchal banalities such as reality dating shows from *The 5th Wheel* to *Elimidate* that encourage today's youth to regard themselves as a product to be marketed on the dating exchanges.

If the uncompromising third camp politics that Julius and Phyllis Jacobson so eloquently struggled for over a period of decades is to be sustained and have real significance in the lives of future generations, a new emphasis on the arts and popular culture ought to be a regular part of each issue of *New Politics* and investment in such diversity of coverage will likely pay huge dividends in terms of new readers. Both the Words & Pictures feature and the insightful, articulate and frankly just plain fun interview with fantasy fiction writer China Miéville point in the right direction.

Perhaps the greatest third camp socialist of the twentieth century, C.L.R. James, wrote frequently and convincingly about the importance of popular culture, and a commitment to making political cartoons a regular feature of *New Politics* would be entirely in keeping with the vision that Julius and Phyllis so painstakingly and uncompromisingly fought for time and again. The editors of *NP* owe it to them to continue this promising new direction to ensure that the journal can grow to have the influence in American political life that it so richly deserves.

RAVI MALHOTRA
Toronto, Canada

Edward Said

New Politics marks with sadness the irreplaceable loss of Edward Said, fearless and inimically articulate voice for international justice, humanism and the fundamental affinity among cultures and civilizations. Maligned and calumniated in the West as the "professor of terrorism" Said could be credited, along with his collaborator and comrade the late Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, with transferring the narrative of Palestinian oppression and dispossession, of resistance and rebirth, from the interstices of politics into the universal stream of cultural consciousness. And in so doing, he equally mobilized the voices of colonialism, the stirrings of third world emancipation everywhere, into "grand narratives of equality and human community" that resonate with the democratic experiences, cultural ideals and political aspirations of socialism.

Unassimilated and unassimilateable — self-described as forever "between worlds," at the boundaries of civilizations, religions and epochs — Said was, in the noblest sense, a rootless cosmopolitan. A Palestinian schooled in Egypt, with an English first name and a U.S. passport, Christian by upbringing, a nonbeliever by conviction, a debunker of Eurocentric distortions of Islam by historical honesty, never fully at home with English or Arabic, he embodied that very paradox of intellectuality — the universal outsider. His home, if one could call it as such, was only in the ethereal realms of literature, philosophy, history and music. Like the non-Jewish Jew that Isaac Deutscher once celebrated, it was undoubtedly this marginality that enabled Said to rise above his time and his generation. Looked at originally with suspicion in Arab circles for his sensitivity to Jewish suffering, Said, we are confident, will eventually be memorialized equally as a tireless advocate of international reconciliation as he is for his combative and principled defense of the Palestinian cause. No greater tribute can be paid to the engaged intellectual that he fought against the sophistries and injustices of his time and labored mightily to take the world along on his intellectual journey.

REVIEWS

Hal Draper, speaking at a Free Speech Movement noon rally in December 1964 at the University of California (Berkeley). Hal Draper was an editor of New Politics *from 1961 to 1973.*

Communist-Led Unions

Review by Nelson Lichtenstein

Left Out: Reds and America's Industrial Unions
JUDITH STEPAN-NORRIS & MAURICE ZEITLIN
New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003, 375 pp. $27

COMMUNISM, OF THE CAPITAL "C" VARIETY, hardly exists in the world today, and in the United States it is an idea and a movement increasingly part of a distant past, more contemporary than Populism or Prohibition, but of seemingly less twenty-firstcentury relevance that evangelical Protestantism or environmental activism. And yet this is a phenomenon that still generates the same kind of debates that divided the left, and the left from the right, more than half a century ago. In some instances, documents flowing out of the Moscow archives have helped shed new light on the politics and affiliations of an Alger Hiss or a Harry Bridges, but such revelations are hardly needed to keep this pot boiling because the real issue involves the fate, character and legitimacy of the American radical tradition, especially during that moment in the middle decades of the twentieth century when the Communists were at their influential apogee within a dynamic new trade union movement, as well as in almost every other area of progressive U.S. politics. For example, the sharp and principled critique of Stalinism, both at home and abroad, was certainly one of the most salutary legacies of the generation that founded *New Politics* more than forty years ago, but the embrocated argument, that American Communists, in the unions or out, did not actually constitute a part of the indigenous United States left seems increasingly formulaic, if not sectarian. And conversely, the contemporary academic right — and believe me, there is a large one — has redeployed the investigatory methodology first made infamous by the mid-twentieth century House Committee on UnAmerican Activities, thereby mounting an aggressive effort to reduce all Communist activity in the United States to a species of Soviet spy craft.

Sociologists Judith Stepan-Norris (UC Irvine) and Maurice Zeitlin (UCLA) have now thrown a massively-researched excavation of the Communist-led trade unions into this debate. They did not visit the Moscow state archives, but they did take the freeway to the California Institute of Technology where they found a unique documentary resource: a large and representative set of collective bargaining contracts (collected by Cal Tech to help business fight the new unions) that they have analyzed to compare "red" American trade unions with those labor organizations led by unionists whose ideology was less politically well-defined or with those of an outright anti-Communist orientation. Their thesis is straight forward: U.S. Communist apologies "for the crimes of the Soviet regime should not be allowed to distort or obscure Communist unionists' real, radical, and democratic, achievements — whether these unionists were officers of CIO internationals, local officers or worker activists in the shops."

To make this case the authors take aim at a species of anti-Communist argumentation that began in the 1930s and 1940s chiefly among Socialist and Trotskyist intellectuals at war with the rise of American Stalinism. This attack proved potent because it broke so sharply from that of a much older antiradical tradition. From 1886, when the Haymarket bombs first mobilized conserva-

---

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, now in paperback).*

tives against radical labor, until the early 1930s, anti-Communists, inside the unions and without, accused the revolutionary left of being just that: revolutionaries who sought the destruction of the existing trade unions ("dual unionism"), violence on the picket line, and the subversion of family, church and ethnic hierarchy. Although much was made of Communist allegiance to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, conservatives, from Samuel Gompers to Alfred Sloan, made few distinctions between the Industrial Workers of the World, the antiwar Socialists, or post-WWI Communists, all of whom seemed impractical, impatient, destructive agitators. To these unsympathetic observers. Communist strikes and Communist unions — in New York City garment shops, Gastonia textile mills, New Mexico coal mines — all collapsed because their ideological leadership did not know how to make the kind of deals and compromises necessary to maintain stable trade unionism.

But this critique of the Communist-line union leadership was transformed during the next third of a century, and largely along lines advanced by liberals, socialists, and those influenced by the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism, both in the Soviet Union and at home. There were still conservatives who attacked the Communists for race-mixing, treasonous un-Americanism, and the subversion of a paternalistic plant community, but of far more consequence during the era of WWII and the Cold War that followed was the charge that Communist union leaders failed at their primary duty: representing the rank and file, fighting for racial and gender equality, advancing a progressive version of trade unionism within the workplace and the larger polity. Because their main allegiance lay with the ruling strata of the Soviet Union, Communist-line unionists subordinated the interests of their own membership to the foreign policy needs of an alien, authoritarian state. This made for increasing moderation during the years after the sit-down strikes, when the Soviets sought to convince President Roosevelt and the New Dealers that they were suitable partners in an antifascist alliance, but it made for strike militancy during the era of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, when American Communists insisted that "the Yanks are not coming."

World War II has always been Exhibit A in this bill of charges. With the Soviet Union fighting for its life, Communist trade unionists were "the great reactionaries" opinioned the liberal columnists, Joseph and Stuart Alsop. They were "counterfeit revolutionaries" in the words of the labor radical Sidney Lens. Communists in the unions defended the no-strike pledge, denounced the mine strikes led by John L. Lewis, abandoned the March on Washington Movement led by A. Philip Randolph, and favored incentive pay, a crackdown on wildcat strikes, and labor-management cooperation in the factories. And even during the Cold War this line of attack did not cease: liberals and those on the anti-Communist left claimed that unions like the United Electrical Workers, fearful of raids from the CIO and under constant attack by the government, signed sweetheart contracts with General Electric and Westinghouse to make themselves more acceptable to big business than their anti-Communist rivals. They were now "Red Company Unions." And of course the Communists were not trade union democrats. Writing in 1948, C. Wright Mills endorsed the liberal-left charge that when they are in control, the Communist intrigue "prefers wrecking a union to losing control of it."

Maurice Zeitlin and Judith Stepan-Norris are not the first scholars to take issue with this line of analysis. A generation of New Left and post-New Left historians of labor, feminism, civil rights, music, film, fiction, journalism and the law have uncovered a world of complexity beneath the hyperpolitical schema advanced by observers like Theodore Draper, Irving Howe and Max Kampelman, the latter a Hubert Humphrey staffer who wrote *The Communist Party vs. the CIO* early in the 1950s. More than two million people probably passed through the Communist Party during the mid-century decades and not all of them took lock-step orders from party headquarters in Union Square. Robin Kelley's celebrated study of black Alabama Communists makes that abundantly clear. As an anonymous black Communist told a Communist Party functionary from the North. "Ain't no foreign country in the world foreign as Alabama to a New Yorker. They know all about England, maybe, France, never met one who knew 'Bama." Indeed, when it came to the labor movement party discipline was loose, and the farther one got into the field, the more autonomy unionists enjoyed, especially on those day-to-day issues that were specific to each firm, workforce and industry.

> Politics and policy subverted the progressive, democratic promise of the Depression era labor movement.

Thus Michael Honey has demonstrated the extent to which Memphis union Communists advanced the civil rights frontier even during World War II; Ron Schatz has shown how the United Electrical Workers turned industry incentive pay schemes to rank and file advantage; Toni Gilpin has reminded us that the Farm Equipment locals built a powerful shop steward system that was in many instances superior to that of the UAW in its agriculture equipment locals; and Joshua Freeman has explained how the legacy of New York City's extensive network of Communist and ex-Communist trade union leaders gave to the municipal labor movement in the 1950s and 1960s a remarkably aggressive and politicized profile.

Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin take such historical studies and personal memoirs and combine them with as much large "N" statistical evidence as they can muster to demonstrate that the most significant achievement of the Communists was "the building of a combative, class-conscious industrial union movement." As we shall see, the authors are frequently fetishistic about the virtues of CP leadership, but there can no longer be much doubt that when it came to actual trade union practice, the 16 or 18 CIO unions that fell within the Communist orbit were usually effective labor organizations that were at least as internally democratic as other affiliates, negotiating contracts equal or superior to those of the unions led by non-Communist officials.

The authors demonstrate that mega historical theories of trade union development, whether pluralist, Marxist or based on some Weberian variant, fail if they do not take into account the politics and ideology of both union leaders and their corporate adversaries. Democracy is rooted in factions, insurgency and counterpoised ideologies. Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin restore a contingent quality to labor history which is often missing in the grand theories generated by social scientists and not a few historians. Politics and policy, not an "iron law of oligarchy," subverted the progressive, democratic promise of the Depression Era labor movement. Bureaucratic practices were becoming manifest on both the left and right of the American union movement, but such an undemocratic drift was as much a function of the American labor law, government pressure and most importantly, corporate labor policies as it was any internal logic of trade union development. Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin turn the epigram of Robert Michaels upside down. Instead of "Who says organization says 'oligarchy,' the authors respond "Who says 'the unrestricted power of capital,' says 'oligarchy.' "

Indeed, Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin confirm in what seems an overwhelmingly rigorous fashion what historians and memoirists have been writing for some time. On a whole variety of issues that constituted the progressive mid-century union agenda, the Communist unions were significantly better than non-Communist or anti-Communist unions. Why precisely this is the case remains a bit fuzzy, but there is no doubt that on many shop issues, on race and gender equality, those unions denominated as Communist were more democratic, militant, and organizationally progressive. For example, when the authors examined a sample of California local contracts negotiated by the locals of the CIO Big Three unions, they found that over the years 1938-1955 6 percent of UE contracts contained a total no-strike provision, 53 percent of UAW contracts contained such a work stoppage prohibition, and 68 percent of those covered by the Steelworkers has such a provision. Likewise, 93 percent of all UE contracts specified that a shop steward had to be present at the grievance procedure's first step, 48 percent of UAW contracts had a similar provision, while only a quarter of those in steel assured this progressive union right. All this remained true even during World War II when Communist chief Earl Browder denounced shop militancy and hailed a new era of labor-management cooperation that reflected the larger alignment of American capital and Soviet power in the antifascist struggle.

But Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin confirm, both through anecdote and statistical survey, the perspective long advanced by memoirists and historians alike: regardless of the directives from Moscow or Union Square, Communists in the trade unions remained militant opponents of shop management. "We conducted business as usual in the unions," California Communist Dorothy Healey told the authors. "We never stopped fighting on the shop floor, whatever the national leadership under Browder was saying . . . we never gave anything away. It was the tasks imposed by the day-to-day defense of workers that mattered. We never stopped to ask if what we did violated the no-strike pledge or Browder's incentive plans."

Of course this same impulse was hardly confined to Communist trade unionists. There was much "right-wing" militancy as well during the two decades that followed the labor upsurge of the 1930s. Regardless of the contract language or the politics of the union leadership, workers do seek a kind of shop control of the production process: craft and building trades workers often declared their allegiance to an anti-Communist, socially conservative unionism, but during most of the twentieth century these skilled workers defended a set of job-protecting work rules with a ferocity virtually unmatched throughout North America. And in the factories, one did not have to be represented by a Communist-led local to battle for shop control of the production process. In his account of Chrysler unionism from the early sit-down strikes to the era of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement, Steve Jefferies has demonstrated that a dense phalanx of "blue button" shop stewards and a tradition of wildcat strikes kept management on the defensive for years. Likewise, at Ford's great River Rouge complex, where Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin overstate the continuous degree of Communist influence, shop militancy had a multiplicity of sources, some explicitly anti-Communist in their origins and orientation.

Because of their relentless effort to celebrate Communist-led union militancy, Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin downplay the overall nature of the business community's hostility to CIO-style unionism. There was no labor-management accord or consensus in the postwar years. Corporate leaders and their political spokesmen believed that when it came to bargaining issues or shop-floor militancy, the distinction between Communists and their more conventional trade-union counterparts was rather slim. "Nothing is more dangerous than to assume that those who today attack 'Communists' within the union, and who are in consequence unthinkingly labeled 'right-wingers' are ipso facto believers in private enterprise or in our form of government" warned Stuart Ball, counsel for Montgomery Ward, late in 1946. "It is not necessary to pin the label of 'Marxist' upon a labor leader to prove that what he believes is incompatible with our basic political and economic beliefs." In textiles, retail trade, shoemaking, tobacco processing and office employment, business played the anti-Communist card to keep its workplaces union free. But then issue was always unionism, not Communism.

Of course, the authors are right to declare the purge of the Communists from the CIO and the main body of American labor "an American tragedy." This is hardly controversial because even the anti-Communists within the CIO came to realize that the 1949 expulsion of unions representing more than a million workers had a devastating impact on all of American labor, both in terms of economic clout, political influence and shop-floor practice. Indeed, even in the late 1940s the justification for the purge came almost entirely in terms of real politic. Philip Murray, Walter Reuther and Mike Quill of the Transit Workers were happy to borrow the rhetoric of democracy and anti-Stalinism in their anti-Communist crusade, but the real issue was always U.S. government blackmail: unless the CIO got rid of this politically unorthodox faction, the industrial union federation would find itself under attack by both the Truman administration and the resurgent GOP right-wing. This turned out to be the perspective of the Communists (the Union Square variety) themselves, who urged the expelled unions to rejoin the labor "mainstream" even if it meant the demise of their organizational independence. Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin think this another New York/Moscow blunder, and they advance the somewhat fanciful idea — albeit based on the dogged perseverance of the Communists and their allies still in command of unions like the UE, the ILWU and Mine, Mill — that the expelled CP unions might have formed a cohesive, organizationally aggressive alliance in the 1950s. The authors call this the "third labor federation" that never was.

How do the authors explain the virtues of Communist trade union practice? Clearly, it was neither a question of centralized direction or ideology, because at numerous points Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin deride and denounce the hyperpolitical formulations put out by party headquarters. The Communists functioned best when they functioned as quasi-autonomous trade unionists. So what made them better than the Socialists, the Reutherites or the IWW remnants? The authors don't say. Or rather they advance the somewhat nostalgic view that if an organizer got his Communist politics in the 1920s and 1930s when the going was tough, then they were sure to advance a militant and democratic unionism despite the misbegotten advice from the CP politicos. Actually, I think there is another dimension to this question. Like the Socialists, the Wobblies and other left-wing formations, the Communists recruited from the same social strata: first and second generation immigrants, alienated urban workers, ex-populists and a bit later, science-oriented academics, African-Americans, Jews and the creative intellectuals of Hollywood and New York. But if the party was not the internally Stalinist organization of which its critics complained (the American CP did not hold state power), how do we explain the coherence of the party even when its trade union element was in quasi-revolt against headquarters?

The answer is the Soviet Union and the mystique it gave to party membership and party activism. The sense that the American party was part of a worldwide movement that took guidance from the successful revolutionaries (later antifascists) in Russia provided the emotive, cohesive glue which made the American Communists something other than another reform organization. It explains why the Communists, unlike the Depression-Era Socialists, for example, remained a disciplined force despite the party's rotating membership and infamous political zig zags. The Socialist Party, which started off the interwar period with a sizable proletarian base, disintegrated during the 1930s because tactical political differences led to organizational splits, after which party members simply decamped into the CIO or other progressive organizations like the Union for Democratic Action, forerunner of the ADA. This was the path taken by Walter Reuther, Reinhold Neibuhr and Paul Douglas. For good — but chiefly ill — the Communists had the Soviet lodestar, which until 1956, gave even the most independent-operating Communists a collective élan shared by comrades both in both nearby shops and old world cities.

To understand union Communism's rise and demise the ideological issue cannot be avoided. *Left Out* marginalizes CP politics through a relentless focus on the collective bargaining relationship, on measuring Communist effectiveness in the shop-floor contest for power. There is much to be said for this perspective, because a militant, independent shop floor organization is the essence of trade unionism and an autonomous working-class political voice. But the CIO was not a syndicalist formation. Indeed it was the program of the right, not the left, to reduce all labor politics to collective bargaining, and once this was accomplished, the containment, retreat and destruction of the labor movement was virtually foreordained. That was the essential logic of the Taft-Hartley Act passed in 1947. Thus to the extent that the authors measure union progressivism by a firm-centered collective bargaining standard, they are playing a game where shop militancy alone would have a self-defeating character.

The CIO's greatest triumphs came when its affiliates linked union power and political program to push forward the New Deal and the coalition that sustained it. The CIO always had to move forward, to generate a political bloc that could influence elections, neutralize the state or actually make it an ally, and win over a large slice of the middleclass. Otherwise union labor would become isolated and defensive, and ultimately transformed into the parochial interest group that its opponents were delighted to combat. And it is precisely in this way that the red economism celebrated by Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin became dysfunctional. It was not that a more moderate program would have won over those layers of the lower middle class that were in fact being captured by the political right; rather the labor left needed a transitional, social democratic program that would link shop militancy to the New Deal's larger political universe.

> The authors are right to declare the purge of the Communists from the CIO and the main body of labor "an American tragedy." Even the anti-Communists within the CIO came to realize that the 1949 expulsion of unions representing more than a million workers had a devastating impact on labor.

By emphasizing the autonomy of the CP unionists from the meddlesome Union Square politicos, (as in the CP union reluctance to endorse Henry Wallace's Progressive Party in 1948) Stepan-Norris and Zeitlin actually demonstrate how and why the Communist-led labor project failed to crystallize a set of politics that could appeal much beyond the world of a few trade union sectors. The labor movement, or any social movement, succeeds when the ideology put forward by its most visible and articulate members resonates within a large slice of the entire body politic. This was the function C. Wright Mills thought "union intellectuals" could fulfill as they dialogued with "the new men of power" who led the industrial union movement of the 1930s and 1940s. But for the Communists, and especially Communists in the unions, the generation of such a political bloc proved impossible, if only because so much of the political culture of the Communists was covert, alien and yes, "un-American." At various moments, Communists themselves were not unaware of the political ghetto into which they had fallen, but the authors of *Left Out* downplay this ideological disjunction, and for good reason, because it was in the larger, liberal political world that Stalinism, trade union or otherwise, became such an obnoxious obstacle to the construction of a mid-century progressive bloc.

Blind Faith

Reviewed by Robin Ganev

Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life
Eric Hobsbawm
New York: Pantheon Books, 2003
464 pp. $30

Among the great British Marxist historians Eric Hobsbawm is the only one to remain in the Communist Party until the late 1980s. His decision to do so has never fully been explained. Thus the publication of his autobiography, *Interesting Times*, is an exciting event, as it has the potential of addressing this question. How did Hobsbawm manage to reconcile himself, for example, to 1956? Did he not at least feel disillusioned when he learned about Stalinist atrocities? However, despite the undoubted value of the book in letting us see the twentieth century through the eyes of a fine historian who has lived through it, Eric Hobsbawm remains an enigma.

Hobsbawm is the author of over twenty scholarly books, including *The Age of Revolution* (1962), *Industry and Empire* (1968), *The Age of Capital* (1975), *The Age of Empire* (1987) and *On History* (1997). But his distinguished career is not allotted much space in his autobiography. Instead Hobsbawm focuses on the world of politics, keeping personal information and academic gossip to a minimum. The true fascination of the book lies in its first half dealing with Hobsbawm's childhood and youth in 1930s Berlin and his life as a Communist in Britain after WWII. Hobsbawm is at his best when writing about places and events he knows very well and cares about very deeply. The second half, dealing with Hobsbawm's friendships and experiences abroad, while providing entertaining anecdotes and intriguing reflections, particularly for those interested in the historical profession, is something of an anticlimax by comparison.

Hobsbawm was compelled to think politically at an early age. As a schoolboy in Vienna he noted that Vienna was a "red" city and saw himself as a "red." Afterwards in Berlin he admired his dashing Communist elder cousin who sported a badge with the Russian initials of the Young Communist International. But his first political act was in 1932 when he joined the Sozialistscher Schulerbund, a branch of the Young Communists for secondary school students. As a member of this organization he marched in the KPD's last legal demonstration on January 25, 1933 and distributed leaflets for the party after the burning of the Reichstag building. This experience was the beginning of a life-long love affair with Communism. It was also the most dangerous work Hobsbawm was ever to do for the party and, arguably, the most overt political activism he would ever engage in.

His subsequent activities were largely confined to writing and debating politics with other intellectuals, partly due to his academic temperament and partly due to circumstances. He might have fought in the Spanish Civil War if he had not been deported by a disgruntled border patrol officer shortly after crossing into Spain. He passionately wanted to fight in the Second World War, but had to be content with serving as a sapper in Cambridge and in the Army Education Corps in Gloucester. His language skills gave rise to dreams of doing intelligence work but the British government failed to make use of him (they were suspicious of his Austrian background and his politics). While he made some efforts at activism after the war, by his own admission he had little interest in it after 1956. One of the later chapters is aptly titled "A Watcher in Politics." When com-

Robin Ganev *is a graduate student in British history at York University, Toronto. Her thesis is about popular ballads as expressions of peasants' identity and discontent with social conditions in eighteenth-century Britain.*

pared with the life of another eminent Marxist historian, E.P. Thompson, this seems a quiet existence for a man who feels so strongly about the Communist cause.

A comparison with Thompson also makes one wonder why the working class is almost completely absent from Hobsbawm's account of his life. Thompson worked on the Yugoslav Youth Railway construction project and in adult education at the Workers' Educational Association. The only time Hobsbawm encountered some working-class men was when he was in the British army during WWII. For the first time he met the proletariat face to face and found them politically disappointing. But in retrospect, he praises their capacity for collective action and remembers fondly the "real proletarian experience" of operating a road drill. During these years with the working class he acquired "a permanent, if often exasperated, admiration for their uprightness, their distrust of bullshit, their sense of class, comradeship and mutual help. They were good people." (159)

Still, he did not seek out this contact, it came to him by accident. We also hear nothing about the troubles of British workers in the 1930s. While Hobsbawm writes eloquently about this in *The Age of Extremes* (1994), it does not seem to have affected him at the time. Fully engrossed by his studies at Cambridge, this young communist seems to have had little time for the proletariat. We would expect more from a historian of labor and the author of *Bandits* (1969) and *Primitive Rebels* (1959).

Nevertheless, Hobsbawm gives us a truly valuable account of what it felt like to belong to a mass political movement. The party dominated every aspect of the lives of its members. In Hobsbawm's case this extended even to his erotic imagination. The memory of the KPD demonstration of January 25, 1933 provokes the following reflection: "Next to sex, the activity combining bodily experience and intense emotion to the highest degree is the participation in a mass demonstration at a time of great public exaltation. Unlike sex, which is essentially individual, it is by its nature collective, and unlike the sexual climax, at any rate for men, it can be prolonged for hours. On the other hand, like sex it implies some physical action — marching, chanting slogans, singing — through which the merger of the individual in the mass, which is the essence of the collective experience, finds expression." (73)

This is one of several comparisons between lovemaking and Communism in the book. A young Viennese boy's coming to political awareness is linked to his coming to sexual awareness, radicals' language describing great social revolutions is said to resemble the language of romantic love, the prospect of a Communist mating with a non-Communist is named unthinkable and among the good Communist's many sacrifices is listed the duty to abandon his lover immediately and without question if ordered by the party.

The comparison with a charismatic religious sect may seem a cliché, but it is employed very effectively by Hobsbawm. The Communist movement was like religion in that one was fully consumed by it and gave oneself over to it entirely: "The party was what our life was about. We gave it all we had. In return, we got from it the certainty of our victory and the experience of fraternity." (134) One followed "the line" without wavering, regardless of what it was. If one disagreed with it, one strove to convince oneself that it was right, much like devout Christians might strive to reconcile themselves to God's will.

BUT THERE IS ONE IMPORTANT aspect in which belonging to the Communist Party was not like belonging to a religious group: the party claimed to rely not on blind faith but on rational arguments and "scientific socialism." Thus, when the party line was ridiculous, one would expect a reasonable individual to refuse to endorse it. Hobsbawm stresses numerous times that the brightest lights and the finest minds were Communists in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. What drove them to reconcile themselves to party policy was a notion of self-sacrifice: they put away their personal objections for the sake of the greater good. Still, the question of how a sharp, critical mind can be content to follow any sort of line so devoutly is not resolved.

Signs that the party was flawed were present early on. In the early 1930s they made the argument that social democracy was a greater danger than the rise of Hitler and devoted their energy to fighting capitalism rather than fascism. In Hobsbawm's own words this "bordered on political insanity." Though for a while it came to recognize fascism as the chief enemy, in 1939 Moscow reverted to its earlier rhetoric, proclaiming that the war was no longer anti-fascist and that Britain and France were as bad as Nazi Germany. Hobsbawm can't remember what he thought or felt when he heard this but a look at his diary reveals he had "no reservations about the new line." (153-4)

There is one issue, however, on which Hobsbawm flatly refused to follow the party line: jazz. The Soviets saw jazz as a decadent bourgeois art form and advised Communists to stay away from its corrupting influence. In *The Jazz Scene* (1959) Hobsbawm dismisses this position as shortsightedness or a Russian prejudice. His love for jazz and the culture surrounding it has been an important part of his life since he discovered the music when he moved to Britain in the 1930s. In comparison with Berlin, thirties-era Britain did not seem an exciting place to the young Hobsbawm until he heard the music of Armstrong, Ellington, Fletcher Henderson and Bessie Smith. He recalls the thrill of being present at Duke Ellington's concert in London which left him feeling "captured for ever."

In the fifties, Hobsbawm started contributing a monthly column on jazz to the *New Statesman* under the pseudonym Francis Newton. He writes engagingly about the broader social significance of jazz. Far from associating it with the bourgeoisie he emphasizes its origins among American blacks, the most oppressed social class. Because it is a "poor man's music," jazz is inherently oppositional, but its potential for social protest is further enhanced by leftist intellectuals who understand it as a form of dissent. As for its contribution to Hobsbawm's own life, jazz not only brought emotion to an otherwise cerebral existence, it allowed him to discover new worlds: he would not have been so interested in the United States nor made so many friendships there without jazz.

With the exception of this one issue, Hobsbawm did not deviate from official Communist policies and seldom gives us the reasons. Thus *Interesting Times* can be frustrating and tantalizing. We are dying to know the motivations behind some of Hobsbawm's actions, but too often he fails to explain himself, so we must be content with "I can't remember" and "who can tell what was in the mind of a young man 60 years ago?" No less disturbing than the party's stance toward fascism was the USSR's treatment of Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Hobsbawm was upset, but decided that the USSR was more important to the world Communist movement than these small, though "proud and heroic," countries.

Of all the Soviet policies toward the rest of Eastern Europe, the most shocking was the 1956 suppression of the Hungarian uprising. Hobsbawm gives this date the same significance as the 1917 Revolution. It virtually destroyed the world Communist movement. The Communist Party's Historians' Group objected to Soviet aggression and most of them left the party. But Hobsbawm did not. He did however, lose faith in the party's future in Britain and stopped being politically active.

SO WHY DID HE REMAIN? He does wrestle with this question and must be given credit for his honesty. First, he stayed our of rebelliousness and pride — he had been criticized so long for being a Communist that he was not going to admit defeat now. There was also vanity — he would show the academic establishment that he was a good enough historian to get all the best posts and honors despite the fact that he was a Communist. If he were to give up his membership, colleagues might say he was simply hungry for money and prestige. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it was hard for Hobsbawm to give up the cause to which he gave his youth, his dreams and ambitions. It was hard to leave the cause for which so many men and women had given their lives. It was harder to leave than to stay.

Although he felt an outsider to the radical movements of the sixties and seventies, Hobsbawm writes of them with more sympathy than one might expect. In May, 1968 Hobsbawm was in Paris for a UNESCO conference on Marx. He recalls watching the protesters from the conference hall and urging his colleagues to support the youths. He felt excited but could not understand what the radicals' aims were: "For middle-aged leftwingers like me, May 1968 and indeed the 1960s as a whole were both enormously welcome and enormously puzzling. We seemed to be using the same vocabulary, but we did not appear to speak the same language." Hobsbawm compares the radicals of the 1960s to the heroes of his *Primitive Rebels*, because they lacked a coherent political program. However, he accepted an invitation to address a crowd of occupying forces in the Cambridge Old Schools by one of their leaders. (253) He even ponders whether changing traditional relations between people as well as personal behavior may not be a better way to improve society than fighting to bring down capitalism.

One would think it is not a large step from this to understanding identity politics, but Hobsbawm's belief in a particular version of global socialism makes it impossible for him to relate to this phenomenon. He argues that since identity is defined against someone else it implies not identifying with the other. The consequences of this are disastrous both in terms of politics and in terms of writing history. Identity history, such as queer or feminist history, cannot be good history because "no identity group, however large, is alone in the world; the world cannot be changed to suit it alone, nor can the past." Hobsbawm is right in that it is important not to let one's own suffering blind one to the suffering of others. However, there is no reason why the effort to recover the voices of these minority groups has to imply failure to identify with the other or ignorance of the rest of the world.

Still, Hobsbawm's effort to understand and engage with radical politics since the sixties, as well as the numerous times he speaks critically of the Communist Party and expresses regret for the suffering of people at the hands of Communism gives the lie to the notion that he is some sort of unrepentant Communist, untouched by the actual history of his movement. In some ways, the book raises more questions than it answers but it is written with sincerity and passion, and like all good memoirs it conveys a powerful sense of what it was like to be alive in a world very different from our own.

Labor History Wisdom

Review by David Roediger

Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture
Franklin Rosemont
Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Company, 2003. 639 pp. $17

Years ago, the great folklorist Archie Green told me, eyes twinkling, that he could predict how little he'd learn about working class culture in many academic labor history books by counting how many times the word "culture" appeared in the subtitle and introduction. The more it was invoked, the less it would be illuminated. In part, this reflected a difference in how Green, borrowing from folklore and musicology, and labor historians, borrowing from liberal anthropologists, defined culture. Green much more firmly expected that culture would be embodied in creative expression while many labor historians regarded it diffusely as everything workers did or valued, often to the exclusion of any consideration of workers' relations to art and poetry.

Franklin Rosemont dedicates *Joe Hill* to Archie Green, "the Shakespeare and Hegel of labor lore." Rosemont himself is an accomplished surrealist artist, poet and theorist. Therefore it is no surprise that this more-and-less biography of the great labor organizer and songwriter murdered by the state of Utah in 1915 delivers on its subtitle's promise to provide a history of how a "revolutionary workingclass counterculture" was made by Hill and the union he championed. Indeed, Rosemont's massive study started out to be a modest introduction to the first full set of reproductions of Joe Hill's cartoons and other artwork. Full disclosure requires that I acknowledge being part of the process by which that project lost its modesty. Rosemont would send bits of text and I, with others, would assent to the logic: You can't understand Joe Hill's cartoons without knowing about his songs, his dreams, his life, his times, his frame-up, his fellow workers, his union, his ongoing impact and so on. The result is a fantastic compendium that delivers on an analysis of culture along the lines Green called for but also illuminates culture in the sense of everyday life, right down to what Hill had for dinner.

The adjectives best describing *Joe Hill* are ones usually seen as damning in academic reviews. They include romantic, rambling, partisan, autodidactic and playful — that is, exactly the adjectives that apply to Hill's own life as immigrant, hobo and rebel. This, then, is a book that refuses to submit to received labor history wisdom, to the blandness that has made "academic" the synonym of "irrelevant" and "boring," to linear narratives, or to capitulation in the face of "lesser evil" politics and subreformist unionism. Its deliberate sprawl also means, of course, that it refuses to submit to a conventional review. What follows is therefore meant to be appetite whetting and to suggest what is at stake in Rosemont's departures from orthodoxy.

That Joe Hill and the Industrial Workers of the World should be the subjects of a *celebration*, even as many radicals convince themselves that John Sweeney represents the best of all possible unionisms, will of course seem remarkable. But the problem actually runs longer and deeper than our constrained present imaginations. As Rosemont spiritedly shows, even in the heady days of the 1960s the IWW was anything but celebrated by those most influentially writing its history. Melvyn Dubofsky's sardonically titled *We Shall Be All* (1969) was the monumental work on the IWW appearing during that period. As the

Dave Roediger *teaches history and Afro-American Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His recent books include* Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past *(California) and, as editor, W.E.B. Du Bois'* John Brown *(Random House/Modern Library).*

world rallied to the free-spirited, direct actionist and democratic values of the IWW, *We Shall Be All* told the IWW's story as one of failure. Indeed, even its victories in shortening the working day were precursors of defeat for Dubofsky. The study found Joe Hill's union to be unwise, short-lived and unable to rise above the "culture of poverty" that held captive its members, and workers generally. The IWW's lack of permanent success ensured that labor history would look to the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) as the twentieth century success story of U.S. labor, and that activists would look to Communist activism in the CIO as the practice to be engaged and critiqued. Whatever the merits of such engagement, it ought not be an argument for marginalizing the IWW, any more than the greater size and durability of the Urban League would argue that its history holds more vital lessons than that of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee or the Black Panther Party.

Rosemont's *Joe Hill* shows a much longer-living and precedent-setting social movement, one able to organize democratically, internationally and interracially in ways fully relevant a century later. Dubofsky oddly frets that Joe Hill was "never proved innocent" in the murder case that led to his execution. Rosemont details an outrageous miscarriage of justice and excoriates state terror and the death penalty as fundamentally antilabor. Hill and his fellow writers, cartoonists, singers, thinkers and readers in the IWW — Rosemont's grasp of this milieu is unmatched — emerge as anything but the products of a culture of poverty." They were worker-intellectuals whose great learning, boldness and command of popular culture are still in many ways without peer. Indeed Rosemont's history of the IWW's *Little Red Song Book* (and of "its enemies") establishes the place of that slim volume, featuring Hill's songs, among the most influential and enduring works of U.S. radicalism. Its lyrics and audacity resonated, as Rosemont marvelously shows, among beat poets and New Leftists.

Implicit, and sometimes more than that, in *Joe Hill*, is Rosemont's insistence that a humorless history of the IWW is necessarily an uncomprehending one. From Hill's devilishly funny parodies of Salvation Army hymns, to Covington Hall's "Factful Fables," to the inspired nonsense of T-Bone Slim — the subject of another volume by Rosemont — the IWW laughed in scorn, in solidarity and just for fun and for practice in subverting misery-as-usual. In that sense it is fully appropriate that *Joe Hill* began as a collection of cartoons.

The turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century saw labor historians asking, just as the IWW was being born, "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" Rosemont starts this century with a far better question: "Who taught Joe Hill how to cook Chinese food?" That Hill loved to eat and to cook such food, even as the conservative American Federation (to IWWs, Fakeration) of Labor (AFL) organized racist boycotts of Asian eateries, is just the sort of delicious detail that runs through *Joe Hill*. It grounds a far-reaching consideration of the antiracist practice of the IWW, found both in a long section on "The White Problem" and throughout the book. Rosemont shows Hill voting with his feet to join and support the Mexican Revolution and details a strike led by an African-Canadian IWW member in British Columbia. Within the United States, he portrays an IWW light years ahead of the AFL in contesting Jim Crow and in rejecting anti-Asian terror. A brief chapter on the IWW, its Native American members and its occasional opposition to settler colonialism impressively gathers scattered sources. Withal, Rosemont acknowledges that "the IWW's attitudes on race . . . were contradictory, full of loose ends, troubling ambiguities and unresolved problems," showing that celebration and balanced critique can coexist. Indeed much can coexist in this treasure trove of history, poetry and memory. Read it — you'll have to get up early — in one sitting. Or savor it as four score overlapping vignettes, plus a marvelous concluding poem. But don't miss this book.

How the Labor Movement Got Away From Us

MAGGIE DICKINSON

State of the Union:
A Century of American Labor
NELSON LICHTENSTEIN
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002
276 pp. $18.95

NO MATTER HOW DIMINISHED the labor movement may currently seem, it is still a behemoth. It moves like a behemoth, slowly and heavily. So slowly, many workers may begin to feel like Sisyphus, pushing and pushing and never getting anywhere. This seems at odds with the idea of a labor *movement*. How do we regain a sense of movement? How did that get lost in the first place? These are some of the questions Nelson Lichtenstein addresses in his latest book, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor.*

Lichtenstein paints a portrait of a labor movement that has spent much of the past sixty years trying to replace the fluidity, uncertainty, openness and responsiveness of a social movement with the raw, anonymous power of sheer numbers. The result is a behemoth that has been bypassed by more agile notions. We are left with a mausoleum full of dead ideas that have become artifacts to everyone except those ensconced within — the groundskeepers, the union bureaucrats.

Or so it might seem. However, Lichtenstein — thankfully — refuses to give up hope that we could once again have viable working class institutions in America. As a historian who has made many important contributions to our understanding of modern labor history, including a noteworthy biography of Walter Ruether, Lichtenstein has a deep understanding of labor's dynamic nature. Modern U.S. unions may be job-protection programs for entrenched staffers. But there is a rank and file rumbling beneath the surface. Lichtenstein cites the Teamsters for a Democratic Union, who were partly responsible for the successful UPS strike in 1997, and the SEIU Justice for Janitors campaign in Los Angeles, as indicators of new direction for American labor.

The election of John Sweeney as president of the AFL-CIO in 1995, with his commitment to organizing the unorganized, signaled a shift at the top of the labor movement. Recognizing the potential to build alliances between this new leadership, the academic left, and student and community groups, Lichtenstein, as a founder of Scholars, Artists and Writers for Social Justice, helped organize a series of high profile labor teach-ins at several universities in the mid-nineties. These teach-ins fostered ties between the new AFL-CIO leadership and academics. They also enabled the new leadership to reach out to students and recruit young people to the labor movement as organizers and activists.

The State of the Union takes a special interest in questions of class in relation to social identity — the perceived split between a primarily class-based political identity and a political identity (or multiple and contradictory identities) as defined by individuals' characteristics such as race, gender and sexual orientation. Lichtenstein postulates that as Americans our sense of social justice was once deeply rooted in the labor question. However, with the rise of the civil rights movement, and subsequently the feminist movement, the persons with disabilities movement and the gay rights movement, our fundamental sense of social justice is now most readily associated with the idea of equal opportunity, or what Lichtenstein terms "rights

MAGGIE DICKINSON *is a union organizer currently working for the Professional Staff Congress, the faculty and staff union of the City University of New York (CUNY). She has organized retail workers, industrial laundries and part-time, contingent and grant-funded labor in the university. She is a member of New York City Labor Against the War (NYCLAW).*

consciousness." From Lichtenstein's perspective, labor rights consciousness has given way to civil rights consciousness.

In his introduction, Lichtenstein lays out the basic premise of his argument by looking at an employment application from that most typical of modern U.S. employers, the fast food restaurant. Prominently placed on the top of the page is the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) statement that the employer does not discriminate on the basis of "race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status or liability for service in the armed forces of the United States." The reason for the prominence of this statement is twofold. First, it's the law. Second, and more importantly for Lichtenstein's argument, "Americans consider workplace discrimination on the basis of race and religion and creed un-American." The EEOC statement sums up the general sentiment that discrimination is wrong. In contrast, Lichtenstein points to the "employment at will" statement that appears on the same application as an example of how far we've moved, both legally and morally, from the Wagner era notion of "encouraging unions and collective bargaining."

This contrast between substantial civil rights and minimal labor rights is at the heart of U.S. politics, according to Lichtenstein. As he writes:

> The problem facing American workers, the issue that puts a question mark on the democratic character of our polity, is summed up by the dichotomy sketched out here. In the last forty years a transformation in law, custom, and ideology has made a once radical demand for racial and gender equality into an elemental code of conduct. This is unquestionably one of the great steps forward in U.S. politics and workplace culture. But during the same era, the rights of workers, as workers, and especially as workers acting in an autonomous, collective fashion, have moved well into the shadows. The law, the managerial ethos, the opinion-forming pundits, indeed many workers themselves, have marginalized and ridiculed the idea that democratic norms should govern the workplace.

In other words, robust labor rights, the right to organize and collectively bargain over wages and working conditions, have effectively disappeared. The Wagner Act is still on the books, but it is almost entirely toothless. Meanwhile, the legislation engendered by the rights revolution has become virtually unassailable. It is un-American to discriminate, but it is not un-American to bust unions.

THIS TURN OF EVENTS is deeply troubling to many of Lichtenstein's prolabor colleagues. He tells us, "Todd Gitlin, Michael Tomasky and Richard Rorty have argued that whatever its past legitimacy, 'identity politics' (itself a pejorative term for rights consciousness) has reached a contemporary dead end — both in terms of its impact on the working class movement as a whole and in its capacity to make a real impact on the polity." However, Lichtenstein does not see civil rights consciousness as the enemy of labor rights. Instead, he proposes that, "just as the CIO made the quest for industrial democracy a powerful theme that legitimized its strikes and organizing campaigns, so can the contemporary labor movement capitalize on the nation's well established rights culture of the last forty years."

By arguing that "the 'identity' politics side of this debate cannot be dismissed," Lichtenstein is attempting a bit of a balancing act. Instead of agreeing with Gitlin, Tomasky and Rorty that its time to get back to class issues, Lichtenstein argues that in order for our working class institutions to be viable, they have to capitalize on rights consciousness.

Lichtenstein's got the right book but he is arguably on the wrong page, largely because he continues to posit a sharp dichotomy between rights consciousness based on identity and working class consciousness. The weakness in his argument lies in the conflation between the union idea and the institutions that grew up around that idea. The union idea is not at odds with a political consciousness based on identity. It is the working class institutions that are at odds with workers' understanding of themselves.

There was never a time when the labor question could be resolved without addressing issues of identity. This fact has its historical roots in two labor questions that predate the one Lichtenstein starts with, namely the questions of slavery and the devaluation of women's labor. It is not possible to address the labor question without simultaneously addressing the dual economic hierarchies of race and gender that are so deeply rooted in our culture. If the labor movement failed to understand the importance of these issues and Americans found forms of redress outside of labor institutions, through movements for civil rights and equal opportunity, it does not mean that the struggle for these rights was not also a working class struggle.

Lichtenstein's reading of labor history tends to presume a "we," an inside and an outside to the labor movement. His assumption is that what happens inside the house of labor is class struggle and what happens outside is...something else. It is Lichtenstein's subtle identification with the "we" inside the labor movement that stifles the kind of critical analysis necessary to address and remedy the historical tensions between race, gender and working class institutions.

This "we" can be seen, for example, in the chapter "Erosion of the Union Idea" which places responsibility for the recession of the labor question and the quest for "industrial democracy at the worksite" on those "intellectuals, jurists, journalists, academics and politicians" who "came to see the unions as little more than a self-aggrandizing interest group, no longer a lever for progressive change." Yet this critique from the left was not a critique of the idea of collective action or workplace democracy. Intellectuals such as C. Wright Mills and Dwight Macdonald were critiquing of the kind of undemocratic, inflexible institutions the unions had become. Harvey Swados' analysis of the dehumanization of the workplace came from the time he spent on the assembly line with other workers. If workers' real source of discontent was out of line with the unions' project of winning ever-higher wages and increasing American consumption, it is certainly not Harvey Swados' fault for pointing it out.

To claim that the critique from the academy and the left had more of an influence on popular perceptions of the labor question than the labor institutions themselves is an absurdity. It wasn't the intellectual vanguard that brought the labor question into such sharp focus in the years leading up to the Wagner Act. It was the constant upheaval created by the massive unrest and subsequent action on the part of workers throughout industrial America. It was the refusal on the part of workers and their institutions to be constrained by the law that ultimately caused the law to shift in their favor.

Lichtenstein tends to give too much weight to outside factors and not enough to strategic decisions made by union leaders. He tells us "the stolid quality of postwar unionism reflected the institutional constraints and legal structures under which the unions were forced to function." Talking about "constraints that the labor movement is forced to operate under" reflects a certain passivity in Lichtenstein's reading. There are always constraints on the working class. However, these constraints can be broken when people confront them directly. This was the case with the massive strikes leading up to the passage of the Wagner Act as well as the civil disobedience that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act. The stolid character of postwar unionism may reflect the fact that unions internalized these constraints, but that is a matter of decisions on the part of labor leaders. It is not a function of the fact that external constraints exist, it is a function of the conscious decisions made by leaders in how to deal (or not deal, as the case may be) with these constraints.

We see this passivity again in Lichtenstein's discussion of the "outright corruption of unions like the Teamsters, the National Maritime Union, the Laborers, East Coast Longshoremen and Confectionary Workers." He tells us this corruption "was a product of the near irresistible temptations faced by an entrenched stratum of union officials when given the opportunity to administer health, welfare and pension funds that mounted into the billions." Stealing from the members' benefit funds was the product of an irresistible temptation? It is this subtle forgiveness of labor's failure to make principled stands that prevents a real reckoning inside the labor movement.

And this is what the labor movement needs if it is to see a meaningful revitalization in this country. Lichtenstein's prescription of militancy, internal union democracy and politics is a good start. He tells us that that internal union democracy "is not a luxury, an ethical imperative divorced from the hard work necessary to rebuild the unions and link them to a rights agenda. Instead it stands at the center of that rebuilding process." He is absolutely right. The labor movement needs a base of grassroots activists acting autonomously on the shop floor to shift the balance of power from the bureaucrats to the workers.

However, beyond these basic prescriptions, Lichtenstein claims that "the organizational shape of the American trade-union movement is actually of far less importance than the ideas and ideology, the inspiration that sustains it." He asks "What ideas motivate American workers today, and what seem capable of generating the kinds of mobilizations and alliances that will once again make a resolution of the labor question seem synonymous with the economic and civic health of the society as a whole?"

It's a good question, but he has already answered it. The ideas that have motivated American workers for the past forty years are ideas centered around discrimination based on identity. The link he fails to make is that for the labor movement to make the connection between class consciousness and rights consciousness, unions must put issues of identity front and center. They must begin to talk about issues of race and gender as economic issues, not because it is strategically smart, as Lichtenstein argues, but because it is true. When two million prisoners, largely people of color, are forced to work below minimum wage, it is an economic issue that erodes standards for the entire workforce. Organizing against this kind of exploitation and systemic discrimination would be taking the kind of principled stand that might just win back the hearts and minds of key groups of American workers.

For the labor movement to be successful, it must speak to workers as human beings, not as economic units to be fit into some grand social design. This means understanding workers as they understand themselves, as women, as people of color and as immigrants. It means making a commitment to the issues that effect these groups, whether or not they are "class issues" or "race issues" or "gender issues," because they are all worker's issues.

The labor movement, as an expression of class consciousness in America, simply cannot exist in a vacuum. It must listen before it speaks. There was an opening for this kind of inclusive organizing in the 1930s with the rise of the CIO. The openness to organizing all workers, regardless of race, gender or skill level breathed life into the movement. Unfortunately, the essentially undemocratic nature of the unions prevented the kind of robust working-class movement that Lichtenstein now hopes to renew. Unions may have organized people of color and women out of economic necessity, but they resisted allowing these groups to have any real ownership in these institutions. Taking these groups seriously on their own terms and helping them bring their issues to the table is fundamental to the revitalization of our working class institutions.

High Times: Revisiting the New Left

REVIEWED BY KRISTIN LAWLER

The New Left Revisited
EDITED BY JOHN MCMILLIAN AND PAUL BUHLE
Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2003, 244 pp. $24.95

I REMEMBER DECIDING TO MAJOR in sociology in college while taking a class in social movements. There, it came to seem to me that we lefties could take the past and through subjecting it to scientific scrutiny — what "worked," what didn't — we could build more successful movements on the basis of what we learned. I am no longer quite so naïve — about social science or about what it takes to build a viable movement. But still, I search. I want a past I can use. And I think I'm probably not alone.

The Sixties rarely give me an inch on this. What makes the last massive upsurge of political and cultural radicalism in this country so compelling, so endlessly fascinating, is also what makes it so difficult on the instrumental front. The decade defies easy moral-of-the-story telling. Sixties radicalism is quite slippery that way. Every time you try to capture it, to get an analytical handle on it — "the problem with the New Left was that activists were constantly searching outside themselves, for some Other who would serve as the real agent of change," for instance — some anomaly shows up. Someone turns out to have been doing or saying just the opposite. Add the fluidity and cross-pollination among the different movements, the relationship between the New Left and the counterculture, the Old New Left and the New New Left, and on and on, and it's a wonder that we're able to say anything at all.

Still, a narrative exists. John McMillian calls it "the New Left consensus." Crafted by writers like Kirkpatrick Sale, Allen Matusow, Todd Gitlin, James Miller and Maurice Isserman, it's a target of the collection of essays he's edited with Paul Buhle entitled *The New Left Revisited*. For too long, McMillian says, we've taken the word of a few scholars, several of whom were big players in the movement themselves, for what the New Left was and what it meant. And given that "the 1960s are often associated with a scholarly view which holds that our understanding of the world can be enriched from a 'bottom-up' perspective," it's problematic that "most chroniclers of the New Left have been disappointingly 'top-down' in their approach." In consequence, he says, it may be that "the reigning narrative of the New Left too closely reflects the idiosyncratic experiences and perspectives of its architects."

Clearly, a richer portrait of the New Left emerges when we move past the SDS office and conventions, beyond the elite East and West coast universities, and listen to the voices not only of the movement's leaders but of its rank-and-file participants. The New Left was a "broad-based, grassroots movement," and the essays collected here accentuate that reality and complicate our understanding of the movement in powerful ways.

In fact, the strength of the book lies as much in its form as in its content. The New Left was nothing if not open, diverse, heterogeneous and dynamic, and so is a subject better served by many voices, many perspectives, many stories. And, in the true spirit of the New Left, it's a younger generation of scholars that's coming to challenge the assumptions of their elders about the 1960s, claiming boldly, irreverently, that "You Didn't Have to Be There."

The book's essays consciously disrupt much

KRISTIN LAWLER *is a PhD candidate in sociology at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She worked as an organizer for CUNY's faculty and staff union, the PSC, for nearly three years, and is currently teaching sociology at Queens College.*

of the established wisdom about the 1960s and its activists. Gregg L. Michel, for instance, in "Building the New South," claims that "white students in the South simply are not part of the story of the progressive movements of the 1960s," and tells the story of the Southern Student Organizing Committee. Deploying the rebel imagery and sense of regional distinctiveness of the South, young white activists organized in their communities and on their campuses for civil rights, free speech in the university, against the Vietnam war, and, significantly, with and for local labor unions. In the process, they "helped to make dissent respectable on southern campuses."

These "Local Stories" give us something else besides an expanded portrait of activism in the 1960s. We're left with a sense of the profound personal transformations at the base of politics, the ways in which people and their surroundings were changed through their activity. White southern students weren't the stars of the New Left, by any means. Still, what they did mattered. Michel quotes former member David Nolan on SSOC: "it went from nothing to something, . . . it did create something, and it did it in a place where things otherwise would not have happened."

Jennifer Frost's reconsideration of SDS's Economic Research and Action Project is similarly inspiring. In "Organizing from the Bottom Up," the author claims that "community participants in the ERAP projects have been caricatured and dismissed rather than taken seriously. This is ironic, given ERAP's commitment to organizing from the bottom up." ERAP is largely considered a failure, given that it never did organize a mass "interracial movement of the poor," but by letting us hear their voices, Frost shows how organizing with ERAP transformed two very different poor women. "How representative," she asks, "were these two women of the residents in the communities where ERAP projects were initiated? Not very, if 'representativeness' is defined in quantitative terms . . . they are hardly a statistically significant sample. Yet their lives and their voices matter." Quoting Alessandro Portelli, Frost points out that these two women offer us "less a grid of standard experiences than a horizon of shared possibilities."

So many important themes are taken up in the book — revolution, women, participatory democracy, regional differences, consumerism and cooptation, race relations, New Left exceptionalism — that it's impossible to do them all justice within the scope of this review. But the best essays deal in different ways with what I consider to be the most crucial aspect of the New Left and its era — the transformative power of countercultural activity.

In "Death City Radicals: The Counterculture in Los Angeles," David McBride challenges "the familiar argument that the counterculture and the New Left were distinct entities (at least before New Leftists succumbed to the pleasures of pot, free love, and acid rock)", claiming that "it cannot hold when applied to the admittedly unique Los Angeles region." There, "political and aesthetic radicalism in everyday life meshed considerably," with hipsters and politicos reading the same papers and inhabiting (and coming to defend) the same neighborhoods. Sometimes the same bodies. He demonstrates, too, the natural affinities between the two groups at the levels of antiracism, opposition to the war, and the search for authenticity against the fake backdrop of Hollywood, as well as those that developed under the pressure of shared repression. Significantly, he paints a portrait of hippies as always already political, willing to defend the Sunset Strip and Venice as the "environments of transgressive libertarianism" that they had become. McBride convincingly throws into question the conventional dichotomy of apolitical counterculture and political New Left. Although he speaks of the importance of particular spatial contexts in shaping movement activity, it's fair to assume that what he found in L.A. was also the case elsewhere.

IT SEEMS, IN FACT, that the farther we get from the spatial and organizational centers of the New Left, the more fluid and blurred the lines between the two dimensions of the student upsurge become. The first story in the volume is one of the best. In "'It Seemed a Very Local Affair': The Student Movement at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale," Robbie Lieberman and David Cochran trace the events leading up to a spring of massive civil disobedience at SIU in 1970. The movement there, which was quite unconnected to national New Left organizations, was composed of three groups of students who eventually came together to oppose both the enforcement of restrictive dorm hours and the Vietnam war. The authors identify these three strains as the student rights movement (their organization tellingly named the Rational Action Movement), the small New Left and the mass of students involved in the university's quite wild party culture. It's a great story — how the *in loco parentis* policies of the university, Nixon's bombing of Cambodia, and Kent State brought these students together in a series of clashes with authorities that culminated in a student strike and referendum that forced the closing of the university.

What's striking is the recognition that the countercultural party atmosphere of SIU had effects that were not the least apolitical. In fact, "the politicization of many students grew out of their participation in the party culture." A student government leader put it this way: "Everybody was getting turned on . . . they were smoking pot, they were dropping acid . . . that increased their sense of negativity toward the government. 'What do you mean, they put you in jail for doing *this*?'" And the closing of the university was a festive affair: "It was the original street party at SIU. People were smoking dope on the street . . . We had our makeshift parades going down the street. Some guy with a Nixon mask on, it was a circus atmosphere. It was a lot of fun, nobody got hurt . . . It was pretty peaceful, everybody was everybody's friend."

However, the politicos and the party lovers had significant differences. For one, the political leaders and the rank and file tended to interpret events differently. Although the politicos saw the protest activity as consciously planned, rank-and-file participants more often remember the events that spring as leaderless and spontaneous. In addition, the energy of the student mass overflowed the boundaries of "reasonable" behavior, as students regularly ignored calls for restraint from student leaders. The split is best reflected, though, in the two groups' divergent views regarding the closing of SIU. Most of the students were thrilled, and the space that opened was filled with a wild public celebration. The Rational Action and New Left types, however, were disappointed. They felt that the "closing of the university dissipated the movement's strength and destroyed further opportunities for organizing." One let-down activist felt that at first, "there was a lot of potential, we were even talking about educational things, priorities and what kind of university did we want this to be. *It was exciting, sitting all day in rap sessions* . . . and then the whole thing toppled." Clearly most of the students saw the street party as more exciting than an all-day meeting about how to better run the university. I think it's fair to say that most people on the left would agree with the political types at SIU that this was a problem.

But it's just this notion — the counterculture was not properly political — that it's time to revisit. People may not love meetings, but they do love freedom. James Miller's *Democracy is in the Streets* is one of the main works identified with the "New Left consensus." In the preface to the most recent edition, Miller rethinks his original work in several ways — too much focus on leaders, for instance — and then states that "the gravest omission in my text may be cultural. Given the political focus of my narrative, it was all but impossible to convey adequately the era's *carnivalesque* atmosphere of confusion — an air of chaos that was, depending on one's aspirations, either fearful or liberating." He goes on to say that "the student politics of the era were of a piece with this unfettered cultural spirit, helping to shape it, and being shaped by it in turn."

Here Miller points to precisely what it is that simultaneously makes the Sixties so hard to "capture," *and* provides the era's most important lesson — the Sixties as carnival. In *Rabelais and His World,* Mikhail Bakhtin brings to life the popular celebrations of carnival during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In Rabelais, these images are "opposed to all that is finished and polished, to all pomposity, to every ready-made solution in the sphere of thought and world outlook" — to the authoritative word. And during carnival, the official law of church and state was overturned and vital energy was subject only to "the laws of its own freedom." In the wild, bawdy feasts of carnival, "a boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture." Most important, carnival celebrations in which the anti-official, unserious culture of the people flowed through the streets, were for Bakhtin not only not in the way of revolution, they were the revolution. The ancient tradition of carnival was, by the way, always pop and always centered around the wild space of the marketplace.

The carnival spirit enacts the people's opposition to the normal; carnival is queer. In my favorite essay, "Losing Our Kids: Queer Perspectives on the Chicago Seven Conspiracy Trial," Ian Lekus proposes that "the trial itself proved a remarkably queer event, an open confrontation between the state on one hand and those who protested the racial, sexual, and generational hierarchies dominant in society on the other, between those who enforced the American order of things and those who rebelled against the norms." In more ways than one, prosecutor Thomas Foran represented the state. The trial's queerest moment, says Lekus, came when "Allen Ginsburg — Buddhist and Jew, poet and unrepentant homosexual, opponent of the Vietnam war" who "embodied much that was anathema to the courtroom's defenders of state and national power" took the stand on behalf of the defendants. Foran badgered, gay-baited, cast aspersions, while Ginsberg read from *Howl* and chanted Om.

Tom Hayden was no Merry Prankster, but like Lekus he came to see the true meaning of this symbolic battle — that "Our crime was that we were beginning to live a new and contagious lifestyle without official authorization. We were tried for being out of control . . . " One week after the close of the trial, Thomas Foran ranted at a local Booster Club meeting that "we've lost our kids to the freaking fag revolution." He got it — what was really at stake in the face of the queer carnival "menace" was the very construction and maintenance of normality itself, the ground on which all authority stands. Why is it that enemies of the left often understand the power of liberatory culture better than we do?

THE NEW LEFT WAS MANY things, but it *was* part and parcel of the spirit of its age — a spirit that opposed instrumental rationality and its ascetic demands of delayed gratification with the enactment of pleasure and freedom *now.* There were Yippies and Pranksters, hippie dropouts and fragging GIs, wildcat young auto workers and psychedelicized college students who wanted to find themselves and have fun and not die in the jungle, and these things are not marginal to what the 1960s, or the New Left, were about. All over America, they refused discipline. This libertarianism is, in fact, what above all remains within American culture from that time.

And in the end, my only criticism of the book is on this level. The carnivalesque is alive and well in this volume, as it was in its subject. But then as now, it's not the only force at work. The antiauthoritarian current that swept through every nook and cranny of American life spoke with millions of voices that can probably never be contained in one story. The editors of *The New Left Revisited* are right to let the multiplicity of voices speak, to complicate the narrative. But the other aspect of carnival, which Bakhtin describes as belonging "to the borderline between art and life," which is, "in reality, life itself, but shaped according to a certain pattern of *play*," is too often neglected. Some of the contributors end up taking positions that are . . . well, a little square.

Kevin Mattson, for instance, ends his examination of the intellectual currents at work within *Studies on the Left* with the statement that "Realism . . . suggests the need for a more conciliatory attitude toward centrist liberals" and that "reform, with all its imperfections . . . is probably the only realistic approach to achieving political change, a lesson that the events of the 1960s should make clear." But it's not at all clear that this is the lesson of the 1960s. The Chicago Seven trial is instructive here. Thomas Foran saw himself as a good liberal Democratic reformer, sympathetic to civil rights and antiwar sentiment. But his own "days of rage" in the courtroom "laid bare the heteronormative liberal masculinity devoted at all costs to holding up the pillars of empire." The classic refrain is always appropriate: Which side are you on, boys? If you're partial to vital energy against the forces that would discipline and instrumentalize it, choosing sides in this conflict is not an obstacle to political progress. It's essential to it.

Paul Buhle's epilogue rips to shreds, once and for all, the argument that the New Left should have better appreciated liberal sellouts. He ends the volume with a damning indictment of the "lib-lab" coalition that New Leftists have gotten so much flack for rebelling against. It's time, he says, to stop blaming New Leftists for rejecting the corrupt vision and tactics of (CIA-funded) liberal intellectuals and organized labor. Buhle shifts the blame for the breakup of the progressive coalition squarely onto the shoulders of the Cold Warriors. We are encouraged to imagine a counterhistory: how much stronger would American progressives be today if the new social movements had been supported by other left-of-center forces? He makes a powerful case that New Left radicalism holds up quite well in contrast to the sixties liberalism exemplified by Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and George Meany.

Still, Buhle wants to redeem the New Left from the charge that the kids were being unreasonable. But now even more than then, we live in a world dominated by the instrumental rationality that aims to make all life, every instant and every iota, into a means to the end of profit. I think it's worth considering the idea that a rejection of rationality, of playing by the rules, an *irrational* exuberance, if you will, may be the most powerful, the most transformative critique of that system that there is.

Sure, the exuberance of the Sixties didn't come from nowhere — there were economic conditions, among others. And yes, capital fought back with crisis and austerity in the face of a mass rejection of its rules and discipline. The fight continues — the institutions of capital still work to beat every bit of exuberance out of us, every day. That's the class struggle. What if the left — and the labor movement, especially — came to see the other side of this fight, the countercultural desire for freedom, as its most important, most enduring weapon? Embraced it, spoke to it, organized around it? The Sixties are long gone, but the carnival impulse is timeless. I'd like to propose that if there's anything we can learn from revisiting the Sixties, it's that we need to embrace our inner "freaking fag revolutionary" and get back on the bus. It's high time for another ride.

In sad remembrance of

Jim Murray

April 10, 1949 - July 21, 2003

Founder and Director of the C.L.R. James Institute

"You must be able to write what you have to say, and know that that is what matters; and I hope you can see that you can begin anywhere and end up as far as anybody else and end up as far as anybody else has reached. I hope you are not scared to write about what concerns you, what you know — these things matter."

C.L.R. JAMES

Fascinating Discoveries

Review by Paul Buhle

> The World of C.L.R. James: The Unfragmented Vision
> James Young
> Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1999
> 365 pp. $21.95

James Young's volume is destined to be one of the most distinctive biographies of C.L.R. James ever written, and for a very special reason: it is a sequel of sorts to Young's recent book on Scottish nationalism, *The Very Bastards of Creation* (Clydeside Press). Son of a working class Communist, he tells us there, James Young was a teenager during the Second World War when he learned from a teacher that Scotland "had been sold out in 1707" to the imperialist English. It was surely a shock. Making his way home from work in a sawmill a few years later, Young ran across the same teacher, who directed him to Lewis Grassic Gibbon's nationalist novel, *A Scot's Quair*. Add in the *Communist Manifesto* as imbibed by Young when he had become a railway worker in 1948, and you have practically got the whole story; except to say that the founding fathers of Marxism nettled him with their mostly blind rejection of national feeling and sentiment. Through decades of political activity — in the labor movement, on the left and, eventually, as a teacher and university professor — he learned to be a socialist with a difference. And that is where, toward the end of the 1950s, he took up with C.L.R. James.

The style of *The World of C.L.R. James* is sui generis as well. Young is so enamored by the expression of the historical witnesses (from James and Raya Dunayevskya to a host of assorted personalities, 1930s Trinidad calypsonians to 1970s English and Scottish Marxists) that he uses bloc quotations without reserve. He is trying to give us the full flavor of the writer's meaning, without interposing his own interpretation (which generally follows within a few sentences). By this often curious means, even the most familiar parts of the tale take on new life.

There are other intellectual strategies here that no other writer is likely to adopt. As a historically conscious Scot, Young not only knows the colonialism of England "from the inside," but understands intuitively the assorted means adopted to break out, syndicalism, which had some of its hottest devotees in the English language world on the Clydeside (where the volume is published). He owed a lot to another Caribbean-born thinker, Daniel DeLeon, an American Marxist sectarian but also a profound antiracist and anti-imperialist who understood the many corruptions of labor "reform" and socialsit "gradualism." By reasoning (as others, including Marx himself, had done for the Irish) that the English willingness to exterminate troublesome highland clans bred and reinforced the kind of racism needed for overseas imperial adventures, Young sees the issues afresh. He also recovers an obscure piece of syndicalist history: Edinburgh DeLeonites of the 1930s, politically isolated but syndicalists to the bone, entered partway into the British Trotskyist movement after extensive discussions with James and his group.

As he further traces a history that James might have known — if only the full pre-Communist history of the left had been available to him — Young culls antiracist sentiments from Rosa Luxemberg, leftwing Clydesider John

---

Paul Buhle *is the author of* C.L.R. James: The Artist as Revolutionary *(1988),* Taking Care of Business: Samuel Gompers, George Meany, Lane Kirkland and the Tragedy of American Labor *(1999),* Radical Hollywood *(2002, with Dave Wagner) and numerous other books on labor, culture and intellectuals. A symposium on his book* Taking Care of Business *appeared in* New Politics*, no. 28 (winter 2000).*

Maclean, South African Bolshevik S.P. Bunting and an assortment of otherwise forgotten prophets, white and nonwhite. He makes many fascinating discoveries. For *The Very Bastards of Creation*, Young scoured the local press and the forgotten small magazines of two centuries, as well as using the most up-to-date historical studies. From the United Scotsmen of the 1790s to the nationalist anti-Thatcherites of the 1990s, at least a section of the Scots had — he discovered — outdone the most radical English in rejection of empire's claim. *The World of C.L.R. James* tells a similar story of antiracists and antiimperialists, mostly intellectuals of the last half-century, but a militant minority for all that. On the other side, he identifies the socialist (and liberal-bourgeois) racists who accommodated themselves to the prevailing views, expecting socialist or liberal movements to profit from the common (white) sentiment, colonial or neocolonial.

Some of the most tantalizing incidents recounted here find Scottish, Welsh and Irish radicals of the 1930s with James, on his occasional lectures and visits to the Celtic survivors of empire's grasp. No one else was likely to find this material, and Young spoke mostly with the elderly militants now gone, including Easter uprising martyr James Connolly's daughter Nora Connolly O'Brien and Nan Maclean Milton, daughter of nationalist-socialist writer John Maclean. Other old time sympathizers that Young discovers recalled reading James' internationalist essays in the widely circulated organs of the Independent Labour Party to which James' Trotskyist group belonged at the high point of its 1930s influence.

For readers not drawn to the fine points of left politics and theory in the United Kingdom, the going is likely to get a little rough here. One must, for example, be stirred to feel the rage that Young exhibits toward *The Common People*, written by socialists G.D.H. Cole and Raymond Postgate, a widely read popular history that described Scottish nationalism as something akin to barbarism. But reader, bear with Young. He also has important points to make about determined internationalism, as analyzed in the rare surviving issues of 1930s British far left publications.

It is safe to say that no one has treated James' unorthodox Trotskyism of that period quite so sympathetically and in such detail as Young, and probably no one could. Sensitive to the veterans of the 1930-1950s in their strengths and weaknesses, Young has uniquely perceived how much the best of them drew without realizing it on the early twentieth century and yet more distant traditions of anarchism, utopianism and moralism. In Young's reconstruction, the Machiavellianism that marked the Communists' descent into blind support of Stalin also infected the rest of the left, not entirely excepting Trotskyists. James, without recognizing it, recuperated much of what had been lost, placing the values in the new context of midcentury by "thinking in color," i.e., in true internationalist terms.

One can rightly object, I think, to the tainted quality of some other purported recuperators. The social democratic intellectuals that Young quotes, Joseph Buttinger in particular, had never been as innocent on issues of race and colonialism as they claimed, and grew steadily less innocent as time went on, their critique of Stalinism increasingly self-serving. When the United States displaced Russia as the master of the world's slaughter houses, Buttinger himself masterminded (in the pages of *Dissent* and elsewhere) a propaganda campaign to lead the United States into full-scale involvement in Vietnam. Young recovers his bearing by critiquing the side effects of some of the openly rightward shifts. The *Dissent* crowd of the 1950s, so acute to the logic of totalitarianism at work in other parts of the world, was all too eager to see mass society at home as another symptom of reason's decay, and African-American based youth music as one of its symptoms.

C.L.R. James perceived instead the vitality of mass society, and if he had not been expelled from the U.S., he presumably would have welcomed rock and roll and the early counterculture that the New York Intellectuals so despised. James Young thus quotes from a private letter in which James refers to Irving Howe: "I could have taught that boy something — seriousness, method, dig down deep, wrestle with ideas, help the proletariat, help himself . . . he is a literary person by nature, and yet I wonder. James Baldwin . . . is as different from Howe as genuine orange-ice is from the stuff in cans." Perhaps this is a bit unfair, but it is not inaccurate.

Even when attempting an implausible stretch, Young moves on to more splendid examples and insights. Quoting a dialogue between worker-intellectual Stan Weir and young writer James Baldwin, Young recreates the America of the late 1940s and extensively quotes James' reaction to it, as well as his reflections on his life within it. We are on rather familiar ground here among the James biographies, but the documentation that Young adds has its own independent value.

THE LAST CHAPTERS pull together much of James' latter-day efforts (not all of them successful, by any means) to make sense of the rapidly changing world and the role of the revolutionary within it. The portrayal of James' appearance at a conference in Coventry in 1967 is affecting (according to one participant's memory, "the slight figure . . . next to me in a shabby coat" rose to say "my name is James" and went on to explore the political issues raised by the *May Day Manifesto*) and the moment of reconciliation between James and E.P. Thompson (who had a decade earlier broken with the British Communist movement) at the same meeting is priceless. Other touching moments feature James on the lecture trail in the 1970s, and his "money worries" during the last era of his life. To have visited James in Brixton, in an undistinguished room over the offices of *Race Today* magazine, was to appreciate how poignant the last years of the writer-philosopher-activist (intermittently still one of Britain's favorite cricket commentators) really were.

Young wants to come down, at last, to an elusive point closest to himself: "the consequences of cultural imperialism on national minorities outside of the mainstream." James lacked the energy to reconsider many aspects of this question. Yet there was no doubt that it had been close to his mind (and heart) all these decades, occasionally flaring up against V.S. Naipaul and others. If James failed to reconcile or place at a higher stage of dialectic nationalism and internationalism; high culture, mass culture and class; the revolutionary imperative and the necessity for a personal life — it had not been for want of trying.

The Logic of Holy War

Review by Marvin Mandell

The Malady of Islam
By Abdelwahab Meddeb
Translated from the French by
Pierre Joris and Ann Reid
New York: Basic Books, 2003
240 pp. $24

Both American neo-conservatives and Islamic fundamentalists share this manner of discourse, according to Abdelwahab Meddeb: "For them dialogue is desirable only on condition that the interlocutor disappear to himself . . . Submit to me or I dismiss you." (215) Example: No rational discourse is possible with someone who says, "God gave me the land"or "God wills that she be stoned to death."

Voltaire wrote *Treatise on Toleration* (1763) to respond to Catholic fanaticism (reaching yet another high point in the death sentence imposed on Jean Calas in 1762) and Thomas Mann wrote *Doctor Faustus* (1947) to respond to German fanaticism. Meddeb now writes *The Malady of Islam* to respond to Islamic fundamentalism. "If fanaticism was the sickness in Catholicism, if Nazism was the sickness in Germany, then surely fundamentalism is the sickness in Islam." (6)

"'Shut up,' he explained."
—Ring Lardner

Meddeb is a Tunisian poet and professor living in Paris. His *Malady of Islam*, superbly translated by Pierre Joris and Ann Reid, provides the reader with a comprehensive background of both the triumphs and the turmoils of Islamic culture from the beginning to the present. His scholarship is thorough, his philosophy humane, and his writing lucid and lively. I will take issue, however, with his politics.

Meddeb uses Fernand Braudel's criterion for locating the highest points of civilization: concentration of world capital. In the ninth and tenth centuries, the acme of civilization was in the Baghdad of the Abbasids, in the eleventh century the Cairo of the Fatimids, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the Cairo of the Mamluks. After that, world capital shifted away from the Islamic world, first to Genoa and Venice, thence to Amsterdam (seventeenth century), London (nineteenth) and finally to New York (twentieth).

Thus, Islamic culture flourished from 750 to 1250 A.D. Then it declined. The reasons for this decline are many, but to name five:

- the invasions of the Crusaders and the Mongols crippled the Byzantine empire and weakened the rest of Islam;
- the Spanish Inquisition persecuted Muslims;
- the Crusades enriched both Venice and Genoa, enabling them to surpass Islamic centers;
- monopolies over certain resources changed hands;
- shipowners circumvented territories of Islam with the discovery of the new world, cutting Islam out of international trade routes.

Meddeb realizes that these — and other — reasons do not fully account for the entropy, and at one point he throws up his hands and lays it up to "providence" or a "spirit."

Once the decline began the reactions to it found expression in what Meddeb calls "ressentiment." Yes, this is resentment, but Meddeb fleshes it out:

> The situation of the person of ressentiment... is to be in the position of the one who receives but who does not have the means to give; the person of ressentiment cannot affirm. Thus the Muslim is no longer the individual of the "yes" that illuminates the world . . . From sovereign

Marvin Mandell *is a member of the* New Politics *editorial board.*

> being the Muslim has slowly become the person of the "no," the one who refuses, who is no longer active but only reactive, the one who accumulates hatred and waits only for the hour of revenge . . . I believe that the fundamentalist actions whose agent is the Muslim subject can be explained by the growth of the subject's ressentiment, a condition that had historically been unknown to the Muslim since his first appearance on the stage of history . . . (12)

However, this is a two-way street. Before we study Islamic ressentiment, let us briefly look at the West's relationship to Islam. First of all, of course, there were the Crusades' nine attempts to smash the Muslim world all for the greater "Glory of God." After them, in his *Divine Comedy* (1300), Dante, one of the three or four greatest poets of Western civilization, placed Islam's most venerated prophet, Mohammed, into one of the deepest pits in Hell, where throughout all eternity he is hacked and torn apart by a great demon; he is cleft from crotch to chin with internal organs dangling between his legs. (He who sows discord is forever ripped apart himself.) His son, Ali, suffers similarly. Dante's writing surely reflects not only the Catholic Church's teachings, but also the *zeitgeist* of the western world during the Middle Ages and beyond. Contrast this revolting treatment of Mohammed to the way in which Muslims honor both Moses and Jesus, as part of their own heritage.

Meddeb celebrates the rich Islamic traditions of *A Thousand and One Nights* (anon., circa 1000), of Averroes' philosophy, of literary and mystical Sufism, of astronomy, mathematics, painting, architecture and of lush, sensuous poetry.

But opposed to these traditions is the sickness of Islam, fundamentalism. On what theory is fundamentalism based? Here, Meddeb, as a poet, is at his best. All good poets are linguists adept at etymology. Meddeb begins with the word "hukm," which derives from the verbal root H. K. M., meaning to exercise power as governing, to judge, to be knowledgeable. In the Koran, this verse appears: "'Hukm is God's alone. He has commanded that you adore none but him." Commentators usually interpret this as a warning against idolatry: false gods are powerless. But the Pakistani Abu al-Ala Mawdudi (1903-79) insisted that "Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah." Legitimacy, then, resides only in God. It cannot come from a democratically elected majority; it cannot come from any secularist arrangement. (102) But he was a pacifist. His Egyptian disciple Sayyid Qutb (1929-66), calling for a holy war, took it further. According to Meddeb,

> (A)ll the contributions of the modern West turn out to be absolutely illegitimate . . . This radical and terrifying vision . . . transforms the world into a postnuclear place in which we find desolate landscapes . . . Everything is at fault in the history of humanity...; all thought, all representation is so insufficient that it merits annihilation. Everything must disappear, except the word of God as is reported in the Koran. (103-4)

This is indeed the religion of the desert. And it is appropriate that Ibn Saud embraced it in Arabia.

For Meddeb, the Islamist fundamentalists have shipwrecked beauty, and in so doing, they have "dishonored the famous *hadith* which affirms that God is beautiful and loves beauty." (119) In their sexual repressiveness, they have turned women into chattel. Meddeb's struggle against fundamentalists' sexual repressiveness calls to mind the sharp division in *The Brothers Karamazov* between Alyosha's mentor, Father Zossima, and Father Ferapont. The latter seeks salvation through severe asceticism, nearly starving himself, wearing heavy irons, praying all day and sweeping "the devil" out of his cell. Zossima offers a different path to salvation: love all God's creation, embrace each other; fulfill yourselves.

Mawdudi and Qutb were by no means the first Islamic fundamentalists. Three prominent predecessors were Ibn Hanbal (ninth century), Ibn Tamiyya (fourteenth), and Abd al-Wahhab (eighteenth), whence the designation Wahhabites. There was no possibility of success for fundamentalism during Islam's golden "classic" period, and Hanbal suffered torture at the hands of the rationalist Mu'tazilites. Tamiyya, in his turn, insisted on a rigid, harsh penal code (nonnegotiable because it is God's commandment), including stoning, flagellating and maiming, and he also wanted to wage a holy war against the infidels abroad: police state at home and war abroad. Tamiyya, too, suffered long imprisonment. The rationalists of the ninth centuryand the moderates of the fourteenth century were no more tolerant than their enemies. Ibn Wahhab (1703-92), along with the Saud tribe, launched a Puritanism in Arabia that — sad to say — was contemporary with European Enlightenment. Meddeb, more scornful of Ibn Wahhab than any of the others ("We don't even dare give him the status of thinker" 54), holds him responsible for violent actions, including the destruction of century-old mausoleums in Arabia. It is chilling to realize that hundreds of thousands of Muslims in madrassas and mosques, as well as in secret bunkers, consider themselves Wahhabites. Television has shown us Muslim college and graduate students giving reporters bizarre conspiracy theories about 9-11.

For Meddeb, colonialism is not the cause, but rather the consequence of Islamic decline since the decline began much earlier. CIA-organized overthrow of Mussadegh? British, French, U.S. oil interests? Israeli aggression? All important — crucially important — but as the catalysts, not the causes of decline.

Anti-westernism did not begin until the 1920s. Hassan al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood, linked with the Axis powers in World War II, assassinated two Muslim prime ministers, Ahmad Maher (1945) and Nuqrashy (1948), and tried unsuccessfully to assassinate Gamal Abdel Nasser. Al-Banna, in turn, was himself assassinated. Significantly, this was happening at a time of liberalization in the Islamic world. Women had begun unveiling and ending their cloistering in the late nineteenth century. In Turkey, Kemal Ataturk abolished the Caliphate (theocratic rule) in 1924. (In 2001, Osama bin Ladin indirectly referred to this in deploring eighty years of misery.) In the early 1970s Anwar al-Sadat supported the return to legality of the fundamentalists whom Nasser had abolished as a political force. For this, Sadat received a hail of bullets in gratitude. "'Shut up', he explained" has moved, as it usually does, to "'Drop dead', he explained."

Meddeb disagrees with Edward Said, who, he maintains, minimizes the malady of Islam, criticizing the "experts" who have pontificated on the troubles inherent in Islam. Said wrote,

> why not see the parallels . . . of Osama bin Laden and his partisans in sects like the Branch Davidians, or the disciples of the preacher Jim Jones in Guyana, or even the members of Om Shinrikiyo in Japan? (quoted on 174)

Like Meddeb, I think Said errs here if only because Jim Jones and company did not command the very wide acceptance in the West that bin Laden has had throughout the entire Islamic world. But, like Said, Meddeb opposes the Samuel Huntington thesis that we are witnessing a clash of civilizations. Huntington uses the Bernard Lewis book *The Assassins* to link the twelfth century Assassins to al-Qaeda. But the Assassins never targeted bystanders; they practiced deliberate assassinations. Moreover, "there is no place for human sacrifice or for ritual murder in Islamic law, traditions, or practice." (155) Finally, Meddeb denies the Huntington-Lewis implication that the Assassins "were a basic part of Islamic culture, absolutely legitimate." (155) And throughout the ages, it has been the Western, not Islamic, commentators who have contributed to the myth of the Assassins.

While Meddeb certainly does not condone Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, he opposes the 1991 Gulf War partly because the West "destroyed Iraq by running to the aid of Kuwait" (127) and partly because he knows that the war was really about oil interests, not national sovereignty. Yet he regrets that the West did not intervene in Afghanistan when the Taliban announced that the Buddha statues were to be destroyed, since that intervention would have been without the self-interest of oil.

> Can I dare assert that, if we had exercised the right of intervention to save the Buddhas, New York would have escaped the loss of its twin towers? (135)

But Meddeb contradicts himself here, or nearly so. The colossi of Bamiyan were destroyed on

March 9, 2001, just six months before September 11. He himself admits that the planning for 9-11 went on for months, if not years. (166) (It is now clear that it was years in the planning.)

In the original manuscript Meddeb called for an American invasion of Iraq and for a subsequent Marshall Plan to reconstruct it. (185) But in a new afterword, Meddeb having discovered the infamous Project for a New American Century of Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, et al., realizes that a global Pax Americana is the real aim and that "September 11 was not the instigator of this war. It was only its accelerator." (196-7) He likens American cloaking hegemonic reasoning with a moral task to the late nineteenth century reasoning of Jules Ferry on colonialism:

> Superior races have a right with regard to inferior races . . . because they have a duty. They have the duty to civilize inferior races. (quoted on 198)

MEDDEB'S RAGE AGAINST THE WAYS in which Islamic fundamentalists have traduced the rich tradition of Islam leads him to a desperate political position: since you not only cannot trust American empire builders but also must resist them, arm Europe. An armed Europe, he maintains, might have intervened in Iraq, "sparing the people a large part of its dead and avoiding . . . destruction to the country." (221) However, he does not specify how an all-European invasion would have either saved Iraqi lives or avoided destruction. He goes further: while supporting the Palestinians' cause, he advocates that an armed Europe should demand Arafat's departure. This, even though Arafat — whatever his deficiencies, in cluding corruption — is the democratically elected leader of the Palestinians. Clearly, Meddeb lacks faith in the popular will, whether in Palestine, Iraq or Afghanistan.

Nevertheless, none of this should detract from the enormous contribution Meddeb has made to understanding Islamic tradition and those fanatics — past and present — who would subvert it.

Both U.S. neo-conservatives and Islamic fundamentalists regard each other as barbarian. At the climax of *Iphigenia in Aulis* (405 B.C.), Euripides, with consummate irony, has Iphigenia cry out,

> Shall I, who am mortal, oppose
> The divine will? No — that is unthinkable! . . .
> It is
> A right thing that Greeks rule barbarians,
> Not barbarians Greeks.

Soon after her father gives the nod to the priests to chop off her head.

Blame it on Bolshevism

Review by Ernest Erber

A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia
Alexander N. Yakovlev
New Haven, Yale University Press
2002. 272 pp. $29.95

Alexander N. Yakovlev's *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* was destined to become simply another little-noticed addition to the profuse and growing field of Russian and Soviet studies, when it came to the attention of a million-or-so *New York Times*' readers via a prominent op-ed titled "Digging Up the Dead" (5/3/03).

The author of the article is Bill Keller, a *Times* correspondent who has since then been appointed the *Times*' executive editor, who interviewed Yakovlev in Moscow. Keller cites Yakolev's recent work as head of President Putin's Commission for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression as the source of new data on the massive number of executions and of lives shortened by forced labor during the eight decades of Soviet rule, including allegedly new revelations exposing, in Keller's words, "beyond any refutation" that Lenin was theorist for, and instigator of, the Soviet Union's government by violence, and that, quoting Yakovlev, "depravity was not an aberration — it pervaded the whole Communist project."

Yakovlev claims that his book is a condensation of factual information from 33 volumes of hither-to secret Soviet documents, available to him as head of Putin's Commission, documents he found and examined during the past dozen years. Yakovlev says that these substantiate his conclusion that, as Keller quotes him, "the whole Soviet experience was a crime against humanity."

Yakovlev's conclusion is not, of course, unique nor original. Hundreds, if not thousands, of scholars and political theorists of various parties and factions — from Mensheviks to Monarchists — beginning in the very earliest years of the Soviet Union, have voiced the same condemnatory verdict on it. But hundreds, if not thousands, of other scholars and political theorists of various parties and factions (from liberals to Trotskyists) rejected the conclusion that Yakovlev arrived at as being ahistorical and adverse to their more nuanced and particularized explanations of events underlying the overall course of the Soviet Union's development. Consequently, Yakovlev's book is hardly an earth-shaking addition to the already voluminous literature based on researching the history of the Russian Revolution in an effort to identify the driving political and ideological concepts that guided historical change in the Soviet state and the civilization it produced.

The core of the difference between these two groupings of historians and other theorists was and remains, essentially, the question whether there existed a seamless continuity between Lenin's theories and practice and those of Stalin and his successors, or whether Lenin's theories were bowdlerized and his practice transformed by Stalin and those who wielded power after him. Yakovlev's book is devoted to proving that Stalinism is a seamless continuity of Leninism and that Bolshevism, in theory and in practice, is the root cause of Soviet Russia's "century of violence."

But Yakovlev's book does differ in important respects from the scholarly studies that predominate in this field and, for certain reasons, might even be considered unique. Paul Hollander, in his foreword to the book, advises that "readers accustomed to dispassionate, scholarly analyses of political phenomena and traumatic historical events

---

Ernest Erber *has been active in the radical movement for over sixty years. He has written on nationalism, fascism and Stalinism for* New Politics, *and his memorial tribute to Julius Jacobson appeared in the summer 2003 issue.*

should be warned: this is not a detached, bland discussion wrapped in neutral social scientific terminology — it is an emotionally charged expression of deeply felt pain and moral indignation . . ." (thus giving the book its somewhat manifesto-like characteristics).

Those readers who, after having become aware of the book, forego reading it after learning of its "emotionally charged" form of presentation, might decide to read it despite its form, when made aware of the extraordinary singularity of Yakovlev's experiential background for authoring this book. For, as Hollander notes, "It is hard to think of any other Communist official of comparable rank and distinction who so explicitly, sweepingly, and powerfully repudiated the system he was a part of, who was so much an insider and product of the system as Alexander Yakovlev."

How and why this book is a useful addition to this field of study depends, therefore, upon both the purpose of a reader in wanting to read it and in the amount and quality of relevant knowledge each reader brings to doing so. Though this is true, of course, for the reading of almost every serious book, it is particularly so in this case for reasons, that I hope, will become clear from this review.

YAKOVLEV'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE as a functionary in the highest strata of administration of the Russian Communist Party is not only generally relevant to the contents of this book, but very specifically so, since most of his experience was in "packaging" and interpreting the party's ideological output as head of the Propaganda Department of the Party's Central Committee, beginning in the last period of Stalin's rule and ending during the Gorbachev reforms. Following an interlude that began in the early 1970s, during which Yakovlev served as a Soviet diplomat abroad and, later, as a director at the USSR Academy of Sciences, he returned in 1985 to party work for the Central Committee as its Secretary and member of its Politburo. This unique combination of intermittent roles as theorist and as functionary gave him an opportunity to become intimately familiar with both the party's ideology and with how it functioned — and, as he sets forth, with how apparent contradictions between these two areas were explained to the public.

Yakovlev attributes his above-mentioned "interlude" when he was away from work in party administration, to his resolve to confront his growing doubts and disenchantment with party doctrine by immersing himself virtually full-time in a study of the "whole" of Marxism as it applied to Russia and as it had been adapted, interpreted and debated within the Russian revolutionary movement.

This period of preoccupation with the study of theory, doctrine and ideology evidently expanded Yakovlev's familiarity with the classics of Marxism and Leninism, even if so largely confined to Russia. This is apparent from his later published works, particularly his *The Fate of Marxism in Russia* (1993) in which he challenges the more commonly known Marxist theories, showing a familiarity with its nomenclature. This knowledge of the Marxist lexicon had already been useful to Yakovlev a decade or so earlier when it served as "wrapping" for his initial "deviant" reform proposals in the realm of party and Soviet state policy and practice. But it was well into the Gorbachev interregnum before Yakovlev began abandoning his careful concealment of his growing self-questioning and doubts. These were soon seen as intellectual and political heresies by the Stalinist loyalists, especially as Yakovlev, in his leading party positions, began to formulate and voice policy proposals that deviated from the prevailing Stalinist interpretations of the doctrines that had shaped the Russian revolution and the Soviet state.

With the exception of the beginning and ending chapters of *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia*, which are devoted to expressions of Yakovlev's ideologicalized overall conclusions on what shaped Soviet Russia's historical course, most of the book is devoted to descriptive accounts of how the various separate phenomena that composed Russia's political and cultural institutions and entities were affected by the Communist Party's dictatorial programs and policies. Yakovlev devotes separate chapters to descriptions of the fate of children whose parents were executed or subjected to forced labor; to the suppression of social democrats and anarchists; to the suffering of the peasants; to the persecution of the intelligentsia; to the virtual extinction of the clergy; to the crimes against returning Soviet troops who had surrendered to the Germans in World War II; to the uprooting and forcible resettlement of non-Russian national minorities, who were relocated to the Siberian and subarctic wilderness.

Yakovlev's period of doubt and self-questioning began when, in 1956, he attended the Party's XXth Congress, and was staggered by Nikita Khrushchev's famous speech as new head of the party and state, in which the Russian leader accused Stalin of having been a brutal and cruel dictator who falsified the past and terrorized his colleagues. Yakovlev is unsparing in his description of how he was affected by Khrushchev's revelatory speech, setting forth his reaction in these words in the introductory pages of *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia*:

> What I heard plunged me into the deepest dejection, if not despair. Everything seemed unreal, even that I was sitting there in the Kremlin hearing words that were destroying everything I'd lived by shattering the past, rending the soul. Everything crumbled, never to be made whole again . . . And all the while Khrushchev kept piling fact on fact, one more horrifying than the other . . . The shock had been indescribably severe, especially since this was the first time we'd been told officially of the crimes of Stalin himself. No one said anything . . . (6-7).

YAKOVLEV IS ALSO UNSPARING in informing the book's readers of the ongoing effect of Khrushchev's speech upon his efforts to regain his bearings.

> And now my fledgling doubts and a raft of tormenting considerations gnawed at me. I began to lose interest in my work; sometimes I'd become apathetic about everything that was going on. At the same time I became much more attentive to the speeches of our higher-ups, only now from a critical standpoint, finding them full of mawkish nonsense, pretense and outright lies. Gradually, my trust in our leaders' words unraveled; I began to look more closely about me, and the prevailing careerism, unscrupulousness, boot-licking and intrigue grew more and more evident. These were bitter discoveries indeed.

But as readers of this book will discover, probably with amazement, that Yakovlev chose to conceal his deviant views as he continued to work as an apparatchik in the highest ranks of the party for another thirty years! In describing this period of his life, Yakovlev writes: "I had been honest in my previous faith, and I was equally honest in rejecting it. I came to detest Stalin . . . I lived a double life of agonizing dissimulation. I conformed, I pretended, trying all the while not to lose my bearings and disgrace myself."

These were the decades when Russia's intellectuals were teeming with increasingly open defiance of the Communist dictatorship and giving birth to an ever-growing number of oppositionist, underground publications given the collective designation of *samizdat*. And these were the decades when the names of the leading Russian critics of the Communist regime became household words, such as Sakharov, Solzhenitzen, Medvedev, Sinyavsky and hundreds, if not thousands, more; intellectuals, writers, scholars, journalists and so on who braved the known risks of writing out their criticisms of the Soviet regime and circulating them clandestinely and, sometimes, not so clandestinely.

During these decades Soviet state power passed from Khrushchev to Brezhnev and, ultimately, to Gorbachev in the mid-1980s. It was only under the latter's protection that Yakovlev dared give voice to his deviant thoughts.

As the structure of Soviet power began to crumble, Yakovlev's expressions of heretical views moved swiftly and sweepingly in discarding virtually everything he had once believed. He now concluded that Marxism was the original sin, and, that in Russia, Bolshevism was its poisonous fruit — penetrating Russian politics and culture, with Lenin as its evil genius, and causing eight decades of unending violence that claimed (according to Yakovlev) some twenty to sixty million victims, depending on varying categorizations of victimization.

Not only did Yakovlev discard his adherence to Marxism, but also to socialism in any form. He replaced his lifetime of effort on behalf of what he previously believed was a socialist future, with a newly acquired faith in capitalism, which he expounds with a recently learned lexicon of hackneyed arguments on behalf of private property and a market-based economy.

While Yakovlev vigorously favors democracy, he shows no awareness of its problems in practice, as these are again being reviewed and analyzed in such studies as Fareed Zakaria's *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* and the series of studies in the scholarly periodical *Critical Review*, under the designation of "Democratic Theory vs. Reality."

While Yakovlev is evidently unfamiliar with the scholarly critiques of "democracy" in a capitalist economy, he certainly has much evidence of "democracy's" shortcomings close at hand in today's Russia under President Putin. Current news reports from Russia recount repeated measures taken by the Putin regime to resolve conflicts with private enterprise, usually monopolistic corporations and freewheeling, billionaire entrepreneurs, by strengthening the government's role in directing the economy, recreating governmental control of institutions such as the press and broadcasting, thereby curbing freedom of speech and press and shrinking the limits of "democracy."

Yakovlev's *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* appears at a time when it provides intellectual ammunition for use by the recent reinvigorated advocacy of placing the ideology of Bolshevism and the Soviet Union in the same category of historical phenomena with the ideology of Nazism and its ensuing Holocaust. This concept received new attention with the recent appearance of the book *Gulag — A History* by Anne Applebaum. This view also seems to be reflected in Keller's op-ed article when he asks rhetorically, "What were the Baathists, after all, but Bolsheviks with an Arab accent?" If Keller were a really careful reader of the *New York Times*, he would have been informed that the Moscow-affiliated Communist Party of Iraq continued to exist as an underground organization during the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, though losing many members by imprisonment and execution for carrying on illegal activities against the regime. The effort to conjoin Bolshevism and the Soviet dictatorship with Nazism and the Third Reich (or fascism, generally) as a common historical category is fraught with monstrous dangers to historical perceptions and the lessons they can teach present and future generations about the politics of social and cultural change.

THE KEY QUESTION IS NOT which of these two devastating historical experiences was worse in magnitude of numbers executed, but rather in the historical developments which preceded and led to each of the two forms of totalitarian oppression. In the context of the concerns raised by Yakovlev's book, we are required to focus on the Russian Revolution within the broadest scope of European history, on the coming to power of the Bolshevik Party in October 1917, on the critical first years under Lenin's leadership, ending with his illness and death, and on the emergence of Stalin at the head of the Party. Knowledge and critical analysis of this historical background and its events is essential to answering the key question of whether the transition from Leninism to Stalinism was inevitable and seamless.

In seeking to find an answer to this key question, Yakovlev's new book is of little or no help. His final chapter's concluding with a sixteen count indictment of Bolshevism as being responsible for everything violent and disastrous in a century of Soviet Russian revolution is of no help. Its main effect — with each count beginning with the words "Bolshevism is responsible for . . ." — is to end the book on a note of high hysteria.

Except for a superficial account of the 1921 Kronstadt uprising, Yakovlev's book does not examine the critical first years of Soviet power under Lenin. But detailed descriptions, with documentation, of these years are available from many sources and in many forms of presentation. One of the most useful is *Since Lenin Died* by Max Eastman, founding editor of the radical periodical *The Masses*, who spent a number of years covering — and being involved in — Russian politics in the early 1920s. His years of experience in leftist politics in the United States and his command of both written and spoken Russian made Eastman a keen observer of political events and a talented writer on them, especially the inner-party events shaping Lenin's leadership role in the last few years before his death and his enfeebled efforts made from his sickbed to bring a halt to the locus of power being shifted from the labor and peasant mass organizations and the lower echelons of the party into the hands of its Politbureau and, eventually, into the sole control of Stalin, as the party's general secretary. Before his death, Lenin made a final, unsuccessful effort to have Stalin removed for being "too brutal." The very title of Eastman's book — *Since Lenin Died* (Boni and Liveright, 1925) — reflects the widespread interest in the transition from Lenin to Stalin, not only in Russia but abroad. It could hardly have been otherwise. The world held its breath while the mantel was being passed from the widely-known leader of the Bolshevik Revolution to the relatively unknown Stalin — and anxiously wondered whether Lenin's ideology and style of leadership would remain paramount, or would be replaced by altered ideology and a different style of leadership. And yet, Yakovlev, in his book, simply assumes there was a seamless transition from Lenin to Stalin — from Leninism to Stalinism.

Bride of the Revolution, a biography of Lenin's life-long wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, by Robert H. McNeal, one of the foremost scholars in the field of Russian studies, gives a detailed insight into the behind-the-scene maneuvers and conflicts over the succession of leadership of the party and the young Soviet state as Lenin lay dying in the final months of 1923 and of January, 1924, when Lenin died. Because of Lenin's desperate illness, Krupskaya acted on his behalf in the secret negotiations of the Bolshevik leadership, acting on Lenin's behalf according to his daily instructions. When in December 1922, Stalin discovered that Krupskaya had had delivered a secret note from Lenin to Trotsky, Stalin called Krupskaya on the telephone "and gave her a crude, intimidating dressing down . . . he threatened her with action by the Central Committee, the party's disciplinary body."

Krupskaya turned to Lev Kamenev, an old, close friend of Lenin and his wife, but now associated with Stalin in the leadership struggle, asking for Kamenev's protection against Stalin. In a letter to Kamenev, she wrote that "Stalin allowed himself yesterday an unusually rude outburst directed at me . . . I beg you to protect me from rude interference with my private life and from vile invectives and threats." The records do not show how Kamenev responded to Krupskaya's appeal, but Stalin's efforts to control Lenin's communications with other Bolshevik leaders, especially with Trotsky, continued, until on March 5, 1923, Lenin addressed an angry communication to Stalin, saying, "You permitted yourself a rude summons of my wife to the telephone and a rude reprimand of her . . . I have no intention to forget so easily that which is being done against my wife. I ask you, therefore, that you weigh carefully whether you are agreeable to retracting your words and apologizing or whether you prefer the severance of relations between us. Sincerely, Lenin."

As Lenin was forbidden by his doctors to participate in controversies likely to cause more stress, the concealed maneuvers to frustrate Lenin in his efforts to get the party's leading triumvirate of Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev to democratize the party's control by adding "workers from the bench" to the leading committee's, even to the Politbureau, the highest level of authority. But, as the party's Thirteenth Party Conference approached, Stalin and his allies succeeded in frustrating Lenin's efforts and Lenin's demand that Stalin be removed was ignored. Lenin died of a new stroke on January 21, 1924.

McNeal comments on his death: "There is no way of knowing precisely what triggered this, but if one wishes to embark on any theorizing on this matter, one need not start with Stalin or poisons. Lenin's fatal stroke is far better likely to have been triggered by Krupskaya's soft voice reading from the resolutions of the Thirteenth Party Conference." (236)

DESPITE THE FOREGOING, Yakovlev sees the transition from Leninism to Stalinism as seamlessly smooth. This was hardly the case.

If I might be permitted a personal note, I wish to inform my readers that in my letter of resignation from the quasi-Trotskyist Workers Party, dated September 28, 1948, among the reasons I gave for resigning was that "I concluded that it is necessary to reject the Leninist teachings on the relationship of democracy to socialism and the road to power."

Though I broke from Leninism as an ideological basis for a politics of social and cultural change, especially in the United States, I never lost sight of the role of Lenin as one of history's great leaders in revolutionary change, along with our founding fathers, Robbespierre, Napoleon, Cromwell, Martin Luther, et al. Lenin led a revolution that terminated conclusively and irrevocably the centuries-old Tsarism and its oppressive social and cultural institutions and created massive and basic social and economic changes that, if not entirely irreversible, endured for many generations and will leave a mark on Russia and things Russian for many generations in the future.

It is sad to know that Yakovlev has chosen to devote his declining years to extolling the virtues of private property and free enterprise at a time when those of us who live in the United States are daily beholding the exposure of our corporate and financial leaders as shysters and crooks, not much different morally from the monsters and personal opportunists that Yakovlev came to realize composed the Soviet bureaucracy. He now knows that in Stalinized Russia the only truly great Russians of moral stature who made a lasting contribution to humanity's insights and understanding were the dissidents and oppositionists who risked their personal security and welfare for the public good. He should also realize that those who choose to be dissidents and oppositionists in the world of capitalism can achieve a moral vision necessary to improving their nation and its social and cultural fabric.

But in Keller's unfortunate op-ed, he writes that Yakovlev "is something of a newfound hero to Western conservatives. He is admired on the Western right for documenting beyond any refutation that every monstrosity that Stalin carried out . . . was inspired, if not invented by Lenin. Mr. Yakovlev's intensely moral view of world affairs, and his ready recourse to the vocabulary of good and evil, is much more in step with President Bush's Washington than with Vladimir Putin's Kremlin." And Keller has now been made the *New York Times*' executive editor!

If reading Yakovlev's *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* has any special value, it is because it and its author are rare exhibits — like an archeological find — for the study of what a lifetime spent in the Stalinist upper bureaucracy can do to a human being, intellectually and morally. Some scholar in the field of Russian studies, with an interest in psychosocial influences on thought and behavior, might wish to pursue this lead.

Yesterday's Desperados

KURT JACOBSEN

> The Weather Underground
> *Documentary film, 2003*
> DIRECTED BY SAM GREEN AND BILL SIEGEL

"CUSTERISTIC" IS THE EXCEEDINGLY apt adjective that Black Panther leader Fred Hampton coined in 1969, shortly before he was murdered in a predawn Chicago police raid, to describe the violent Weatherman faction of Students for a Democratic Society — a bunch of overwrought white kids scampering off on a self-indulgent and pseudorevolutionary spree. I recall, foggily, attending a small regional SDS meeting in Chicago in the early summer of 1969, just before the national convention when that wonderfully anarchic organization, already split at every squabbling seam, dissolved forever.

That day Jeff Jones and several other Weathermen blithely unfurled their utterly daft slogan "Bring The War Home." Somehow, perhaps as a neurological result of tear gassings, skull crackings and systematic harassments over the long broken trail of the sixties, they had gotten it into their increasingly addled heads that the USA, where Nixon had just been elected president (not a good sign), was really in a bubbling prerevolutionary phase and all that the good ole working class needed to fulfill its historic mission by next Saturday was a little shove or two.

The Weathermen — some with impressive movement backgrounds — had gone headlong over the edge and had resolved, in effect, to do the dirty work of agents provocateurs, who really didn't need the help. But there was no dissuading them. Oh, yes. Nineteen sixty-nine also was the rare and glorious summer of the great patronizing "work-in" where sober SDSers were supposed to infiltrate work places to enlighten the toiling masses, who presumably would welcome their young messiahs with open arms. The objective was not to reach out — as French students attempted in May 1968 — to workers as esteemed partners (senior partners, at that) but to take charge and straighten out the benighted blue-collar flock.

Only a few egregiously out-of-touch upper and upper middle class kids could possibly be suckers for these deluded and insulting schemes. (The camera pans police mug shots of mostly handsome, even elegant, young men and women, none of whom remotely looks working class however hard they tried.) If you actually grew up in a working class family, you neither romanticized working class people nor underestimated their native intelligence. The Weathermen did both. They were quite a nifty gift to Nixon — although, on reflection, if they hadn't appointed themselves, Nixon would have concocted something very like them: picture dangerous clowns like G. Gordon Liddy and Howard Hunt fumbling with long-hair wigs, tie-dye bell bottoms and alarm clock detonators.

Most movements, up against tough foes, contain a conscientiously pacifist wing at one end and an unruly action-oriented wing at the other. It's probably an organizational law. "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows" is the gritty Bob Dylan 'Subterranean Homesick Blues' lyric from which the Weather faction cribbed their name. One glum riposte circulating at the time was that you didn't need a rectal thermometer to know who the assholes were either. Still, how far to go (from protest to resistance to — what?) was a troubling question at a grim time when mass nonviolent activities seemed to yield next to nothing (e.g., "changing the color of the corpses" through Vietnamization, or shifting the

KURT JACOBSEN *is a research associate in politics at the University of Chicago. He is the author of several books, including* Maverick Voices *(2004),* Technical Fouls *(2000) and* Chasing Progress in the Irish Republic *(1994).*

aerial bomb patterns). In fact, the antiwar movement, as Tom Wells ably argued in *The War Within*, seriously crimped Nixon's aggressive plans, but few outside the White House knew that at the time.

A case might even be made that Nixon's gibbering henchmen already were falling all over themselves with nasty schemes to hurt perfectly legal opposition. So what difference did the flaky Weathermen, given the whole dark burlesque show of White House lawbreaking, really make?

Nevertheless, their petulant bombing campaign boosted the law and order crowd who were only too happy to have old-fashioned reasons for crowd-pleasing repressive measures. What the Weathermen conceived as audacious actions, calculated to ignite nationwide insurgency, looked to their desired audience more like juvenile temper tantrums, crafted to discredit all dissent. Is there anything useful to say about such a ludicrous dead-end strategy today? What, if any, legacy did Weatherman leave? Long after Emile D'Antonio's grainy 1970s documentary, Bill Siegal and Steve Green have come along and crafted a ruefully reflective documentary recapturing those inglorious days of yore and, most intriguing, pitting the grizzled present-day survivors against their younger, sleeker, zealous selves.

So what imaginable excuse was there for the damage inflicted (and self-inflicted in the case of 1970 townhouse explosion fatalities Ted Gold, Diane Oughton and Terry Robbins), for the intensified backlash against the antiwar movement, and for the Weathermen taking leave of all their senses? The filmmakers cannot be faulted for ignoring the turbulent context or for using it as an all-absolving alibi. *Weather Underground* is strategically strewn with telling background bits and often remarkably graphic stock footage to set the nativity scene. Gaze at the GI helmet emblazoned with "Kill a Gook for God," the sullen stare of a special forces operative in green and black war paint, and the censored news footage that mythology today says everyone saw on television every night but never did: the smorgasbord of mutilated bodies, wounded refugees and good-as-dead Viet Cong captives. General Loan, the Saigon police chief, peremptorily blasts a bullet through the head of a prisoner in the street during Tet — an instructive moment that U.S. news organizations were loathe to show at the time.

Hear the late 1960s television news report that 232 American servicemen were killed in Vietnam in a 2 week period (omitting, as usual, Vietnamese casualties, especially civilians), which is close to the number killed in action in Iraq in all of 2003. A young audience, unversed in Vietnam lore, hardly can fail to be moved by the massive bloodshed that number evokes. By the time the Weathermen had rushed into the streets of Chicago, in October 1969, more than thirty thousand Americans, and a million or more South East Asians, had been killed. Nearly as many more would be "wasted," as that appropriate sixties jargon has it, while Nixon toyed with his phony plan for peace with honor, which at first he intended to achieve by escalating the war deliriously. So the maddest bombers of all had the highest security clearances. It was hard not to notice.

Former Weathermen speak with a pathos that is hard to scorn "of the need to do something." The marches, the lobbying and the nonviolent activities weren't working visibly enough to suit them. Perhaps some even felt more deeply — had one less protective psychic membrane — than most of us. "We could not believe it," says a chastened and affecting Mark Rudd. They could not believe that the USA deliberately murders and maims, let alone at such a scale. "We had to do whatever we had to do to stop the war."

Comically, the FBI, accustomed to chasing dopey crooks, was unable to nail these clever kids and resorted to seamy tactics which, ironically, nearly justified the Weathermen's views and, even more ironically, later saved most from prison when the courts threw out illegally gathered evidence. (Kathy Boudin and Dave Gilbert only do jail time for their part in the botched 1981 Brinks truck robbery with an even nuttier organization.)

"Violence can mean lots of different things," is an all-time great self-absolving quote. Over October 8 — 11 in 1969 a few hundred masked desperadoes smashed windows in downtown Chicago, clashed with cops, and crippled a future county sheriff. Mark Rudd recalls how jittery he was the evening before at the paltry turnout and hoping something would thwart them before they started. "Freaks are revolutionaries and revolutionaries are freaks," is a ringing slogan affirming a great deal of cross-fertilization, in every sense, between the politicos and the cultural rebels. Dope and sex were de rigueur when all one had to fret about were occasional bummers or ordinary social diseases in an age of miraculous antibiotics. The Weathermen rapidly retracted into the cloistered reality of a L. Ron Hubbard-like cult, laced with polymorphous perversity to keep them bonded. So, in a pruriently recreated scene, they rut away with "a totally disconnected feeling," fourteen writhing figures in a van.

"Bring the War Home" was as sensible a slogan as "Shoot Yourself in The Foot" Indeed, I knew one SDSer who really was shot in the foot (a "graze," he said) during the Days of Rage, got away, was drafted, granted CO status and served as a combat medic in Vietnam, as I learned later. (A high school pal enlisted in the marines with feverish John Wayne ambitions and spent his tour of duty snug in an underground radio facility in Saigon — go figure.) Todd Gitlin says much that I felt at the time although he overrates the attractiveness of the Weathermen who were allegedly "running away with the left." What they ran away with for a while was the media coverage. Government agents welcome their penny ante violence because that is what they are trained to handle, and there are no niggling moral issues to complicate things. As the documentary reminds, it was a Weatherman raid on FBI offices that disclosed documents on the illicit activities of COINTELPRO, so, heck, give the Weathermen credit where credit is due.

The film omits the trip many of them made to Cuba in 1969 to meet North Vietnamese officials who may have been taken aback afterward at how idiotically the ardent youngsters enacted their resistance on home soil. There was always a macho/macha spirit driving them, stemming from doubts that they were not doing enough, which was a widespread feeling. One wonders what the Cubans and Vietnamese made of these youngsters then and now. Of them all, Brian Flanagan, a bar owner today, cuts to the core: "When you feel you have right on your side, you can do some horrible things." Exactly that unshakable belief spurred American expansion abroad and bursts of repression at home. Wasn't that Walt Disney's Davy Crockett credo, "Be sure you're right, then go ahead"? They felt betrayed by their elders and were only doing what they were being carefully prepared to do all their highly-educated lives in the most humorless and self-righteous manner, except it was supposed to be done on behalf of exploitative institutions.

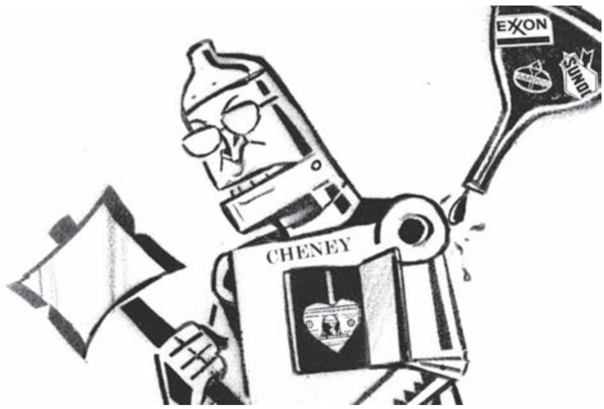
So there is Bernadine Dohrn, sunglasses fashionably propped atop her head, reading a fervent statement to a smattering of the press. We later hear her droning — "without affect" as psychologists say — in several taped public statements released while the Weathermen were on the run. She sounds like someone badly cast in an absurdist Pirandello play or in a role in one of those deliberately stilted movies David Mamet directed. Hardly La Passionara reincarnate. The Weather Underground retaliated for George Jackson's death, aided Timothy Leary's jailbreak, and bombed the Presidio, the Capitol and San Francisco's prison bureaucracy. But outlaw culture was just a series of safe houses and low wage jobs. The Vietnam War ended, paranoia turned inward, and no one was listening except wire tappers. Rudd turned himself in in 1977 and Dohrn and Bill Ayers in 1980. Several still do not regret what they did: "We really thought a revolution was going to happen in 5 years."

WERE THEY SOMEHOW casualties of the Vietnam War too? With turmoil erupting everywhere there was a millenarian sense that the world was transforming: civil rights for everyone, a New Deal or Great Society for everyone, a democracy where people's voices overrode what then correctly were called "special interests," a rule of people over corporate property. The Weather Underground seized on what they imagined were signs of apocalypse, and impatiently tried to hurry it along. Most former Weathermen performed admirable work in their later lives. Still, I can't help believing that these people, had they succeeded in their own terms, would have emerged as the worst imaginable apparatchiks.

WORDS & PICTURES

Peter Kuper

PETER KUPER IS A NEW YORK-BASED cartoonist and illustrator whose work has appeared in mainstream, leftist and underground publications. His approach lies at the interstices of commercial art, fine art and comics, and is characterized by a deeply political sensibility.



In the last issue we featured three Disneyesque strips about Lucky Ducky, "the impoverished duck who is rich in luck," by visual satirist Ruben Bolling. This time we spotlight a radical cartoonist whose work uses iconic militancy rather than sweet-faced irony to leave its mark.

Kuper's rage is unmistakable as the attorney general torches the bill of rights, the vice president gets oiled by industry and the American people are swallowed up by those in charge. His use of photographs, stencils and patriotic symbols lends a sense of immediacy and engagement to these images, as if they were intended for placards rather than publications (or maybe both). All three exhibit a kind of aesthetic bluntness that owes as much to seventies punk as to the ideological left.

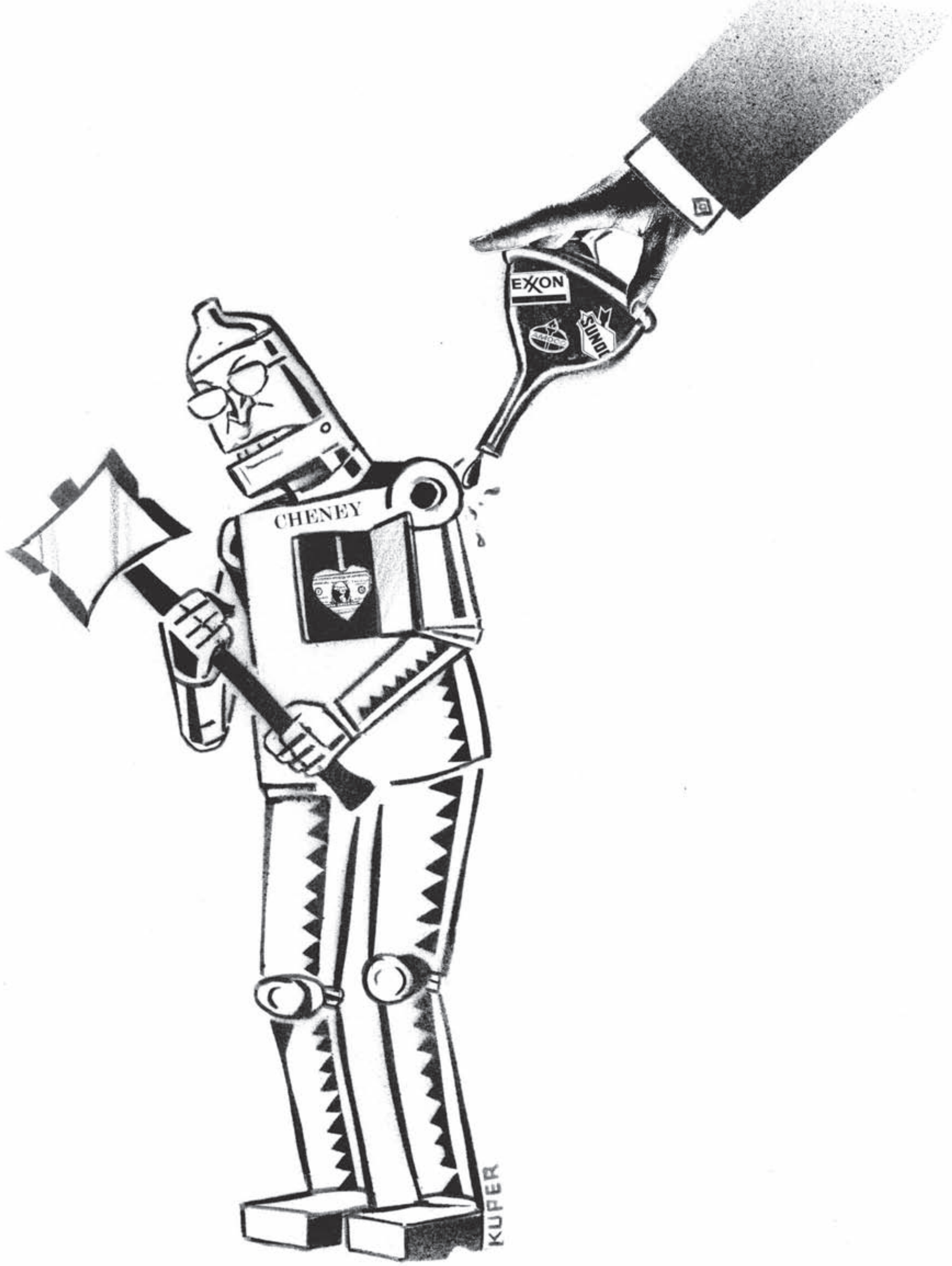
As a freelance artist, Peter Kuper has produced a steady stream of black-and-white editorial cartoons, largely for magazine and newspaper art directors on the look-out for explicitly political graphics. When the *New York Times* wanted something to accompany a Bob Herbert op-ed about sweatshop labor, for example, Kuper came up with an arresting image of a hand in a business suit pressing down on a woman whose arms have been transformed into a sewing machine. His graphic art has also appeared in *Time*, *Business Week*, *Newsweek*, the *Baffler*, *Details*, the *Progressive* and various local papers and alternative weeklies. And for the past several years he has illustrated the regular feature Spy vs. Spy for *Mad* magazine.

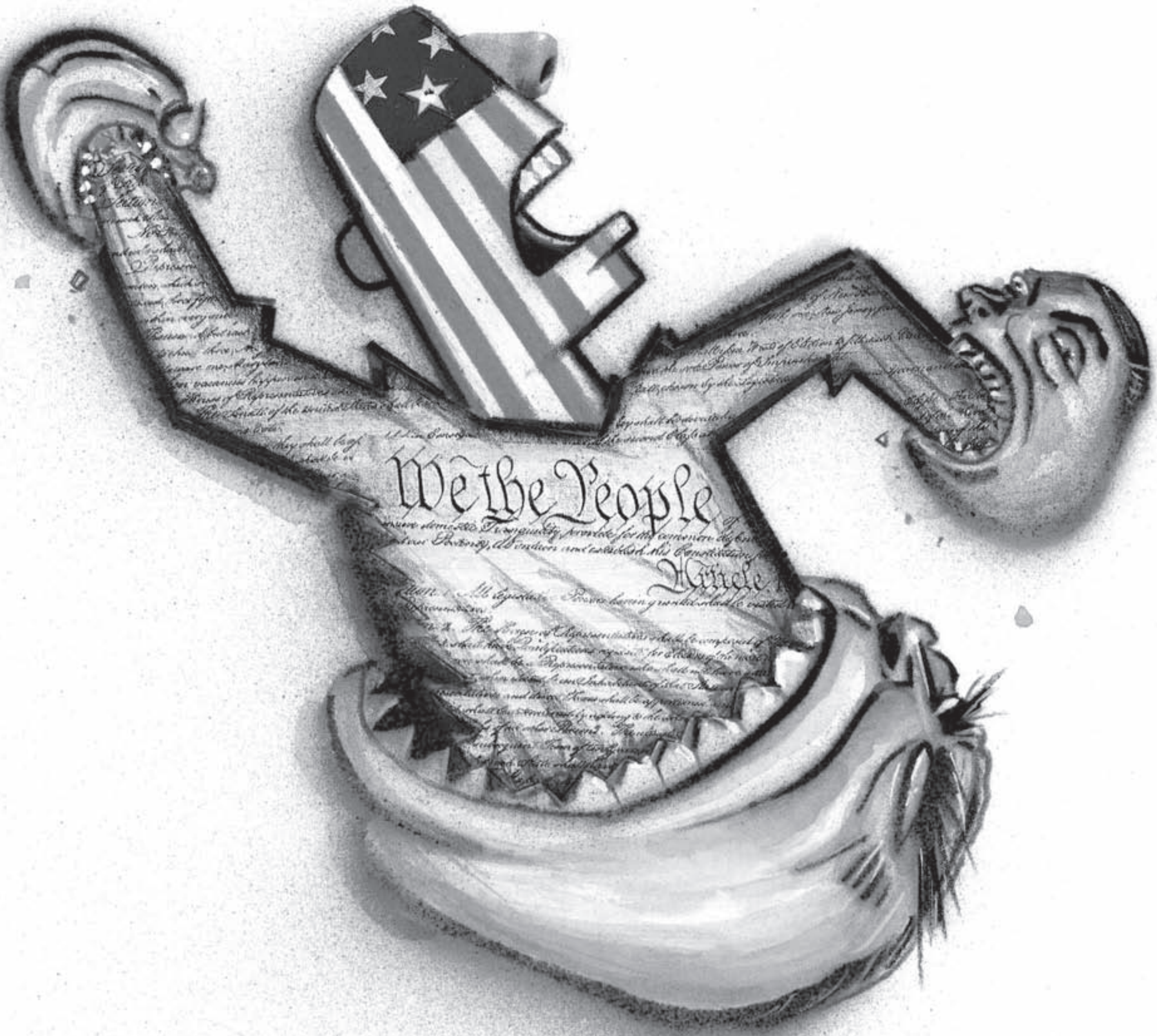
Peter Kuper works in many different formats, not simply editorial cartoons. *Speechless*, a 2001 coffee table book that offers a mid-career retrospective of Kuper's art, includes penciled drawings, watercolors, collages, visual travelogues, illuminated windows and carved wooden masks, as well as his signature, single-panel spray-paints and stencils. *Speechless* also showcases his effective use of color as a means of expressing contemporary anxieties.

Other Kuper collections include *New York, New York* (1987), *Eye of the Beholder* (1996) and *The System* (1996), a dialogue-free graphic novel published by DC Comics. His work also turns up in the pages of *World War III Illustrated*, a magazine sized comics anthology with a strongly political point of view. Kuper in fact cofounded *WWIII Illustrated* in 1979 with his childhood friend, Seth Tobocman, when he was twenty-one years old. Some of the visual militants whose work has appeared in the magazine over the years include Sue Coe, Eric Drooker, Fly, Sabrina Jones, James Romberger and David Wojnarowicz. He maintains a website (www.peterkuper.com), and sometimes teaches courses and gives lectures on comics and illustration. Few contemporary cartoonists have managed to integrate their political and artistic passions as completely or effectively.

KENT WORCESTER


BILL OF RIGHTS


EXXON
SUNOCO
CHENEY
KUPER


We the People