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The Ambiguous Calm

What is Sharon up to, and can he really get away with it?

ADAM KELLER

WITH A PALESTINIAN LEADER firmly classified as "a good guy" by the President of the United States, Ariel Sharon had to give up such tactics as besieging the presidential compound in Ramallah or threatening to send his troops right in. The Israeli prime minister had from now to keep up at least some pretense of civilized usages in his dealings with the Palestinians. But the atmosphere of something resembling an ongoing peace process was not long-lived. Soon forgotten were the photos of handshakes in the summit at Sharm-a-Sheikh, Egyptian resort and venue of high-level meetings at various stages of the convoluted process (most of them futile).

On the international level, the "renewed Middle East peace process" had often been taken at face value. Since 2000, the year of the failed Camp David talks, international media had become accustomed to speak in such terms as "the intractable conflict with no end in sight" or "an ineluctable tangle of fanatism, hatred, and bloodshed." Much less attention was paid to such fine details as the existence of a military occupation or the ongoing settlement extension.

Overnight, the same correspondents and editors shifted to the equally cliche image of "two brave leaders groping towards a new hope, despite all odds" — aptly encapsulated in a cartoon showing Sharon and Abu Mazen as two tightrope artists precariously reaching out to each other.

Indeed, Sharon reaped some diplomatic dividends from the mere image of "a courageous peacemaker," with an impressive gallery of world leaders arriving in Jerusalem to attend the opening of the new Holocaust museum — a gesture only very partially concerned with homage to the victims of a sixty-year-old genocide, and having much more to do with present-day politics.

In the wake of Sharm-a-Sheik the ambassadors of Egypt and Jordan — recalled to their countries in 2001 in protest at the use of Israeli fighter airplanes to bomb virtually defenseless Palestinian cities — were ceremoniously reinstalled at their Tel Aviv embassies. And Hollywood star Richard Gere, long known for taking a personal interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, spoke with obvious sincerity on Israeli TV: "Last time I arrived here in the midst of curfews, shootings, and daily bloodshed. Now I arrive to see a new hope dawning."

Inhabitants of the region itself were far more skeptical. Among Israelis and Palestinians alike, there was not the slightest trace of the uplifting optimism so prevalent on both sides in the wake of the Rabin-Arafat handshake in 1993, or even of the more restrained hopes and expectations which accompanied Barak and Arafat to Camp David in August 2000.

In fact, opinion polls in both societies revealed widespread doubts of any long-lasting positive result, and an increasing assumption that the prevailing cease-fire would turn out to

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be a mere respite. And there were perfectly sound reasons for this skepticism at the grass roots: far from groping towards a common end of peace, the leaderships on both sides were working at cross-purposes.

Despite being branded "a traitor" by hot-headed settler rabbis fiercely opposed to his Gaza disengagement plan, Ariel Sharon was still working — as he did throughout his decades-long military and political career — for a single aim: keeping the maximum possible amount of territory under Israeli-Jewish control, with the minimum possible number of Arabs living in that territory.

A case-hardened military man, Sharon was accustomed to the need of sometimes sacrificing "assets" in order to achieve an objective, and in late 2003 he came to the conclusion that a kind of strategic retreat needed to be made. To appease the mounting internal and international pressure, it was necessary to give up the untenable handful of miniature settlements in the Gaza Strip that he himself had hitherto done a lot to create and nurture. Evidently, the presence of these 8000 settlers in their scattered enclaves paled to insignificance among a teeming and fast growing Palestinian population, already numbering more than a million.

By that sacrifice, Sharon calculated, he would safeguard the continuance in place under Israeli rule of more than a hundred settlements in the West Bank, with an overall population of more than 200,000. Thereby, perpetual Israeli rule in the West Bank as a whole would be ensured, since the Israeli-ruled settlements would hopelessly cut the territorial continuity of the land where by the consensus of the international community the state of Palestine is supposed to arise.

All this, of course, runs in total contradiction to the basic hopes and aspirations of the Palestinians, who regard a state in the whole of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with its capital in East Jerusalem as a bare irreducible minimum. It runs even more sharply against the plans of the new Palestinian leader Abu Mazen, who boldly decided to gamble his political survival (and one cannot rule out that his physical survival is at stake as well) upon the hope and expectation of achieving the above-mentioned aim without the use of violence.

Rather then being one of two coequal tightrope walkers, as that rather naive Yediot Aharonot cartoon portrayed him, Sharon could be far more correctly described as holding a rope which — absent an overwhelming outside intervention — would be eventually fashioned into a noose around Abu Mazen's neck.

Diplomat Freedom Fighter

LIKE MOST OF THE founding nucleus who together with Yasser Arafat founded the Fatah Movement in the 1960s and eventually gained the leadership of the Palestinian national movement, Mahmud Abbas had an "Abu" nickname by which he became globally known — Abu Mazen. A rather gray and uncharismatic character, never directly involved in the armed struggle, he was far from being Arafat's natural successor.

For example, observers of the Palestinian scene often remark that but for the Israeli cabinet's decision to assassinate the charismatic and militant Salah Halaf (Abu Jihad) during the first Intifada, he would have been the most likely successor to Arafat. (Among other things, in the present situation he would have had a far easier task than Abu Mazen in bringing unruly militiamen under control.)

Abu Mazen gained the Palestinian presidency by default — and was, moreover, perceived as the favored candidate of Israel and the Americans. In Palestinian politics that is quite a handicap, which in many situations could have been a fatal one. But Abu Mazen made the best of it.

A clear majority of the voters in a war-weary Palestinian society proved ready (even if not over enthusiastic) to try Abu Mazen out. While Palestinians remained highly skeptical about his (or anyone's) ability to gain a negotiated end to the occupation, even a few months' respite had come to seem a quite desirable goal, after more than four years of fighting, bloodshed, and oppression taking a terrible toll from the Palestinian population.

At the core of the new Palestinian president's policy was a double renunciation of the use of force. To the Palestinian factions and militias Abu Mazen persistently asserted that the continuation of suicide bombings — or even of armed attacks on soldiers — ran counter to the Palestinian interest. At the same time, he told the Israelis and Americans that he had no intention whatsoever of embarking on a head-on confrontation with the Palestinian factions and militias, so as to "dismantle the terrorist infrastructure."

At the core of the new Palestinian president's policy was a double renunciation of the use of force.

In consequence of both, Abu Mazen embarked energetically on efforts to get all Palestinian factions and groupings to sign and maintain a comprehensive cease-fire. That, he hoped, would help restore Palestinian legitimacy on the international arena and end the severe isolation of the last Arafat years — leading to a resumption of the diplomatic process and to some visible move towards ending the occupation. In turn, such a visible change in the Palestinians' fortunes would bolster the cease-fire and encourage the militias in continued refraining from a further resort to arms.

Many observers — Israeli, international, and quite a few Palestinians as well — were surprised at the quick success in implementing the first part in Abu Mazen's strategy, i.e. the establishment of a stable cease-fire. This, of course, needed mainly the cooperation of the various Palestinian factions and some support from Arab countries and regimes — both of which Abu Mazen proved able to secure. Few, if any, were surprised at the snail's pace in achieving the second part, a visible move toward an end to the occupation. After all, such an achievement requires considerable good will on the part of the Israeli government, or, failing that, a massive international and especially American pressure on Sharon.

Abu Mazen did not get any period of grace. He swore his presidential oath of office in the midst of a spiraling escalation in and around the Gaza Strip. Daily, the launching of home made Palestinian rockets was answered by state-of-the-art U.S.-made missiles shot from Israeli helicopter gunships, and Israeli generals made highly visible preparations for a large-scale invasion of the Strip. At the same time, Sharon's stable of propagandists and tame journalists were pushing with all their force the line of "Abu Mazen not in control," presenting the new Palestinian leader as "perhaps well-meaning, but totally ineffective."

Exactly then, however, he proved visibly effective: rushing off to Gaza, engaging in days and nights of marathon talks with political factions and militia leaders. Within days, Palestinian security forces were deployed throughout the strip's "hotspots" with the militias tacitly giving way, and the shooting of Palestinian rockets and mortar bombs ceased. Rather reluctantly, Sharon had to declare a reciprocal halt to Israeli offensive operations.

By the nature of things, Abu Mazen's initial hasty negotiations involved mainly the Gaza leaderships of the various organizations and to some degree those in the West Bank. The more radical exiled leaders, based mostly in Syria, were left out. The glaring danger of such an omission was revealed several weeks later, when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a night club on the Tel Aviv waterfront, killing five random revelers — the first time in months that an Israeli population center was targeted.

Responsibility was claimed by the Damascus-based leadership of the Islamic Jihad — to the obvious discomfiture of the Gazan leaders of the same group, who had participated in the earlier deal with Abu Mazen.

Fortunately, by now the new president had accumulated enough credit to forefend a massive Israeli retaliation, which would have certainly resulted in similar circumstances during the Arafat period.

Rather, under international diplomatic pressure (and also some appeals for caution from none other than the Israeli army's own generals) Sharon had to grant "a continued respite." Abu Mazen made good use of this opportunity in order to start an intensive new round of talks with the Palestinian factions, held in Cairo under auspices of the Egyptian government. The Damascus-based factions were emphatically invited in and given a prominent place.

The move was helped along by the dramatic developments in Lebanon, following the assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri. With Syria finding itself under enormous international pressure and accused of being a supporter of terrorism, the Damascus regime had every incentive to pressure its Palestinian "guests" to accept and adhere to a cease-fire. The same held for the Lebanese Hizbullah, which in the intifada years had become more and more involved with some of the radical Palestinian factions.

Altogether, after some two weeks of inter-Palestinian talks Abu Mazen could preside over an impressive gathering where the Palestinian factions formally and solemnly bound themselves to cease military operations against Israel.

Still, the Arabic term used was *tahadiya* (calm) rather then *hudna* (cease-fire), a more than linguistic difference. The *hudna* of 2003 left bitter memories, having broken down over the continued killing by Israeli forces of "wanted terrorists who had resisted arrest." In *tahadiya*, as defined at the Cairo Conference, the militias explicitly reserved the right to make "a measured retaliation" for Israeli cease-fire violations.

They did exactly that in early April: after Israeli soldiers shot to death three Palestinian boys at Rafah (allegedly "while involved in arms smuggling"), Palestinian militias subjected the Israeli settlements in the Strip to a heavy barrage of mortar shells. While far from happy at the phenomenon, the Israeli generals seemed willing to turn a blind eye — as long as the barrage ended after 24 hours or so, and there were no Israeli fatalities (at least no human ones — the barrage did claim the life of a young horse).

Co-opting, not Confronting

Abu Mazen could hardly be accused of making promises he did not keep. From the first, he categorically announced that he would not resort to brute force against the Palestinian factions and militias in order to "dismantle the terrorist infrastructure." He had neither the personal inclination nor the military might and political backing to bodily disarm the multitude of local militias which sprung up all over the Palestinian territories during four years of fighting, with local or regional power bases and heroic reputations. All the more so since many of the militiamembers were members of Abu Mazen's own Fatah Party, though having long avoided centralized control.

Instead, the president energetically sought — and with considerable success — to co-opt these militiamembers, offering the inducement of enlistment at full pay in the reorganized Palestinian security forces. Moreover, Abu Mazen's security chiefs were able to gain for militia leaders a considerable (though not quite total) immunity from the deadly Israeli pursuit and manhunt that claimed the lives of many of their comrades over the past four years.

And the policy of co-optation was also enacted on the field of Palestinian party politics as a whole. The various oppositional parties and political factions — and in particular Hamas, by far the biggest and most powerful of them — found tempting the offer of participation on equal terms in the Palestinian parliamentary elections due in July. Abu Mazen even consented to changes in the electoral system, from the fully local elections held previously to a mixture of local constituencies with national slates. Such a change is expected to be favorable to parties with a clear ideology and a mass grass roots organization.

The electoral opportunity certainly seemed to have a profound effect on the Hamas leadership, giving it a stake in maintaining the cease-fire with Israel — at least until the elections date in July, which very nearly (and not entirely accidentally) coincides with the date set by Sharon for the Gaza withdrawal. Israeli military intelligence analysts somewhat reluctantly confirmed that in truth Hamas seemed absorbed with selecting popular candidates and canvasing. Any preparations by its military wing for suicide bombings were put in deep freeze.

In theory, George W. Bush — the newly appointed apostle of democracy in the Arab world — should have been ecstatic at what started shaping up in the Palestinian society: multiparty elections, with numerous candidates competing for the voter's favor and with the final result highly unpredictable and likely to remain so until the elections night itself.

But the fly in George W's ointment was that a major player in this unfolding electoral game was Hamas — a name featured prominently on the U.S. government's list of terrorist organizations. (For years, indeed, it was official U.S. policy to veto any United Nations resolution on the Middle East that did not specifically name and denounce Hamas as a bunch of dangerous terrorists.)

Decision makers in Washington found it difficult to grapple with what any student of Palestinian society could have told them even a decade ago: if a stable two-party Palestinian democracy is to emerge, Hamas would certainly turn out to be one of the two big parties.

Hamas got a prominent place on various international blacklists due to the long series of horrific suicide bombings for which its leaders proudly claimed responsibility; nevertheless, only a minority of Hamas supporters had ever held a gun, and an even far smaller minority has ever been in any way concerned with suicide bombings. In Palestinian society, Hamas is principally a political and social force, commanding the allegiance of a significant part of the population and providing a matchless network of charities and social services, a point missed, or deliberately obscured, by U.S. lawkeepers who since 9/11 diligently outlawed and persecuted any charity suspected of Hamas connections.

> The fly in George W's ointment was Hamas.

Drawing Hamas into the electoral process may have been the only way for Abu Mazen to provide the cease-fire which Israel and the international community demanded of him while also preserving national unity among Palestinians and avoiding a destructive civil war. Yet such statesmanlike considerations were adhered to at a very considerable cost to the narrow political interests of Fatah, the political party whose head is Abu Mazen.

Once the idea of a democratic electoral contest stated getting down to the grass roots of Palestinian society, it became clear that Hamas was likely to do well in such elections. It would certainly consolidate its position as a serious rival to Fatah and — not entirely inconceivable — might actually win an outright victory. Abu Mazen's fellow Fatah leaders found all these possibilities far from attractive.

Fatah, which just celebrated the fortieth anniversary of its foundation, had been the unquestioned leader of the Palestinian national movement since the late 1960s, and totally dominated the Palestinian Authority since its inception in 1994.

While the party remains associated with many historical chapters that Palestinians regard as heroic and memorable, in recent years several of the senior Fatah leaders have acquired a far from undeserved reputation for corruption and luxurious living in the midst of an impoverished society. Such criticism, moreover, often issues most vehemently from within Fatah's own ranks.

The party is deeply divided between an older generation of cadres who spent many years in exile and came back in the wake of Oslo, and a younger generation of intifada militants who feel excluded from the real power positions, Both of these two layers are further subdivided into numerous, often mutually-hostile groupings and factions, often on a geographical basis.

At the very top the is Fatah leadership — which in practice is also the Palestinian Authority leadership — also suffers from the unwieldy constitutional arrangement of having a president and a prime minister who both wield executive power and whose respective spheres of influence spelled out in any clear or coherent way.

This arrangement had been, in fact, rather forcibly imposed on the Palestinians by outside pressure two years ago, for the expressly stated purpose of hampering Yasser Arafat and diminishing his authority. Enshrined in Palestinian constitutional law, it at present tends to create ongoing frictions between Abu Mazen and his long-standing companion and rival, Prime Minister Ahmad Qurei (Abu Ala).

While also being divided into many different factions and groupings, Hamas has managed far better than Fatah to maintain its cohesion. And Hamas managed to avoid an internal crisis or acrimonious succession struggle in the wake of Israeli helicopter gunships assassinating Hamas' two major leaders — Sheik Ahmad Yassin and Abd-El-Aziz Rantisi. To many Palestinians — and by no means only among religious fanatics — Hamas has come to seem a viable political alternative possessing a united leadership, a coherent ideology, and a reputation for honest administration of funds.

This image was reinforced by the first round of municipal elections in January, where Hamas trounced Fatah and captured a whole series of town councils, especially in the Gaza Strip. In the view of both inhabitants and outside observers, the new Hamas councilors and mayors compared favorably with their Fatah predecessors.

With three months to go until the legislative elections, the alarmed Fatah leaders made a supreme effort to get their act together, present attractive candidates in the various localities, and remobilize their grass-roots support. They had some successes in student union elections at various universities — elections which, considering the prominent role of Palestinian students in the national struggle, have implications far beyond the university campuses.

However, the second round of municipal elections, held in early May and considered a kind of dress rehearsal for the legislative elections, ended with rather worrying results for Fatah. While they won in a majority of the municipalities polled, these were mostly smaller towns, while Hamas emerged victorious at many of the bigger places.

Notably, the Islamists captured two important cities — Rafah in the Gaza Strip and Qualqilia on the West Bank. Not by chance, both of them were towns especially hard-hit by the occupation — one by numerous destructive "raids in force" and "incursions"; the other by an eight-meter-high wall surrounding it on nearly all sides and strangling its economy.

Before the July elections, the harassed Fatah leaders and party workers on the ground, as well as Abu Mazen and the other leaders, sorely needed a significant and clearly visible achievement that could be presented to the people.

With nothing of the kind materializing, they increasingly seek to put off the July elections.

From the point of view of the average Palestinian, Abu Mazen's tenure so far has not been precisely a failure, but also not much of a success. Certainly, Abu Mazen cannot attribute the impending Israeli withdrawal from Gaza to his diplomatic skills or to his influence on the international arena. Not when Sharon decided upon the withdrawal unilaterally, long before Abu Mazen came to power.

Anyway, Palestinians are quite ambiguous about whether they can count the Gaza withdrawal as a success at all. And to the extent that they do, they are most likely to attribute it to armed struggle in general, and in particular to the armed struggle as carried out by Hamas.

Barely Hidden Agenda

Virtually every visiting diplomat and statesman arriving in Israel in recent months — and there had been quite a few of them, after the diplomatic desert of the intifada years — had the same message for Sharon: the accession of Abu Mazen is a unique opportunity for the Palestinians, for Israel, and for the entire region. This makes it incumbent upon Israel to help the new Palestinian president in every possible way and give him some tangible achievements to show his people.

European foreign ministers, coming one on the heels of the other, took this position. So did Russian President Putin, on the first-ever state visit of a Russian head of state — followed by Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey, Israel's old strategic partner with which relations had become somewhat strained in recent years. And more or less the same line was also taken by none other than George W. Bush at his highly publicized and not quite cordial meeting with Sharon at the presidential ranch in Crawford, Texas.

Upon hearing such advice, Sharon would invariably nod sagely and promise to do whatever he could — but was always careful to add the qualifying clause "as far, of course, as security considerations permit." As all know who know Israeli politicians in general, and Ariel Sharon in particular, that clause has the effect of nullifying whatever promise or obligation it is attached to.

In point of fact, Sharon — whatever he might say in public, or also while closeted with foreign dignitaries and diplomats — has no interest whatever in lending a helping hand to the kind of Palestinian leader who can get a sympathetic hearing for Palestinian aspirations at the White House. To the contrary, the emergence of such a leader on the Palestinian side constitutes a strategic threat to Sharon's plans of hanging on to as much as possible of the West Bank.

Conversely, nothing would serve Sharon's interests better than for Abu Mazen to disappear and be replaced either by bloody chaos or by a plausible new "non-partner." In fact, a Hamas electoral victory would do just fine from the Israeli prime minister's point of view.

The citing of "security needs" as an excuse to wriggle out of virtually every declared obligation to Abu Mazen was a particularly cynical act, even by Sharon's normal standards — considering that many of his own generals urged him to be more forthcoming.

Army chief of staff Moshe Ya'alon — once a firebrand who had dreamed in public of "burning the fact of defeat into Palestinian consciousness" — had in the past two years come to the clear conclusion that the available military options had been more or less exhausted and that Israel must turn back to diplomatic means and resume negotiations with the Palestinians. In particular, Ya'alon made no secret of his view that the government had missed an opportunity by not being generous enough during Abu Mazen's earlier tenure as Palestinian prime minister under Arafat, and that Abu Mazen's elevation to the top rung presented a perfect opportunity of rectifying that mistake.

Ya'alon's outspoken position on that issue might have a lot to do with the cavalier manner in which Sharon suddenly sacked Ya'alon, giving the public no satisfying explanation. Moreover, Ya'alon was replaced by the tough-minded Air Force Commander Dan Halutz, whose views seem to chime more closely with those of the prime minister.

"Blood on their Hands"

THE CELEBRATED PHOTO OPPORTUNITY at Sharm A-Sheikh left Sharon with two main sets of concrete obligations to the Palestinians: release of Palestinian prisoners and withdrawal from occupied Palestinian cities. In addition there was the still-unfulfilled obligation, taken as long ago as the Aqaba Conference of June 2003, to dismantle the illegal (or "unauthorized") settlement outposts on the West Bank. In his inimitable manner, Sharon immediately proceeded to procrastinate, delay, and fritter away the implementation of all three.

> Sharon has no interest whatever in lending a helping hand to the kind of Palestinian leader who can get a sympathetic hearing for Palestinian aspirations at the White House.

Even in the heyday of the Oslo peace process, Israeli and Palestinian perceptions of the prisoner issue had always been particularly wide apart. In Palestinian eyes they are prisoners of war, to be released en masse at the end of the war. Among the Palestinian grass roots the prisoners are admired as heroes, and the easiest way for Palestinian politicians to court popularity is to claim the prisoners' cause as their own. To the contrary, in Israeli society the same prisoners are generally classed as the worst of terrorists and murderers. This constitutes a popular theme for demagogues, especially but by no means only those of the extreme right.

A particularly inflammatory issue are those prisoners deemed to have "blood on their hands." As defined by official Israelis, that category includes not only those who actually pulled a trigger or placed a bomb, but anyone who had any direct or indirect connection with any act in which Israelis were killed (about the killing of Palestinian collaborators, the standards are somewhat more flexible).

And, not to forget, where Palestinians are concerned the Israeli political and legal system makes no distinction whatsoever between the killing of civilians or of soldiers, between assaults on civilian population centers and shooting while in a combat situation. All are equally "terrorists with blood on their hands."

Were the same standards applied to just one of the Israeli Air Force bombings of Palestinian cities, dozens and perhaps hundreds of Israelis would already end up with "blood on their hands" — pilots and air crews, ground crews and providers of logistical support, and all decision makers in the military and political chains of command who were concerned in authorizing the bombing. But since none of these people are in Palestinian custody and in need of being released, this issue remains rather theoretical.

A specific, longstanding Palestinian grievance concerns the group of prisoners who had been held in Israeli prisoners since the 1980s, some even since the 1970s — never released, even under Rabin and Peres in the heyday of Oslo, due to the "blood on their hands."

In Palestinian eyes, it was a grave injustice to keep imprisoned a whole group of staunch Fatah militants at the same time that their superiors in the same organization became Israel's main Palestinian interlocutors. All throughout the ups and downs of the past decade, even when the issue seemed forgotten by the rest of the world, it never was laid to rest among Palestinians.

In the immediate wake of Sharm A Sheikh, Abu Mazen made clear — directly to Sharon as well as through several intermediaries — that the release of even two or three of these long-suffering prisoners would be a highly significant step, helping to buttress his position among his own people. Much more so, in fact, than the release of several hundred "low grade" prisoners (which is the routine response of Israeli governments when pressed to release Palestinian prisoners).

At least some of Israel's security chiefs tended to concur, noting that the prisoners concerned had grown old behind bars (some of them being now beyond seventy years of age), that most of them were in outspoken support of Abu-Mazen's policies, and that at least in this case an exception to the "blood on the hands" rule was indicated. For his part, Sharon himself seemed to seriously consider the idea — at least, that was how it was reported in the press — but on the following day he declared that "the time was not yet ripe" for such a move.

Instead, the government resolved upon releasing 500 Palestinian prisoners (out of about 8,000 held in Israeli prisons and detention camps) with the release to be conducted "under the existing criteria and procedures." That is, the list of released prisoners was formulated unilaterally by the Israeli security services, without any consultation (much less, negotiation) with the Palestinian side. As in previous cases, the prisoners to be released were drawn from those with rather light terms, and most of them had been about to be released soon, anyway.

The Palestinians expressed their frustration to the Americans and Europeans. Sharon responded by pledging to hold negotiations on the basic criteria for prisoner releases. That seemed at first a significant achievement — but the Palestinians soon discovered that for Sharon, such negotiations consisted of infrequent meetings in which the Israeli representatives did not budge even slightly from their long-established positions.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces on the ground continued raiding Palestinian towns and villages and arresting Palestinian activists, though less frequently than before the cease-fire was proclaimed. Military communiques invariably claimed that such raids were directed at hardliners who rejected the cease-fire and were plotting new attacks on Israeli targets — for claims which there was no means of independent verification.

The Erosion

THE OTHER ISRAELI OBLIGATION — withdrawal from occupied Palestinian cities — fared not much better.

Under the famous roadmap, which Sharon formally accepted as early as 2003, Israeli forces are supposed to withdraw to the positions they held at the intifada outbreak in September 2000. But to Sharon, this too is subject to "security considerations."

At Sharm-a-Sheikh, Sharon altogether ruled out "for the time being" withdrawal from three of the eight main West Bank cities — Nablus, Jenin, and Hebron. These were proclaimed to be "hotbeds of terrorism" where "Israeli forces must for the present continue to have freedom of action to counter immediate threats." Evacuation of the other five cities was to be "gradual, based on the Palestinian Authority's performance." In practice, this meant that even the evacuation of Jericho — considered to be by far the most quiet of Palestinian cities, where hardly any violent incidents took place even during the hottest periods — dragged on for months of exhausting and often acrimonious talks. And more months were needed for the evacuation of the next city — Tulkarm.

The main sticking point was the Israeli reluctance to give up the villages around the city together with the city itself; as well as its unwillingness to remove the roadblocks which surround a city and turn it into a besieged enclave. In practice, it soon became clear, Sharon was proposing to restore Palestinian control to a far smaller part than the 18 percent of the West

Bank that was in their hands before the outbreak of hostilities.

After a creaking start, the process broke down completely with only two cities out of the five agreed upon at Sharm-a-Sheikh being handed over. The main sticking point was the Palestinian policy of "enlisting the militiamen wanted by the Israeli security services" into the ranks of Palestinian security. Israeli officials strongly objected, demanding that the militiamembers be "totally disarmed." Palestinian commanders responded that their purpose was "to create a unified Palestinian armed force under centralized control, rather then to provoke civil war among Palestinians."

Even regarding the two evacuated cities, the army and security services reserved unilaterally "the right to re-enter and conduct searches and arrests" in case of an "imminent danger of a terrorist attack" — with the army and security services themselves being the sole judge of when and where such an imminent danger develops.

By April, the number of Israeli raids into Palestinian territory and detention of "suspected terrorists" was on the rise again. The army claimed this was necessary due to the increase of cease-fire violations on the Palestinian side and to intelligence reports indicating an increased number of "plots to carry out attacks on Israeli targets." For their part, Palestinian sources (and also some commentators in the Israeli media) regarded many of these Palestinian violations as acts of retaliation for the Israeli incursions, particularly those that ended with fatalities.

On several occasions Palestinian militants were killed, according to the military communiques "while resisting arrest." Then, two boys were shot down while throwing stones at soldiers guarding the bulldozers that erect the "separation wall." Such killings invariably brought down Palestinian Qasam rockets from Gaza upon the Israeli border town of Sderot.

In between all this, whatever expectations existed on both sides — quite low to start with — dwindled to virtually nothing. Israelis and Palestinians alike started to regard the present calm as a mere temporary lull, which would not last much beyond the two crucial events expected in the second half of the year: the Palestinian elections and the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. And on both sides, the military people reportedly started making their plans and dispositions for the expected new outbreak.

Syria Falls Out of Grace

FROM THE MOMENT THAT former Lebanese prime minister Hariri was assassinated in Beirut, the Sharon Government joined the hue and cry against Syria — even without having any evidence to go on. And for some weeks, Syrian president Bashar Assad replaced Abu Mazen as the Arab leader most often discussed and speculated about by Israeli commentators.

Over the past three years, Assad had been teasing the Sharon government with what was sometimes described as "a peace offensive," repeatedly offering to re-open talks with Israel. On several occasions he made such proposals openly in interviews with the international press. He also sent detailed concrete proposals via a variety of reputable international mediators, among them American and European business people, members of various national parliaments including the U.S. Congress, and the prime minister of Turkey — one of the few countries which is on good terms with both Israel and Syria. On at least one occasion, Assad reportedly offered to emulate the late Egyptian President Sadat and address the Knesset in Jerusalem.

Some Israeli columnists and mainstream politicians felt that the Syrian proposals deserved, at least, to be seriously tested. IDF generals too, were reportedly of the same opinion. Sharon, however, found repugnant the very idea of giving up the Golan Heights — occupied from Syria in 1967 with most of the original population expelled, repopulated with Israelis, and unilaterally annexed in 1981.

For Sharon, the Syrian proposals involved the annoyance of needing to devise new excuses. At first the Syrians asked for resumption of talks with Israel from the point where the American-sponsored Shepherdstown Talks broke down in April 2000 (i.e., Israeli agreement in principle to evacuate the Golan, with dispute on the exact demarcation of the border). Sharon responded by holding out for "talks with no preconditions."

When the unsporting Syrians suddenly accepted the "no preconditions" formula, the Israeli side started coming up with a host of preconditions of its own: before talks could start, Syria must stop supporting the Lebanese Hizbullah, close down the Damascus offices of Hizbullah and the Islamic Jihad, and oblige itself to cut off all relations with these and other Palestinian militias.

Sharon supporters put forward, quite cynically, the position that the Syrian armed forces had become obsolete and no longer presented a threat to Israel — for which reason Israel had no need of peace with Syria and certainly need make no concession for such a peace. And since the advent of the Gaza disengagement plan, Israeli doves and international diplomats were asked for their indulgence and understanding that "the PM cannot possibly engage in settlement dismantling on two fronts simultaneously."

Of course, it was vastly helpful for Sharon to see the Syrian president slide further and further into Bush's bad books, especially due to alleged Syrian support of anti-American insurgents in Iraq. According to Yediot Aharonot, American officials actually defined Assad as "The New Arafat" and were in no mood to promote any new round of Israeli-Syrian talks — quite the reverse, in fact.

So it was that within minutes of the Hariri assassination, Israeli government speakers and media commentators burst into a chorus of wild denunciations and accusations of Syria. "Just to think that some people in this country actually advocated talking to these dirty murderers and giving them territory! Just think of this nonsense!" thundered journalist and TV commentator Uri Dan, Ariel Sharon's personal friend and long-time loyal mouthpiece.

The Israeli media, even more than its counterparts in the West, gave extensive and extremely enthusiastic coverage to the course of the anti-Syrian "Cedar Revolution," some Israeli papers actually sending reporters who possess foreign passports to make direct reports from Beirut (rather risky, since Israel is classed as an enemy country in Lebanese law). Government speakers also took up wholesale the argument that Syrian forces had to be out of Lebanon ahead of the May elections there since it was "inconceivable" to hold democratic elections under military occupation. (Such speakers seemed to have totally forgotten the recent Palestinian elections, held with Israeli forces surrounding all Palestinian cities and occasionally pouncing in and making raids and detentions.)

> The prime minister actually burst out crying.

Once it became clear that Syria was about to comply with the demands and actually pull its forces out of Lebanon in short order, an increasing tone of caution crept into the pronouncements of Sharon's ministers and aides. For one thing, the rapid succession of mass demonstrations and counter-demonstrations at Beirut showed Hizbullah to be a strong cohesive force, possibly the strongest and most cohesive in Lebanese politics — with its influence as likely to increase as decrease in the wake of the Syrian departure.

On a more fundamental level, whatever their glee at Assad's predicament Sharon and his people could hardly avoid some unease at the new precedent being created: a Middle Eastern country being forced by international pressure to end a long-standing military occupation. The total termination of the Syrian occupation — "withdrawal until the last soldier and the last inch" — was in marked contrast to the minor part of the Israeli-occupied territories whose cession constituted the very limit of Sharon's flexibilty. "Lucky Syrians, to get so much pressure focused on them! Lucky Syrians, to be delivered in one fell swoop from the corruption and brutalization which occupation inevitably breeds!" wrote the left-wing satirist B. Michael in Yediot Aharonot.

Whatever the reason, the ceremony marking the final Syrian evacuation from Lebanon got in Israel nothing more than a terse factual report. And a week later, Assad was up to his "peace tricks" again, shaking the hand of Israeli president Moshe Katzav as they met during the pope's funeral in Rome.

Katzav, whose position is purely titular but who has a long-cherished dream of distinguishing himself as a peacemaker, got his spokesman to proudly announce the Syrian encounter — plainly hoping to be praised. Instead, Sharon's bureau sharply censured the President for "thus lending legitimacy to a terrorist-supporting state." The thwarted Assad proved, however, to have more strings to his bow — one of them named Vladimir Putin. During the Russian presidential visit to Israel, Putin made clear his determination to ride roughshod over Israeli objections and go through with a controversial sale of ground-to-air missiles to Syria. "So, from now on it would be more difficult for your planes to overfly the presidential palace in Damascus. Not a big deal," laughed Putin in an exclusive interview on prime-time Israeli TV, and went on to talk in much the same vein when closeted with Sharon at Jerusalem.

Privately, the prime minister's advisers admitted that the Russian missiles in themselves would not significantly change a military balance of power that is enormously titled in Israel's favor. Still, the missile deal — and even more, Putin's blunt way of flaunting it — were a warning of things to come: of a Russia reasserting its role as a global power. A tiny cloud on the horizon which may be the harbinger of a great storm to come.

Sharon's Maneuvers

SHOULD ARIEL SHARON REALIZE his now declared intention — to run again in the 2006 elections and win a third term — he may yet have to deal with Syria as a major diplomatic and/or military challenge. For the present, however, his main worry remains a Palestinian cause which gained considerable international sympathy and which evidently cannot be crushed militarily, despite Israel's overwhelming advantage.

Presidently in Israeli politics, Sharon need not worry of any serious challenge from the left. He got the unequivocal support of such a senior commentator as Amnon Avramovitch of the Second Channel TV, whose name was originally made in 1982 when he launched a relentless campaign to bring down then Defense Minister Sharon. Avramovitch declared in public his opinion that until the Gaza pullout is completed, journalists should "protect and nurture" Sharon and voluntarily refrain from any revelation or expose which might harm him. And, the Labor Party, with its "eternal leader" Shimon Peres, became the most loyal part of Sharon's cabinet as well as of his parliamentary coalition (far more loyal, actually, than many members of his own Likud party).

Also the American Friends of Peace Now, in their newly-launched public opinion campaign, granted the Israeli prime minister a moving endorsement and testimonial: "Prime Minister Sharon is doing everything he can to see that Israel exits Gaza, but settler leaders and their allies are fighting to stop Sharon's plan. Whose side are you on?"

Still, when Labor and Peace Now tried to mobilize their grass-roots support for the Gaza disengagement, it was a miserable fiasco. Most of the tens of thousands of peace movement supporters who normally usually answer such calls, "voted with their feet" this time and stayed home. Not because of any boycott call by the radical groups still confronting Sharon, but rather from a kind of spontaneous innate feeling that this was not truly their cause, that Sharon neither needed nor deserved their active support.

To be sure, Sharon paid for security on his left flank with having to wage a hard struggle on the right. No longer did the settlers, once Sharon's most staunch supporters (and some of them also his personal friends) admire him as "The Bulldozer" who relentlessly crushes all obstacles. Now, they bitterly complained, the same ruthless qualities have been turned squarely against them.

For many long months, the prime minister complained in vain of being misunderstood. In his own eyes he still was, as he had always been, "The Father of the Settlements," painfully forced to sacrifice some of his "children" so that many others may survive and prosper. And indeed, these were much more than idle words.

While pushing forward the plans for evacuating the Gaza Strip and dismantling every single settlement in it, Sharon was meanwhile promoting with at least as much energy the intensified grabbing of Palestinian lands all over the West Bank. Settlement extensions were being built up wherever opportunity offered, by means fair and foul, and with the separation wall/fence/barrier cutting away more and more fertile acres.

And when Sharon presented to his cabinet the definite resolution authorizing the Gaza pullout, he took care to attach to it also a text (and map) setting out a new route of the wall. A route, to be precise, which so defined the course of the wall as to effectively annex some eight percent of the West Bank and deprive many Palestinians of their land. As Sharon hoped, the Labor ministers voted for the entire package, Gaza and Wall together, with few qualms.

However, some weeks later the militant and independent-minded lawyer Taliya Sasson presented an extensive report about settlement expansion on the West Bank (a report commissioned by Sharon himself, in an earlier effort to mollify the Americans).

In her report, Sasson exposed in detail the mechanisms by which officials in all governmental departments help daily to facilitate the creation of "outposts" to which the government is officially opposed. Moreover, she offered concrete proposals for blocking the various conduits by which government moneys are regularly financing the settlement project. For his part, Sharon praised Sasson, warmly welcomed the report — and took care that none of its recommendations would be implemented and all the practices described would continue unabated.

Nevertheless, the settlers seemed utterly ungrateful and unappreciative of all that the prime minister was trying to do for them. At their furious mass rallies, speaker after speaker poured abuse on Sharon. The impending evacuation of Gaza was called "expulsion" and "ethnic cleansing" and "a crime against humanity, in which soldiers must refuse to take part."

The settler leaders' call for "civil disobedience" was answered by bands of youths blocking the main highways of the Tel Aviv area with burning tires, chanting "Down with Sharon the Tyrant!" and creating enormous traffic jams on already congested roads (which did not make the settler cause any more popular).

In the months of February and March, the settlers mobilized their sizeable parliamentary lobby — especially the "Likud Rebels" numbering more than a third of the Knesset representatives of Sharon's own party — in a two-pronged offensive to block the Gaza disengagement and bring the government down.

There was an intensive effort to mobilize a majority for a referendum bill, whose adoption would delay the pullout for at least half a year and might abort it altogether. That campaign was accompanied by thinly-veiled threats that withdrawal without a referendum would lead to bloodshed and a veritable civil war. A second campaign was aimed at denying a parliamentary majority to the government budget — which under Israeli law would have automatically led to the fall of the Sharon cabinet and the holding of new elections.

The settlers failed to seriously mobilize any part of the Israeli society other than their own religious-nationalist-messianic constituency.

For months, the press was full of wild speculations, with first this and then that party or parliamentary faction catching the limelight with rumors of a change in its expected voting patterns. A powerful phalanx of columnists mobilized on behalf of Sharon, urging the left-wing Knesset members to vote for the budget — in spite of its clear neoconservative orientation and in spite of their opposition to Sharon's policies on everything except the Gaza withdrawal. Yossi Beilin of the Meretz/Yahad Party was singled out for special praise for having early on secured five crucial votes for the prime minister's budget.

And so it came to pass that in a dazzling marathon of votes during the last week of March, Sharon sailed through by a comfortable majority, buoyed by support from the left that more than counterbalanced the defection of a significant part of his own party.

"The die is cast!" proclaimed banner headlines once the string of Knesset votes was completed. And literally overnight, Sharon took a new tack, making a highly visible effort to effect a rapprochement with the settlers. After more than a year of severed relations, a delegation of the Gaza settlers was invited to a highly emotional meeting at the seat of government at Jerusalem.

As reported on the following days' papers, the Prime Minister actually burst out crying.

Aside from tears, Sharon had quite a lot to offer the Gaza settlers in exchange for collaborating in the evacuation of the Strip. He offered higher rates of compensation, above and beyond the already generous rates fixed by the Knesset. He also proposed the transplantation of whole settlements to new locations in the lucrative Nitzanim Area. (As environmentalists were quick to cry out, this would entail irreparable damage to a last remaining area of Mediterranean dunes with their specific flora and fauna, once characteristic of Israel's entire seaboard and now almost completely obliterated by fast urbanization.)

Sharon was willing to let the settler's structures of municipalities be transferred intact to the new location, with all officials keeping their jobs at full pay. Moreover, Sharon suddenly discovered that the original date set for the withdrawal (July 20) fell at precisely the time that observant Jews mourn the destruction of the Temple at 70 AD.

Having found out this important datum (which anybody could have told him who was in possession of a calendar showing Jewish holidays and fasts) Sharon suddenly announced a delay of nearly a month "out of consideration for the settlers' feelings" (which aroused renewed doubts about his seriousness in carrying out the plan at any date).

At first, the settlers dealing with Sharon and his officials were deemed to be "a dissident faction," denounced by the others for "breaking ranks." Soon, however, the official Gaza settlers' leadership was actively debating and negotiating on the amounts of compensation and the technicalities of the intended new locations.

The continuing cries of "ethnic cleansing" and the threats of violence and civil war now came mostly from West Bank settlers whom Sharon at this juncture did not at all intend to displace — though they were far from feeling sure of that.

Many of them felt especially apprehensive when Yediot Aharonot published details of an alleged plan for a "second redeployment." Sharon, however, offered increasingly vocal promises and assurances that, whatever the papers might write, there was not going to be any such "second stage."

In a series of interviews Sharon praised the settlers as brave and idealistic pioneers and enumerated the names of specific settlements that were going to be retained by Israel and extended.

In fact, the prime minister went a bit out on a limb by issuing the concrete authorization for the creation of 3500 additional housing units at the already enormous settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, due east of Jerusalem. It created an immediate storm on the international diplomatic arena. Settlement extension of these proportions was clearly a major violation of the letter as well as the spirit of "the roadmap" which Sharon purported to accept. The specific "new neighborhood" which the new housing units were to constitute was strategically located so as to cut Palestinian East Jerusalem off from the rest of the West Bank.

And the settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim as a whole was specifically designed to drive a wedge deep through the West Bank, effectively cutting off the northern from the southern part. Alarmed Palestinians pointed out that the new plan would strike a heavy blow at any plan for the creation of a territorially contiguous Palestinian state, which is the declared aim of the Bush administration.

As it happened, the Ma'aleh Adumim announcement was made shortly before Sharon was due to visit his friend George W. Bush in Crawford, Texas. It dominated the meeting — at least, the press coverage of it — with the two leaders displaying to the gathered journalists a conspicuous public disagreement over Ma'aleh Adumim in particular, and settlement extension in general.

Once closeted in private, however, Sharon assured his American hosts that the 3,500 units were only given a preliminary approval and that there was no intention to construct anything on the contested spot "before 2008 at the earliest." The Americans were more or less convinced and the issue soon sunk away from public attention.

Altogether, columnist Nahum Bar'nea mused, Sharon had raked some credit points with the settlers without paying a serious price on the international diplomatic arena.

Save Us From Ourselves

THE TALK OF A society polarized over the Gaza withdrawal and of an impending danger of civil war has become almost a cliche, a cliche that seems less and less likely as the actual moment comes near. The settlers failed to seriously mobilize any part of the Israeli society other than their own religious-nationalist-messianic constituency. The rest of the public tends to support the Gaza withdrawal — not with enthusiasm, but rather with weariness, after the subject has dominated the public agenda for more than a year and every single argument for and against has been repeated ad nauseam.

News of the army and police preparations for carrying out the evacuation continue to occupy the front pages, together with heated negotiations over the compensations and preparations for violent demonstrations by die-hard groups. Still, the struggle of the day after is already becoming more and more discernable. Not by chance does the media start again paying attention to the heating struggle around the construction of the "separation wall," after many months in which editors dismissed this as "a dead issue."

On June 4 this year, the occupation will have lasted 38 years, which is precisely two-third's of Israel's total fifty seven years of existence. Sharon's temporary allies on the left regard the disengagement from Gaza as the beginning of the end for the occupation as a whole, and as such consider it a major watershed in Israeli history. (Sharon's bitter opponents on the extreme right regard it in much the same way, though for them it is a veritable disaster.)

Sharon himself sees it completely otherwise: in a series of interviews between Passover and Israeli Independence Day he pledged himself at one and the same time to carry out the dismantling of the Gaza settlements and to greatly expand the settlement blocs on the West Bank so as to make them "an integral populous part of Israel, forever."

Clearly, one of the two perspectives is wrong and will be exposed as such within quite a short time after the Gaza withdrawal. In the one case it will be Sharon whose career will be seriously threatened, in the other the threat will hover over Abu Mazen, who has staked everything upon the assumption that the Gaza withdrawal could be made into the beginning of an overall process.

So far, Abu Mazen had gotten from the friendly Americans nothing but words. To be sure, some of the words were pleasing to Palestinian ears, such as President Bush's insistence that Palestine must have territorial contiguity and that a state composed of isolated enclaves would not be viable.

There has been, however, little if any action backing up such words. Not even where Sharon flagrantly violated explicit promises to Bush such as the by now two-years old unfulfilled pledge to remove the "unauthorized outposts." Not only did the Americans not take any concrete action themselves, but they actually helped Sharon sidestep the initiatives of others, such as the London Conference in March. What was widely anticipated and talked about as a major development remained little more than a public relations effort serving Tony Blair in a hard-fought elections campaign. President Putin's idea of convening a conference on the Middle East in Moscow got even shorter shrift.

Should this state of affairs continue after the Gaza withdrawal, as Sharon hopes, the relative calm in Israeli-Palestinian affairs would hardly survive. Israeli generals have already leaked to the press the details of "Operation Iron Fist" in which units would try to clamp down heavily on an upsurge of guerrilla activity expected on the West Bank. In the generals' estimate, Palestinian militias regard the withdrawal from Gaza as their victory and are therefore likely to try emulating it on the West Bank.

The army would also detail considerable forces for the attempt to seal off the long Israeli-Egyptian border in the Negev Desert, through which (if army communiques are to be believed) large quantities of arms are being regularly smuggled to the Palestinians. Moreover, some of the army's scenarios envisage Israeli troops re-invading the Gaza Strip within bare months of evacuating it.

SHOULD THE EFFORTS by people of good will fail, and these plans and scenarios become a reality, very many people on both sides will perish in the relaunched cycles and cyclones of bloodshed. It would be quite a while, to say the least, before there could again be even a temporary calm or as much as a keyhole of opportunity for peace.

We are pleased to publish the following exchange on the politics of the U.S. occupation, the Iraqi resistance, and the antiwar movement. The symposium builds on a trio of articles — by Barry Finger, Wadood Hamad, and Glenn Perusek — that appeared in *New Politics* 38 (Winter 2005). Further responses from our readers are welcome.

The Resistance and the Antiwar Movement

ANTHONY ARNOVE

THE KEY CHALLENGE FOR the left today remains that of ending the occupation of Iraq, which did not end with the January 30 elections. A majority of people in the United States now thinks the invasion of Iraq was not worth the high price that has been paid as a consequence. Yet an enormous gap exists between this sentiment and the level of political activity against the occupation. Even as the antiwar movement has been proven correct on issue after issue — weapons of mass destruction, the cost of this war, the fact that Iraqis would oppose their occupation — the movement has declined in size and influence, a pattern that we saw in a number of countries, though it was more pronounced in the countries where the radical left had less influence or was consciously pushed to the side.

The antiwar movement weathered the storm best where it maintained its political independence. The worst counterexample to this, unfortunately, has been the United States. Large sections of the U.S. antiwar movement threw themselves into the project of mobilizing for a candidate, John Kerry, who supported the so-called war on terror, who was calling for more troops to be sent to Iraq, and who stood opposed to many of the most fundamental demands of the antiwar movement. This forced sections of the left into the most tortured mental gymnastics and apologetics for Kerry. And it meant that the left was largely silent as the crimes of the occupation were being exposed even on the pages of the corporate press. The fact that no mass national demonstration took place against the brutality of Abu Ghraib is appalling, and cannot be separated from the support much of the antiwar movement gave to Kerry and the Democrats.

In this context, it is no surprise that some who organized against the invasion of Iraq are today calling for a continuation of occupation, suggesting that U.S. occupation is the lesser evil among bad choices. The alternative, they claim, is "abandoning Iraq," allowing the country to degenerate into a civil war, or "leaving Iraq to the terrorists." Indeed, significant ideological support for the occupation rests on the demonization of Islam broadly and of the Iraqi resistance in particular. In the dominant media lens, every act of Iraqi opposition is seen as terrorism, while the far greater state terrorism of the occupying forces is ignored or indeed justified as "humanitarian."

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Rather than challenging this situation, significant sections of the left now serve as an echo chamber for elements of this distorted worldview. Indeed, Wadood Hamad has the matter entirely upside down. Far from it being the case that "[a]n uncritical stance of support for the current 'resistance' in Iraq has dominated political discourse on the left," left discussions of the Iraqi resistance, to the extent that they have occurred at all, have been taking their cues from the very people hoping to militarily crush it and are framed in the very terms of the "war on terror" or the global conflict of "democracy against Islam." Of the three essays on Iraq in the Winter 2005 *New Politics* forum, only Glenn Perusek's excellent contribution showed any real engagement with the specificity, diversity, and character of Iraqi resistance to occupation — or the conditions of "force asymmetry" under which Iraqis are fighting. Hamad and Finger's characterizations of the Iraqi resistance, in stark contrast, could have been penned by Christopher Hitchens, Donald Rumsfeld, or Paul Wolfowitz.

Imperialism is being justified today through a very conscious repackaging of the white man's burden. Racism and Islamophobia have been used to sell not just the occupation of Iraq, but the entire war on terrorism and the restriction of civil liberties at home. In this context, it is especially important that the left should reject the racist and elitist idea that it is for us in the United States to decide the future of Iraq. Contra Hamad and Finger, it is not our job to dictate to the Iraqi people what form their resistance to occupation must take — let alone to require that it be "rational," as Hamad suggests in language less from Hitchens than from Samuel Huntington, or that a movement facing the greatest military power in history must use "peaceable means" against its enemy.

Iraqis themselves are perfectly capable of rejecting those actions that are not about liberation from occupation, but sectarian violence. The key question for the U.S. left is not to decide which Iraqi faction we support or do not support, but to organize against the greatest enemy, which as John Reed reminded us, is at home.

ARUNDHATI ROY IS absolutely right when she argues, "[I]t is absurd to condemn the resistance to the U.S. occupation in Iraq as being masterminded by terrorists or insurgents or supporters of Saddam Hussein . . . The Iraqi resistance is fighting on the front lines of the battle against Empire. And therefore, that battle is our battle. Like most resistance movements, it combines a motley range of assorted factions. Former Baathists, liberals, Islamists, fed-up collaborationists, communists, etc. Of course, it is riddled with opportunism, local rivalry, demagoguery and criminality. But if we are only going to support pristine movements, then no resistance will be worthy of our purity. This is not to say that we shouldn't ever criticize resistance movements. Many of them suffer from a lack of democracy, from the iconization of their 'leaders,' a lack of transparency, a lack of vision and direction. But most of all, they suffer from vilification, repression and lack of resources. Before we prescribe how a pristine Iraqi resistance must conduct their secular, feminist, democratic, nonviolent battle, we should shore up our end of the resistance by forcing the United States and its allied governments to withdraw from Iraq." That will do far more to advance possibilities for the development of democratic, secular, and socialist currents in Iraq, the Middle East, and indeed globally, than anything Hamad or Finger have to offer.

Iraq and the Third Camp

BARRY FINGER

THE THIRD CAMP ALTERNATIVE is ultimately expressed by the potential of the Iraqi working class assuming the leadership of the anti-imperialist movement. We do not and cannot claim that this third camp is presently a conscious alternative on the part of those who will make it possible. But we must position ourselves toward that process of struggle which can develop a leadership able to mobilize the masses and attract international support in its resistance to the American occupation without sacrificing the Iraqi nation to the resurgent forces of jihadist fascism.

That is, we support an anti-imperialist movement that does not jeopardize the demands and just aspirations of the working class, of women and gays, of secularists, of national minorities and democrats to the cause of national salvation. We recognize that a nation "redeemed" by authoritarian movements, whether clerical or Baathist, would leave Iraq an empty shell; independent after a sense, but an Iraq whose independence in the absence of popular democratic participation would be a mockery of "self-determination" by any socialist standard. It is to the latent national leadership of these groupings of the oppressed that we counterpose both to the defeatist consciousness of those socialists-in-retreat who, reluctantly or zealously, look to imperialism to clear a path to democracy and to those slow learners and outright nitwits on the left for whom pleading the cause of "the armed resistance," however reactionary its social program and aspirations, is an adequate and sufficient political orientation.

Revolutionary forces, small and beleaguered as they may be, exist in the Islamic and Arab world and their voices are worth heeding. They exist in the Labor Party of Pakistan, who condemn the fake anti-imperialism of Islamist forces across the globe as the "anti-imperialism of fools." It exists in the Worker-communist Party of Iraq, who inveigh against the "reactionary left" abroad, "more concerned with the number of terrorist operations committed by the local fascists (a motley collection of political Islamists, ex-Baathists and regional chauvinists they like to call the 'resistance') than they are to the labor movement struggles, sit-ins and demonstrations which they rarely report. It is exemplified by the fearless Iraqi women who marched in support of International Women's Day under the slogan "no to the USA and its war, occupation and militarism . . . no to the violations of gangs of political Islam," and who bravely renounce the compulsory hijab and sexual segregation. It is exemplified by the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq who defiantly proclaim the imperative separation of religion from the state and declare their endorsement for laws that "oppose all discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender, sect, and race" — an explicit rejection of any forthcoming constitution that seeks consistency with Sharia law.

These are voices that find the "liberty" brought to Iraq by the occupation forces to be disastrous in no small part because American imperialism all too predictably fueled the ranks of reaction throughout the Arab world and circumvented and short-circuited the internal revolutionary process in Iraq itself. And it similarly views the elections with the well-founded suspicion that they are a means less to transfer sovereignty than to increase the legitimacy of

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the occupation.

And this is the point that eludes those for whom the elections retroactively justify their critical support for the intervention. For they have simply wrapped their critical faculties and socialist program in political mothballs. One cannot help but admire those who by the millions braved deadly intimidation to vote for an end to violence and occupation. And although this election was in no small part forced on the American occupation by Ayatollah Sistani, one might profitably speculate that it was acceded to as an expedient to protect and legitimate U.S.-approved political forces against the outrage and discontent of the Iraqi masses and to strengthen their hands against other sections of jihadist Islam and the remnants of the Baath party who are also vying for power.

The U.S. domination of Iraq remains unchanged by this election, except insofar as it ushered in an Islamic-ethnic and sectarian parliament. The transitional administration laws drawn up under Paul Bremer remain in place with legal safeguards that make them virtually impossible to contravene. Key personnel, judges, and prosecutors were vetted and appointed by the occupation authorities. Supplementing the direct influence of the State Department and the Pentagon are tens of thousands of private reconstruction contractors, advisors, and employees who together wield a virtual economic and political stranglehold over the new government, its legal system, and its political latitude. The coming parliament will therefore be little more than a continuation of the last two years of administration, with only the thinnest veneer of electoral legitimacy.

The question then remains: How to struggle against American imperialism without strengthening the camp of fascist reaction? What concrete acts and political demands can we make to fortify the forces of democracy?

It is widely understood that the aims of the occupation are to eliminate the destabilizing influences that can now, or may in the future, hamper American access and control of Gulf oil supplies. The Bush administration sees this war as a continuation of the "global war on terror," and it has conducted itself in a manner commensurate with that view. The al-Qaeda-Baathist connection was of course concocted in the bowels of the CIA and is universally discredited as a transparent façade. But this is not at issue here. The reckless use of firepower and the wanton brutality of American might have been both a predictable breeding ground for jihadists as well as a focal point leeching and reconcentrating these hitherto disparate forces into Iraq from neighboring states and abroad.

The United States, drawing a lesson from the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, has, in effect, treated the peoples of Iraq as if they were so much cheese in a geopolitical mousetrap. Unlike the Soviets, however, the United States confidently believes it now faces an immanently vulnerable Islamacist insurgency bereft of any great power quartermaster. If Iraq is now and in fact the "central front" in the fight against global terror, it is so entirely because the United States has cynically stage-managed the circumstances under which it could be. This process promises to strengthen and internationalize the resistance, polarize the Arab world on that basis and stimulate parallel reflexive tendencies to authoritarianism within the nascent Iraqi government. As this cycle matures, whatever space that presently exists for the elements of democracy can be expected to be rapidly circumscribed and eroded.

IT IS FOR THESE REASONS that the demand for the immediate removal of American troops is the single demand most adequate to the task of breaking this downward spiral and the central act of solidarity that the antiwar movement can offer the forces of Iraqi democracy. As this is being written the "armed resistance" has gathered new momentum. The removal of all foreign armies would go far in satisfying the legitimate nationalist demands of the

Association of Muslim Scholars and Muqtada al-Sadr's forces and fracture the de facto alliance between the national armed resistance, for which they offer political mediation, and al-Qaeda and the communalist militias which seek ethnic separatism. It would allow the Iraqi Arabs, an ethnic amalgam artificially cobbled together by British imperialism, to cohere as a nation around the new parliament. And, most important, for Iraqi democracy, it would release and redirect the latent class antagonisms and social conflicts now suppressed and overwhelmed by the immediate struggle with foreign domination.

For it is a militant, democratic Iraqi working class that holds the future key to the larger regional anti-imperialist struggles. In the specific circumstances of the Middle East, it is impossible to impose a national solution to the social problems that beset Iraq and the Arab countries. Al-Qaeda has already made that connection and offers its own thoroughly reactionary "permanent revolution in reverse." It, and the breeding grounds that nurture it, can never be eliminated by more American intervention, or by emerging Arab democracies that are politically and economically captured by the imperatives of American imperialism and its own native capitalist classes. These social problems, and with it the defeat of al-Qaeda, can only be resolved through revolutionary struggle for the internationalization of the region's vast oil resources under the democratic control of the Middle Eastern working classes.

Struggling for Progress, in Iraq!

WADOOD HAMAD

THE CURRENT ARMED INSURGENCY in Iraq, erroneously portrayed by some as "resistance" to U.S. occupation, does not — nor could it ever — represent a national resistance movement. While it is true that the medley of insurgents espouses "a mixture of Islamic and Pan-Arab ideas," it is inaccurate to insinuate that they "agree on the need to put an end to U.S. presence in Iraq."[1] For if this were true, why are those elements not fighting U.S. operational headquarters and bases in Qatar, and elsewhere in the Arab world? Their *modus operandi* embodies resistance *to* the demise of the *ancien régime* and what it represented, on the one hand, and the possible dawn of pluralistic democracy in Iraq, on the other. The Saddamist-cum-Islamist mercenaries have, since the very beginning, opened channels of communication with U.S. officials, and their emissaries have diligently engaged in dialogue with Arab, Chinese, French, and other European officials. It is a known secret that Iraq's neighbors have contributed to funding the insurgency and offered refuge to its leaders as well as access to the airwaves — as in the case of Qatar's al-Jazeera.

Saddam Hussein's brand of Baathists and faithful security agents — whom I refer to collectively as Saddamists — have followed a two-pronged approach shortly after April 9, 2003. First, they steered an armed insurgency in collaboration with other elements, namely fundamentalist Islamists, who have been on a personal vendetta with their erstwhile patron, the United States. Then pro-consul Paul Bremer's dissolution of the Iraqi military and noises of de-Baathification, on the one hand, and inexcusable U.S. military tactics of attacking civilians willy-nilly, on the other, fueled events and provided fodder to the insurgency. The Saddamist nexus has been well organized, well funded, and ruthless. It has opportunistically maneuvered and founded façade religious organizations, and coordinated activities well with the criminal gangs littering Iraq[2] and the influx of foreign Wahabi jihadis intermingling with local Wahabi diehards. The second concomitant tactic has been their affiliation with Ayad Allawi's National Accord Movement, and their gaining serious positions in sensitive ministries (Interior, Defense, Foreign Affairs).

The decades-long institutionalization of ethnosectarian political and power structure and the tribalization of Iraqi society, now at its peak thanks to four decades of Saddamist despotism and U.S.- and British-sponsored economic sanctions, have been further aggravated by occupation and the occupiers' nonchalant attitude towards the locals. It is perhaps a bit of *naïveté* and sheer fear, but also a lot of arrogance, that propel U.S. soldiers to knock down house doors, throw everyone on the ground, feel up women and children lest they be concealing weapons and deliberately offending worshippers by not only attacking but defecating in their places of worship. It is the arrogance of empire and supremacy of irrationality that drive these actions, which are destined to add fuel to the blazing fire.[3] The unequivocal condemnation should be extended to the targeted killings by the insurgents of (mainly) Shi'a and Christians in towns and hamlets known for peaceful coexistence.

IT IS IN THIS LIGHT that we must understand the significance of the January elections. They

WADOOD HAMAD's *"Unraveling Iraq: The Sociopolitical and Ethical Dimensions of Resistance" appeared in* New Politics *38 (Winter 2005).*

represented a watershed in Iraq's history for several reasons: (1) The majority of Iraq's populace rejects ethnosectarian political and power structures, and while the Shi'a and Kurds of Iraq have been at the worst receiving end since the establishment of the State of Iraq in 1921, they seek a new beginning based on participatory, pluralistic principles. In spite of virulent attacks and targeted killings, the Shi'a majority has acted with remarkable restraint of hardly any parallel in the region, and indeed elsewhere. Equally importantly, the Christian minority has been adamant in its push for elections within an Iraqi construct as a guarantee of peaceful coexistence and future progress. (2) While the religious parties occupy a significant position in current Iraqi politics — for reasons I deliberated upon in my Winter 2005 piece for *New Politics*, the voters indicated their conditional as well as limited support for them, and began to question the efficacy and extent to which their involvement in political life would be beneficial to the country. (3) As a result of the aforesaid, the (humongous) wall of fear that began to slowly crumble in the aftermath of the 1991 uprising is now irreversible: the Saddamists' tether to power is severed for good and their return is next to impossible. (4) The outcome of the elections can serve to end the occupation and curtail U.S. presence in the country.

The electorate, who have risked their lives to vote for genuine change and against the status quo, including U.S. occupation, will — I suspect — not acquiesce to a semblance of democracy based on confessionalism, nor will they jump over to the side of the current insurgents. The latter are, and will continue, to try to instigate civil strife; but judging by people's resilience to and rejection of tit-for-tat retaliations, the Saddamist-cum-Islamists will most likely not succeed.

Ignoring nuanced Iraqi politics and societal dynamics has shamelessly led segments of the left to cheer for a thuggish, reactionary insurgency set on a fruitless course to curtailing, and potentially halting, U.S. hegemonic policies. No crystal ball is needed to understand Iraq — or indeed the Middle East, just a rational reading of history and a commitment to the inviolable sanctity of human life. Human beings, not machine guns, build progress. The rightist view of democracy as a commodity that can be exported using *laissez-faire* economics has infected those leftist segments in a serious way. It prompted them to ignore local (mal)development and the necessity to overhaul a highly corrupt regional power structure; and, in a naïve way, they have come to share the neocon's basic principle of ethnonationalist development.

> The Saddamist nexus has been well organized, well funded, and ruthless.

Thus, elections in Iraq have been a mammoth achievement not because, but in spite, of U.S. desire. It was Sayyed Ali al-Sistani, the Shiite religious authority, who, over U.S. objections, was unwavering in his demand to their eventually taking place.

A BURGEONING, ALBEIT SMALL, movement, amongst university students and young graduates, is emerging in Iraq. It is skeptical of the traditional view of party politics, and emphasizes providing immediate solutions to exigent local problems — from sewage collection, freedom of speech, and critique of the educational system, to challenging patriarchal authority as represented by state and religion — through grassroots participation. They educate, build and mend bridges; they document the effects of the occupation; they peaceably challenge the government and the occupation. They are endeavoring to constitute a *citizenry*, and challenge (ethnoreligious) nationalism. They perform no miracles, but their effectiveness has been infectious. And, no doubt, they have a long, challenging route to follow.

It is they who deserve the support of progressives serious about ending U.S. (and other) aggression, reining in late capitalism and offering genuine hope for progressive change in the Middle East (and elsewhere).

NOTES

1. Quoted approvingly in Glenn Perusek's "A Horizon Lit with Blood: The U.S. Occupation and Resistance in Iraq," *New Politics* 38, 36-52 (Winter 2005). The quote was taken from Samir Haddad and Mazin Ghazi's "An Inventory of Iraqi Resistance Groups," *Al Zawra* (Baghdad), September 19, 2004.

2. As a result of the sanctions and subsequent release, on Saddam's orders, of more than 25,000 criminal elements on the eve of the 2003 invasion.

3. The right, along with liberal apologists, regards every inch as legitimate battleground. But let's ponder for a minute continuing outrage, as the West celebrates the liberation of Europe from Nazi and fascist hold 60 years ago, what it meant for the local residents having gone though not too dissimilar experiences.

To the Editor:

BARRY FINGER IS CORRECT to insist that the only possible stance for socialists to take towards Iraq is to call for an end to occupation and for solidarity with the Iraqi trade union and women's movements. This perspective is sadly lacking in sections of the international antiwar movement who do not recognise their significance and in some elements on the left who support the occupation. His article reminds us that opposition to the occupation is not simply a question of reflex anti-imperialism — a reflex that can lead to support for the "resistance" — but arises from a consideration of the actually existing situation. Such considerations make the question of active solidarity with progressive forces in Iraq an urgent one.

The dual horrors of a brutal occupation and reactionary resistance movements put immense pressure on the autonomous working-class voices of opposition in Iraq. The only brake on this is the "Provisional Authority" in Iraq whom the occupying powers imagine (or at least attempt to convince us) are the seed of a future democracy. In order to sustain a semblance of democratic decorum the occupiers and the PA are forced to leave space for the growth of a trade union movement. In his article, Finger explains the inherent suspicion developed by the imposition of "democracy" from outside-and-above. If, as seems possible, the moves towards imposing "democracy" and the development of a client regime crumble in the face of opposition, the United States and her allies will be forced to fully colonize Iraq or withdraw completely. Either of these two moves will spell very hard times for the only forces in Iraq capable of bringing about real democracy — from inside-and-below.

Already, trade unionists and progressives have been murdered by fundamentalists and fragments of the Ba'ath regime or in some 'accident' by occupying troops. If we do not build solidarity, highlight the atrocities taking place now, and give material assistance then things can and will get worse. Iraq is not virgin territory in terms of the existence and combativeness of trade union and socialist organisations. From strikes over pay and conditions in the oil fields to mass demonstrations against repression on university campuses, Iraqis are standing up for workers' rights and democracy across the country.

The antiwar movement needs to make a turn from pure objection to the continued occupation — a strategy that either explicitly or implicitly advocates "victory for the [reactionary] resistance" — toward solidarity with democratic forces in Iraq. The question needs to be raised in trade union and labor organisations, in antiwar groups and in the wider press. In so doing, socialists will fulfil their obligations as internationalists and democrats and re-emphasise the centrality of the working class to our perspective. The fact that we have to carry this message into such movements is an indication of how far some have drifted from the ideas of socialism towards a reactionary anti-imperialism.

TOM UNTERRAINER
Nottingham, England

Iraq and the Idea of Freedom

PETER HUDIS

WADOOD HAMAD IS CORRECT that many today are "stuck between two inadequate visions" — either apologizing for U.S. imperialist actions or "cheering any misguided 'apparent' resistance to imperialism." Avoiding these false alternatives is not only needed to develop a successful antiwar movement; it is needed to ensure that the idea of freedom is not forsaken by today's radicals.

The problem of narrowing one's political vision to supporting either imperialism or reactionary currents that (for now at least) may oppose it isn't a new one. It happened in 1979, when much of the left supported the leaders of the Iranian Revolution on that the grounds that they "opposed imperialism" — only to see the same leaders slaughter one of the strongest radical movements in the Middle East. It happened in the 1990s, when many leftists failed to oppose Milosevic's regime on the grounds that it represented a bulwark against neoliberalism — only to see Serbia initiate the most far-reaching genocide since World War II. And it is happening today, when much of the left is willing to make excuses for the armed "resistance" in Iraq on the grounds that it is attacking U.S. soldiers — even though it has so far killed far more Iraqi workers, women, and Shiites.

Glenn Perusek denies there is a connection between the "armed resistance fighters who stubbornly defend themselves against" the United States and those who are attacking Iraqi civilians, but his defense of Moqtada al-Sadr undermines his own argument. Al-Sadr's militia has fought U.S. troops in the name of a reactionary, fundamentalist agenda that opposes women's rights, gay liberation, and workers' self-emancipation. In April 2004, when al-Sadr ordered workers in aluminum and sanitary supply plants in Nasariyeh to hand over their factories for use as bastions to fight the U.S. military, the workers refused to back down, even when threatened with death by al-Sadr's forces. More recently, in March 2005, forces allied with al-Sadr attacked students at Basra University, where they tore off the cloths of women students. A male student trying to help one of them was shot dead. Perusek may think it is "simplistic" to equate the "armed resistance" with attacks on civilians, but those on the ground in Iraq tell a different tale. Indeed, al-Sadr's reactionary politics helps explain why most of the Iraqi labor movement (not only the FWCUI but also the Southern Oil Company Union and the dock workers at Um Qasr) has made it clear that it opposes both the U.S. occupation *and* the "armed resistance."

The biggest problem with making apologias for the ex-Baathists and fundamentalists who dominate the Iraqi resistance is the false claim that the absence of a secular alternative leaves us with no other choice. As Perusek puts it, "the historical origins of the weakness of the democratic, secular left within Iraq must be acknowledged." This overlooks the fact that Iraq had one of the most secular and multiethnic radical movements of any land in the Middle East. The first Marxist circle in Iraq was founded in the 1920s by Husain ar-Rahhal, a follower of Rosa Luxemburg. His journal *As-Sahifah* openly called for women's emancipation and even questioned Islam's foundations.

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According to Hanna Batatu, it was "in feminist clothing that 'Marxism' first entered into the mental world of Iraqis."[1] While ar-Rahhal's brand of politics was pushed aside by the subsequent rise of the Iraqi Communist Party, it did not mean the end of an independent Iraqi leftism. As Raya Dunayevskaya wrote of the 1958 Iraqi Revolution, "Here was a new form of revolution that wished to be truly independent, rather than confined into East/West, or Arab/Israel, or even Nasser/Saudi Arabia, as if these were absolute opposites. This revolution started out on a tone independent of any of these, extending even to the distinction between Sunni and Shi'a."[2]

It is true that Saddam Hussein destroyed much of the secular, democratic left. It should also be noted that some Iraqi leftists (like the Communist Party) initially supported Saddam because of his use of "anti-imperialist" and "anti-Zionist" rhetoric. Ironically, the very position that Perusek advocates — allying with "opponents" of imperialism even if they promote regressive positions — helped discredit the Iraqi secular left, which in turn opened the door to the Islamists. Why repeat the same blunder today, when people around the world are facing attacks by the forces of religious fundamentalism?

Surely, the secular, democratic left in Iraq today is weak and marginalized. That is all the more reason for us to extend an active hand of solidarity with it. Even if it were true that pro-democratic leftists in Iraq lack a "mass base," we should do what we can to strengthen these forces, hammered as they are by the two terrorisms of the U.S. occupation and the fundamentalists. Would Perusek advise others overseas not to extend support to the forces for radical change in the United States today simply because these forces also lack a "mass base"?

THE MOST DAMAGING ASPECT of the tendency to choose between lesser evils like the United States and the Iraqi "armed resistance" is that it leaves aside active solidarity with the mass of Iraqis on the basis of what we are for — *freedom*. As Marx made clear in his 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*, there can be no bargaining about principles when it comes to one's vision of a new, human society.[3] The more that radicals forsake such a vision for the sake of allying with anyone, no matter how reactionary, so long as they oppose the United States, the more the radical movement will find itself plunged into a crisis of thought from which it may never recover.

NOTES

1. See *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, by Hanna Batatu (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 396.

2. *The Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World Since World War II*, by Raya Dunayevskaya (Chicago: News and Letters, 1986), 21.

3. See "Marginal Notes on the Programme of the German Workers' Party, in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 24 (New York: International Publishers, 1989, 81-99). Marx held to the same position when it came to his much-neglected writings on Islam. See "Marx Among the Muslims," by Peter Hudis, in *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, Vol. 15, No. 4, December 2004, 51-67.

Immediate U.S. Withdrawal and the Hope for Democracy in Iraq

JOANNE LANDY

THE PEACE MOVEMENT SHOULD call for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and the closing of all military bases there: no temporizing, no negotiations, no timetables — just bring the troops home, now. Peace activists should say to the American people that the occupation is part and parcel of an imperial U.S. foreign policy that shores up undemocratic regimes like those of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, gives one-sided support to Israel against the Palestinians, and promotes unjust, inequitable economic policies throughout the world. Not only in Iraq, but throughout the Middle East and globally, U.S. foreign and military policy either directly or indirectly subverts freedom and democracy. The true interests of the American people are not served by this policy.

Some who opposed the war argue now that the United States can't just "cut and run." In response to such arguments, the peace movement can point out that inside Iraq the occupation has caused terrible suffering, including an estimated 100,000 civilian deaths, massive unemployment, corruption and imposed privatization, horrific torture, a continuing infrastructure disaster, and brutal destruction in Fallujah and elsewhere. Moreover, the U.S. military and political presence has not strengthened secular and democratic elements in Iraq; to the contrary, it has served to undermine them. And far from effectively combating terror, U.S. actions in Iraq have only served to recruit more terrorists both inside the country and globally.

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The Iraqi people have the right to resist the U.S. occupation, and they should have our support; at the same time the peace movement should give no support to the victory of those elements of the resistance, whether Baathist or theocratic fundamentalist, that are organized to impose an extreme authoritarian regime on the Iraqi people. Such elements, if they came to power, would not open up the road to democracy, social justice or social progress for the people of Iraq: they would simply substitute systematic and brutal domestic repression for U.S. rule. A foretaste of this repression was glimpsed in the terrible March 15, 2005 events in Basra, Iraq, where, as the *Washington Post* reported, "Celia Garabet thought students were roughhousing. Sinan Saeed was sure a fight had erupted. Within a few minutes, on a sunny day at a riverside park, they realized something different was afoot. A group of Shiite Muslim militiamen with rifles, pistols, thick wire cables and sticks had charged into crowds of hundreds at a college picnic. They fired shots, beat students, and hauled some of them away in pickup trucks. The transgressions: men dancing and singing, music playing and couples mixing. . . . 'They focused on the women,' said Saeed's friend, Osama Adnan. 'They were beating them viciously.'" (Anthony Shadid, "Picnic Is No Party In the New Basra: Uproar Over Armed Attack on Student Event Redraws Debate on Islam's Role and Reach," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 3/29/05)

This is not to say that one should only support "ideal" democratic resistance forces: the victory of even undemocratic forces against imperialism can still serve to open up pathways toward future democratic and radical struggles.

However, there is a threshold of authoritarianism and historical momentum beyond which this is not the case: for example, the victory of resistance forces controlled by fascists, Pol Pot, Taliban-like fundamentalists, Stalinists, or unreconstructed Baathists intercepts the normal liberatory dynamic of national movements against imperialism.*

In Iraq, then, the character of the different elements of the resistance matters. Those who say that Western peace activists should support anyone and everyone in the Iraqi resistance, no matter how capable of and committed to imposing hyperauthoritarian rule they may be ("Anybody But the U.S.") are giving misadvice. This is not a question of the peace movement seeking respectability by pandering to the prejudices of the American people. People in the U.S. are quite rightly horrified by repression and authoritarianism. If we peace activists ever hope to disentangle that horror from the support for imperialism with which it has become entwined, we need to make clear our own deep commitment to democracy and freedom.

Those of us who advocate immediate withdrawal of the United States and its dwindling number of allies from Iraq make a mistake, however, if we try to assure people that withdrawal will necessarily produce a positive outcome. It may be that the grotesque polarization fostered by the U.S. war and occupation has already succeeded in legitimizing and strengthening reactionary elements in the resistance to the point where they will be able to impose their retrograde agenda on the Iraqi people. But one thing is for sure: the longer the U.S. stays in Iraq the less likely a democratic, secular outcome for Iraq becomes. The only hope for democrats in Iraq is a speedy end to the brutal occupation of the country. And the only hope for democrats internationally is to break out of the terrible symbiotic relationship between the U.S. empire and the reactionary forces that feed off of its brutality, by opposing both of them.

Much of the peace movement lost precious time and momentum during the presidential election campaign because many peace organizations and activists muted or even dropped their opposition to the U.S. military presence in Iraq. The movement often seemed to blur into a simple "Anybody But Bush" effort that failed to distinguish itself from the pro-occupation policies of John Kerry. Today, polls show that Americans are very uneasy with the ongoing U.S. war in Iraq, but this unease can be turned into effective opposition only if the peace movement clearly makes the case for bringing the troops home now.

*Debating with Stephen Shalom and me at the April 16th session of the 2005 Left Forum in Manhattan, Tariq Ali invoked the traditional socialist defense of Ethiopia under Haile Selassie against Italian imperialism in the 1930s to justify support for Baathists and extreme theocrats against the United States in Iraq today. Significantly, Ali described Haile Selassie as a backward dictator. But that is precisely the point: Selassie *was* a backward and outmoded dictator whose historical moment was passing: dictatorships like Saddam Hussein's and those that would result from the victory of political ultrafundamentalists in Iraq are unfortunately very modern, possessing contemporary methods of repression and control, and part of an increasingly powerful and widespread reactionary response to the depredations of Western imperialism. They represent a very real option in the world today.

No Blank Checks

STAUGHTON LYND

BARRY FINGER, WADOOD HAMAD, and Glenn Perusek all appear to demand the immediate withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq. (Finger, 26: "we demand an immediate withdrawal of occupation forces"; Hamad, 34: "We must demand a timely schedule for the withdrawal of occupation forces from Iraq over a fixed, limited period").

However, they differ greatly in assessing the Iraqi resistance. Finger and Hamad take such a negative view of the Iraqi resistance that I fear, when push comes to shove, each might find some rationalization for the United States to stay in Iraq longer. If one really believes that the Iraqi resistance is nothing more than the "Michigan militia" (Hamah, 34), how can one in good conscience wish to expose the long-suffering population of Iraq to rule by such monsters?

Perusek offers a more complex view of the Iraqi resistance (Perusek, 39-43). He argues that "the resistance to occupation in Iraq is *multiform* — orientations from across the political spectrum are being drawn into action. The simplistic equation of the resistance with radical political Islam, or the wing that adopts terroristic tactics against civilians, flies in the face of the reality of the situation" (Perusek, 43; emphasis in original).

Events since these pieces were written offer important evidence supporting Perusek's view. In March 2005, on the second anniversary of the United States invasion, Muqtada Al-Sadr organized hundreds of thousands who nonviolently protested the occupation in Baghdad and elsewhere. The non-terrorist component of the resistance is also evident in the outlook of such an entity as the newly formed Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions. In an interview with the U.S. journalist David Bacon on March 24, 2005, Ghasib Hassan, a member of the IFTU executive committee, said among other things: 1. The ITFU supported the January 2005 elections; 2. "We oppose the occupation absolutely . . . The Iraqi people are calling today, not tomorrow, for removal of the occupation"; 3. "Iraqi publicly owned enterprises should stay publicly owned . . . Oil must remain in the hands of the public"; 4. "Unions should have autonomy, and make their own decisions. Workers should be free to organize. We believe in a real democracy, where workers should choose their own leaders" (www.truthout.org/issues_05/033105LA.shtml).

If one were to seek an analogy in United States history, it might be not to the Michigan militia, but to the activity of John Brown as one part of a much broader movement against slavery. In May 1856 Brown led four of his sons and two other men who seized five pro-slavery activists in Kansas and split open their skulls with broadswords. Yet it was this same Brown whose bravery when facing execution moved Thoreau and Emerson, and who was remembered by Union soldiers as they marched to battle singing, "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on."

HAVING DISAGREED AT LENGTH with Finger and Hamad, let me emphasize one fundamental point of total agreement with them. Hamad rejects a viewpoint he attributes to Tariq

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Ali: "occupations are usually ugly. How then can resistance be pretty?" (Hamad, 27, quoting the *Guardian*, Feb. 14, 2004 and Ali's book *Bush in Babylon*). I agree with Hamad that such reasoning can "effectively dismiss universal norms." Let me share a personal experience.

In 1966 or 1967 I was asked to join the War Crimes Tribunal organized by Lord Bertrand Russell. In conversation with the emissary who proffered the invitation, I urged that the alleged war crimes of any party to the conflict should come before the Tribunal. After all, I argued, a "crime" is an action that is wrong no matter who does it. Pressing my case, I asked, "What if it were shown that the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam tortures unarmed prisoners?" The answer, as I understood it, was, "Anything is justified that drives the imperialist aggressor into the sea." I declined the invitation to be a member of the Tribunal.

So I think: We should demand immediate withdrawal of United States forces, the dismantling of all United States bases, and an end to all attempts by United States corporations to penetrate the Iraqi oil industry, without "endorsing" (Finger, 26) the Iraqi resistance. After all, even the Vietnamese resistance that Hamad considers "heroic" (Hamad, 27) immediately upon its victory created reeducation camps in which all manner of persons were confined in indefinite administrative detention. Why write blank checks that we might come to regret? We will have fulfilled our historical task as United States citizens if we can bring about the end of the occupation of Iraq by the government of this country as soon as possible.

Empire and Resistance

Glenn Perusek

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION DECIDED in 2001 that the September 11 attack was a perfect pretext for ramping up U.S. military presence in the Gulf region. Just as it made military attacks on al-Qaeda and related forces in the Afghan countryside, it embarked on a propaganda campaign against Saddam Hussein, suggesting his danger: he had powerful weapons, he was harboring "terrorists," he was brutalizing his own people.

One by one, the justifications for aggressive war to topple the Saddam Hussein regime were shown to be false. That this was a brutal, dictatorial regime was beyond question, but he was *our* dictator in the 1980s (most brutal, it turns out, precisely when he was allied to, and being supplied by, the United States). The hypocrisy of American foreign policymaking is demonstrated by the hollowness of the democracy promotion rhetoric: if democracy matters, then why not in Egypt or Saudi Arabia? The course of developments in Iran since 1979 have been painful for the left, but isn't that country today closer to the standard of a functioning bourgeois democracy than Saudi Arabia?

A century of U.S. imperial policymaking demonstrates that business interests or strategic advantage have consistently trumped promotion of democracy as a fundamental motive. The history of U.S. involvement in the Middle East, going back to the CIA-engineered overthrow of Mossadig in Iran, is merely a regional case study. This is why Barry Finger is right to skewer those on the left who have been taken in by the Bush/Blair rhetoric about bringing democracy to Iraq. Imperialism is interested in oil, not democracy.[1]

We need to acknowledge that however much the American people are suspicious of the Bush administration, there remains a crucial gap between popular wariness and action. There is no powerful, consistent, coherent voice of opposition to the administration, leaving the large segment of the U.S. population that intuitively rejects the Bush imperial strategy, on cosmopolitan or isolationist grounds, helpless. Without an organized political party, or an opposition-minded mass media, we remain rather at square one in building an antiwar or anti-imperial movement.

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER is within the anti-imperialist camp. As Barry Finger puts the question: "How to struggle against American imperialism without strengthening the camp of fascist reaction?"

Like Gilbert Achcar, Barry Finger warns that there are significant reactionary forces in Iraq that are strengthened by the U.S. intervention. These reactionary elements include those who resort to indiscriminate violence.[2] Staughton Lynd has suggested that we not be so quick to judge the armed resistance in Iraq as akin to the "Michigan militia," that is, armed reactionaries. While the administration and most of the mass media in the United States characterizes the resistance as "terroristic," and monolithically so, I believe there are good reasons to see that resistance as politically and tactically varied. In my view, we in the United States are unwise to emphasize criticism of either the political orientation of the anti-occupation movement in Iraq or its tactics. But of course we solidarize with the most democratic

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elements of the resistance.

THE SITUATION IN IRAQ has devolved into a civil war. There is no monopoly on the legitimate means of force. There were, by April, about 400 guerrilla attacks per week in Iraq, a figure that approaches the pre-election level.[3]

The counterinsurgency is now advised by precisely the same U.S. military figures who advised the rightwing death squads in El Salvador in the 1980s, reports the *New York Times*. "The template for Iraq today is not Vietnam . . . but El Salvador." Seventy thousand people, mostly civilians, were killed in that civil war, which stretched over twelve years — a high toll in a country of just 6 million. The paramilitary and regular army units committed "extrajudicial executions, other unlawful killings, 'disappearances' and torture . . . Whole villages were targeted by the armed forces and their inhabitants massacred."[4]

In June, 2004, General David Petraeus, commander of the 101st Airborne during the initial invasion of Iraq, returned to the country to manage the effort to train Iraqi military forces. He found a humiliating situation of disintegration. When Iraqi troops trained by the United States were ordered to Falluja to support a U.S. Marine incursion, they deserted or refused to fight. In fall 2004, an insurgent attack in Mosul led American-trained Iraqi police to abandon their police stations. "Across the country, police officers were being killed by the dozens in mortar and car-bomb attacks; demoralized and outgunned, they retreated to fortified stations or simply stayed home."[5]

As the security situation for the United States forces and their Iraqi counterparts deteriorated under heightened insurgent attacks, the interim interior minister, Falah al-Naqib, formed his own unit, the Special Police Commandos, drawn from Saddam Hussein's special forces and the Republican Guard. He put General Adnan Thabit, widely feared and well-connected, in charge of the 5000-strong force. Adnan is Naqib's uncle. James Steele, his U.S. advisor, doesn't shy away from characterizing Adnan, in Latin American language, as a *caudillo*, a military strongman. Such are the instruments of American foreign policy in Iraq today.[6]

There are good reasons to see the resistance in Iraq as politically and tactically varied.

General Adnan is behind the production of one of the most popular programs on Al Iraqiya, the American-funded national television station, "Terrorism in the Grip of Justice," a "reality program" that portrays insurgents as "cowardly lowlifes who kill for money rather than patriotism or Allah. They tremble on camera, stumble over their words and look at the ground as they confess to everything from contract murders to sodomy." The program portrays the insurgency as being comprised nearly exclusively of "criminals and religious fanatics." As the Sunni counterinsurgency commandos are the stars of the show, the wild, wild east gunslingers bringing the lowlifes to justice, the extent of former Baathist and Sunni elements among the insurgents is downplayed.[7]

BACK IN WASHINGTON, the Bush administration continues to operate as if bluff and bluster will solve their problems. In response to Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice's claim that 120,000 Iraqi forces had been trained and equipped, Senator Joseph Biden responded that at most 14,000 were reliable. "Biden had a point: many of the Iraqis in Rice's head count barely knew how to fire a weapon," argues Peter Maass in the *New York Times*. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) said simply that the numbers being reported by the State Department and the Iraqi Ministry of Interior were "unreliable" because they do not receive regular reports from locations throughout the country and, more importantly, "the data does not exclude police absent from duty." As GAO official Joseph Christoff told the *Los Angeles Times*, "If you are reporting AWOL's in your numbers, I think there's some inaccuracy in your reporting."[8]

DURING THE COLD WAR, the tendency, east and west, was to paint anti-imperial movements or the nationalist states that emerged from their successful struggles in socialistic colors, with the empire administrators in Washington lamenting this development, and their counterparts in Moscow applauding it. We need not accept this logic, which estimates national independence struggles based upon their political coloration, and which, in practice, necessitated considerable watering down of the definition of democratic socialism in the process. Instead, I would suggest that we view anti-imperial movements as part of the global struggle for social justice because they weaken imperialism, not because they necessarily or immediately open the way to genuinely democratic or socialist politics. To me, it smacks of political sterility and abstentionism to hold nationalist movements to such a high political standard today, given the collapse of the left internationally, as well as the practically insurmountable odds they face in combat with the monolith of U.S. power. We ought to be able to be politically sophisticated enough to lend support to anti-imperial movements without applying impossibly high political standards to them. The power we are struggling against worldwide today is U.S. imperialism and the so-called Washington consensus — neoliberalism and the military might behind it. Every weakening of the grip of this ideology and practice is a step forward for the world social justice movement.

Does this suggest a softness on Islamic fundamentalism? No. Throughout the world, not just in the Middle East, globalization, the increasingly thick interactions of peoples based upon ever-richer economic and political interplay, is likely to stimulate all sorts of parochialist impulses for certainty. In some cases, reactionary political movements will result. From the point of view of the world system as a whole, these movements arise precisely because the protective cover of social institutions has been stripped away. Responsibility for these political developments rests at the doorstep of those who promote the ideology of the unfettered market as panacea for all social ills. Only when there exists in the United States a political movement of sufficient weight to advance a sound immediate programmatic alternative, a genuinely democratic foreign policy, will the American left be in a position to do more than comment upon these developments.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE WAS WON for the "first new nation," the American states, in an all-out struggle against a large, democratic empire. This struggle establishes a political first principle — the right of national self-determination. One is either for or against this principle. If national self-determination is good enough for us, it ought to be good enough for the Iraqi people. National self-determination is a basis for continued struggle toward freedom, democratic rights, full citizenship. Would those who today caution us over the political character of the Iraqi resistance really have us remain agnostic in historical judgment from this anti-imperial struggle because southern slavery remained intact after Yorktown?

NOTES

1. For the history of the American plans in the Middle East, invaluable is Gilbert Achcar, "U.S. Imperial Strategy in the Middle East," in *Eastern Cauldron* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004), 9-45. Lance Selfa, "U.S. Middle East Policy: Democratic Illusions," *International Socialist Review* 41 (May-June 2005): 12-19, is an exemplary survey of the current situation throughout the region.

2. Gilbert Achcar, "On the Forthcoming Election in Iraq," *Z Magazine*, January 3, 2005, accessed from www.zmag.org on April 14, 2005: "The so-called Iraqi resistance is a heterogeneous conglomerate of forces, many of them purely local. For a major part, these are people revolted by the heavy-handed occupation of their country, fighting against the occupiers and their armed Iraqi auxiliaries. But another segment of the forces engaged in violent actions in Iraq is composed of utterly reactionary fanatics, mainly of the Islamic Fundamentalist kind, who make no distinction between civilians, Iraqis included, and armed personnel, and resort to horrible acts, like the decapitation of Asian migrant workers and the kidnapping and/or assassination of all kinds of persons who are in no way hostile or harmful to the Iraqi national cause. These acts are being used in Washington to counterbalance the effect of the legitimate attacks against the U.S. troops: the task of presenting the 'enemy' as evil is thus made very easy."

3. "Pentagon: 400 Hits Weekly in Iraq," CBSNews.com, accessed from www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/04/27/iraq/main691172.shtml on May 1, 2005.

4. Amnesty International report of 2001, quoted in Peter Maass, "The way of the commandos," *New York Times*, May 1, 2005, accessed from www.nytimmes.com on 1 May 2005.

5. Maass, "The way of the commandos."

6. Maass, "The way of the commandos."

7. Maass, "The way of the commandos."

8. See U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Rebuilding Iraq: Preliminary Observations on Challenges in Transferring Security to Iraqi Military and Police," testimony before U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Government Reform, March 14, 2005, accessed from www.gao.gov/new.items/d05431t.pdf on May 1, 2005.

The Antiwar Movement and Iraq

STEPHEN R. SHALOM

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT NEEDS to demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops and an end to the U.S. domination of Iraq, not because we don't care about Iraqis, but precisely because we do care. And while we support any people's right to resistance, we should not "support the Iraq resistance."

Out Now!

RATHER THAN PROTECTING Iraqi civilians, U.S. armed forces have shown themselves to be the main danger to Iraqi civilians. According to the Iraqi Health Ministry, operations by U.S. and allied forces have been killing twice as many Iraqis — most of them civilians — as attacks by insurgents (Nancy A. Youssef, Knight Ridder, 9/25/04).

But even without this extreme brutality and the humiliations of Abu Ghraib, the U.S. presence would provoke Iraqi hostility. Why? Because no people like foreign occupation. It is the U.S. determination to control Iraq — militarily, economically, and politically — that incites many Iraqis to take up arms. And there is every reason to believe that the insurgency would be much reduced if U.S. troops were to withdraw. For example, the Association of Muslim Scholars, the leading Sunni religious group, with ties to the resistance, has declared that if a date were set for withdrawal it would issue a fatwa against anyone continuing the insurgency (Steve Negus, *Financial Times*, 2/7/05).

And ending the occupation is consistent with the views of the Iraqi people. One indicator is a January Zogby poll that showed 82 percent of Sunni Arabs and 69 percent of Shiites favoring U.S. withdrawal "either immediately or after an elected government is in place."

It is essential that the antiwar movement call for *complete* U.S. withdrawal. United States troops are, of course, the main impediment to Iraqi sovereignty, but they aren't the only impediment. Washington has used the occupation to establish all sorts of instruments of control that could last even if the troops were pulled out. There are the military bases, the economic decrees imposed by former U.S. pro-consul Paul Bremer, the sweetheart contracts signed with U.S. and other favored firms, the bureaucrats with multiyear terms appointed by Bremer. The bases must be dismantled, the decrees abrogated, the contracts and appointees made revocable and removable at Iraqi discretion.

And Washington must contribute funds for the reconstruction of Iraq — but without U.S. control. This demand is critical because it reflects simple justice and because it is important for the antiwar movement to distinguish itself from those who oppose the occupation simply because it costs too much to Americans. It *does* cost too much to Americans, but this isn't the only, or even the main reason, to oppose it.

Support "the Resistance"?

SOME SUGGEST THAT there's one other position that the antiwar movement ought to take: namely, "support the resistance." It's not entirely clear what this means, but in any event the position of blanket support for the resistance is extremely ill-advised.

The basic argument advanced for supporting the resistance in Iraq is that as a general

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principle we should always support those who are fighting against U.S. imperialism (e.g., Sharon Smith, *Socialist Worker,* 1/21/05; Paul D'Amato, *International Socialist Review*, March/April 2005). But to give our automatic support to any opponent of U.S. imperialism means we should have supported the Taliban in 2001 or Saddam Hussein in 2003. One can oppose the U.S. wars in Afghanistan or Iraq without having to support those governments that the United States was attacking. And actually, those who have struck the "strongest blows" against U.S. imperialism — on its home soil — are al-Qaeda and Timothy McVeigh. Do we support them?

But don't people have the right to resist foreign occupation? Of course they do, just as people have many other abstract rights that don't require us to support all those who are entitled to these rights. Did the people of Cambodia have the right to oppose U.S. intervention? Certainly. Did we therefore have to support the Khmer Rouge? Of course not.

Am I arguing that we should only support movements that are perfect, that hold exactly all the right views on every question? Of course not. Oppressed people are constrained in their choices and we have to sympathize with people's far-from-optimal conditions. But this doesn't mean that we must give carte blanche to anything that oppressed people do. The German people were suffering during the depression, but we didn't use this to excuse Nazism. So of course we shouldn't insist that a movement needs to be perfect in terms of tactics or politics for us to support it; but nor should we say that our support is automatic no matter how horrible the movement's tactics or politics may be.

Does failing to "support the resistance" mean that we oppose self-determination? On the contrary. We should avoid blanket endorsement of every resistance movement precisely because we care about self-determination. Movements that want to impose ruthless dictatorships over a population are not movements for self-determination — by definition. To be sure, Washington doesn't represent or care about self-determination. But we can't simply assume that anyone fighting the United States is automatically on the side of self-determination.

So which resistance movements should we not support?

In terms of tactics, there are some things that are morally unacceptable, particularly attacks on innocent civilians. Now we shouldn't condemn an entire movement because a small number of its members, acting on their own, perhaps under traumatic conditions, violate these principles. But when a government or movement uses such tactics in a systematic, large-scale, calculated way, that government or movement must be condemned.

We should avoid blanket endorsement of every resistance movement precisely because we care about self-determination.

In terms of political program, I have supported many groups whose program I do not agree with. For example, the anti-Marcos movement in the Philippines included many people in its leadership who had terrible positions on women's reproductive rights. But here's the crucial point: while these people when in power did enact regressive policies, they didn't ban all debate on the subject. That is, the broadly bourgeois democratic framework they established left the question of women's rights, union rights, and many other issues up to democratic contestation. That's very different from a movement that has as its de facto program the stifling of all debate, the squashing of all democratic opposition. The former has democratic and progressive potential even if it has regressive politics in some respects. The latter has no such potential.

What about the particular Iraqi case? Should we "support the resistance" in Iraq?

Of the many assertions as to the nature of the resistance, the only thing that seems certain is that the resistance includes many different elements. There are Baathists, ex-Baathists, extreme Islamic fundamentalists, foreign jihadists, nationalists of various stripes, and people simply enraged by U.S. behavior — but there is no convincing information as to their relative weight or degree of control. We needn't accept the official U.S. view that the resistance is entirely made up of unsavory thugs, but nor should we reflexively assume that the opposite is the case and that such elements are not a significant part of the resistance. Accordingly, refraining from any definitive characterization of the resistance as a whole seems the wisest course of action.

An approach that seems to me far more defensible morally and politically than offering blanket endorsement to "the resistance" is to say that we support the right of the Iraqi people to engage in resistance, whether armed or unarmed, by all legitimate means, and condemn acts of terrorism targeting innocent civilians, especially sectarian attacks. Moreover, we support any forces, armed or unarmed, that are fighting for the liberation of Iraq and to achieve a democratic and progressive outcome, and we withhold our support from those whose tactics are systematically unacceptable and from those who would impose a rigid dictatorship — whether secular or Islamic — over the Iraqi people.

Some will say that Westerners have no right to lecture the Iraqi resistance on what tactics are acceptable. The implication here is that Western progressives are trying to impose their will on Iraqis. But those of us who call for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq are obviously not calling for the United Statesto impose its will on anyone. Those who urge us to "support the resistance" aren't just calling for us to get the United States out; they are calling for us to make an affirmative statement of support for certain Iraqis and they want us to give this endorsement automatically, without considering what it is we are endorsing, merely by virtue of the fact that these Iraqis oppose the United States.

IN FACT, DISTINGUISHING between legitimate and illegitimate means isn't a Western concoction, but a view widely shared in Iraq. In mid-February, a group of "anti-occupation patriotic forces" issued a statement making just this distinction (see Gilbert Achcar, "Iraq Developments, ZNet, 3/4/05), and in March, a cleric at the main Sunni mosque in Baghdad condemned attacks on civilians, telling worshippers "Everybody should speak out against such inhumane acts" (Sameer N. Yacoub, Associated Press, 3/4/05). For Western antiwar activists to fail to join in condemning such tactics, and to offer instead blanket support for the resistance, can only discredit the peace movement.

Likewise, there are Iraqi social or political forces that have been pushing a progressive political agenda, whether for workers' rights or women's rights. They reject the U.S. occupation, and oppose Islamic fundamentalism at the same time. When they are threatened by some armed groups claiming to belong to "the resistance," shouldn't we be defending them and condemning those that would crush them?

The argument against undifferentiated support for "the resistance" is practical as well as moral. What credibility will we have in defending Muslims and Arabs in the United States from repression on the grounds that "they are all terrorists," when we are unable to criticize any terrorism at all when it's committed by Iraqis? And what success will we have in aiding the building of an antiwar movement within the military if we refuse to condemn those who attack mosques and marketplaces?

Our task is to get U.S. troops out of Iraq. Taking a position of supporting the resistance is not only morally and politically wrong, but it makes our main task all the more difficult.

We believe this article begins an important conversation on the left. We will be publishing various responses to it in our next issue, along with a reply from Stephen Steinberg. In addition, this article will be published in the Winter issue of New Labor Forum*, together with a different set of responses and a reply from Steinberg. We urge readers to follow this debate in both venues.*

Immigration, African Americans, and Race Discourse

STEPHEN STEINBERG

> *In race talk the move into mainstream America always means buying into the notion of American blacks as the real aliens. Whatever the ethnicity or nationality of the immigrant, his nemesis is understood to be African Americans.*
>
> TONI MORRISON, "On the Backs of Blacks"[1]

IN 1971, THE *Amsterdam News*, New York City's oldest African-American newspaper, published a cartoon by Melvin Tapley that gave vent to a uniquely black ambivalence toward immigration. The cartoon portrayed a downtrodden black figure crouched on the ground, labeled "US Folks," a double entendre for "us folks" and "U.S. folks." A chain of other figures, representing Spanish Americans and the foreign born, climb on the back of the crouched black figure, to pluck fruit off the tree of opportunity. Tapley had no illusions about the struggles of these immigrant minorities. Although he portrays them as getting ahead on the backs of blacks, immigrants too must climb over the wall of prejudice, and they reach only the lowest branches on the tree of opportunity.

The accompanying editorial read as follows:

> News from the Census Bureau that Spanish-speaking Americans are now able to earn higher incomes than Blacks will not come as a surprise to many of us.
>
> Since our arrival here in 1619 as slaves, Black Americans have watched millions of European immigrants arrive and within a short time hold jobs and reach levels of incomes Blacks were not allowed to attain.
>
> In fact, during the early part of the century the hordes of Irish, Italian, Jewish, Polish, German, Scottish, Greek, Spanish, and other European immigrants frequently replaced Blacks as longshoremen, street-car motormen, construction workers, jockeys, blacksmiths, and able-bodied seamen. *Outright, rank racism, and discrimination* were the tools by which Blacks have been deprived of work over the decades.[2]

The cartoon and editorial reflect a long strand of black thought, which regards immigrants and immigration with an ambivalence verging on resentment and bitterness. This should come as no surprise. As Lawrence Fuchs reminds us: "In 1883, when Emma Lazarus, a daughter of immigrants, wrote the impassioned words 'Give me your tired, your poor, your

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huddled masses yearning to breathe free,' the Supreme Court undermined the last of the civil rights laws passed by Congress following the Civil War."[3] And 1965 — the year these rights were finally restored — also marked the beginning of a massive influx of immigrants from every part of the world who were thrust into competition with blacks for jobs and opportunity. The crowning irony is that most of these immigrants would not be here, but for the black protest movement that led to immigration reform abolishing the national origins quotas that had chocked off flow of immigrants from nations outside of northern and western Europe.

My challenge is to think about immigration from the standpoint of this black figure, crouched on the ground as others pluck fruit off the tree of opportunity.

Let me throw down the gauntlet: my challenge is to think about immigration from the standpoint of this black figure, crouched on the ground as others pluck fruit off the tree of opportunity. Dare we also read the immigration literature — the celebratory narratives of immigrant progress and triumph against adversity — from the point of view of "the man farthest down," to borrow a phrase from Booker T. Washington? It goes without saying that this is only one among many standpoints for thinking about immigration and immigration policy. My only contention is that it is one that must be considered, and that doing so is an intellectual and moral imperative.

To avoid misunderstanding, let me make clear from the outset what I am *not* saying. I am most definitely not calling into question the rights of immigrants. I am the grandson of immigrants, and the new immigrants have as much right to be here as I do, and to claim all of the rights of their adopted nationality. Nor am I blaming immigrants for the nation's tragic failure to address the enduring legacy of slavery. On the other hand, immigrants cannot hide behind the refrain that "our ancestors didn't own slaves," or claim that, as recent arrivals, they are exonerated from America's racial crimes. Indeed, immigrants are implicated in America's race problem through the very act of immigration. Besides, when immigrants proudly embrace American citizenship and nationality, they not only take possession of American dreams and ideals, but they also acquire some heavy baggage: moral and political responsibility for the vestiges of slavery.

A Historical Perspective

THE CARTOON IN THE *Amsterdam News* is a reminder that the issue of immigration and its impact on African Americans must be seen in historical perspective. I first engaged this issue in 1971 when I conducted research on the impact of European immigration on African Americans. I began with the naïve question: why didn't more southern blacks do what my grandparents had done when they left Russia and Poland: to flee persecution and seek refuge and opportunity in Northern cities that were undergoing an extraordinary economic expansion? At the end of the Civil War there were four million emancipated slaves, and as the British economist Brinley Thomas has written, "after the Civil War the best thing that could have happened to the black workers of the United States would have been a fair opportunity to contribute to satisfying the great demand for labour in the rapidly growing cities of the North and West." This did not happen, however, and the social science literature was strangely unhelpful in explaining why this was the case. In *An American Dilemma* Gunnar Myrdal wrote of the period just after the Civil War: "There was enough industrial activity . . . in many of the smaller centers of the North to permit a significant immigration of Negroes. That Negroes have not migrated to these places is . . . a mystery."[4]

Immigration is the most important single factor in dispelling this "mystery." The North was able to satisfy its insatiable need for cheap labor through the immigration of some 25 million Europeans between 1880 and 1924. Blacks, on the other hand, were categorically excluded from the entire industrial sector, except for a few menial, dangerous, or backbreaking jobs that immigrants spurned. Note that the culprits in this drama were not Southern sheriffs and lynch mobs. Nor does blame go only to greedy capitalists who played one group off the other. Workers, through their unions, engaged in a combination of ethnic nepotism and blatant racism that reinforced black exclusion. In effect, the industrial revolution in the United States was "for whites only." Here was a missed opportunity to integrate blacks into the industrial labor force during the critical early stages of industrialization, and the failure to do so, set the nation on a path of racial division and conflict that continues to this day.

The proof that European immigration was devastating to blacks is that as soon as immigration was cut off by the First World War, it triggered a massive migration of blacks to cities in the North and West, resulting in the most significant economic advance since the abolition of slavery. The relationship between immigration and race caught the attention of the *New Republic*, which in 1916 printed an editorial under the caption: "The Superfluous Negro." The editorial began as follows: "The average Pole or Italian arriving at Ellis Island does not realize that he is the deadly foe of the native Negro . . . It is a silent conflict on a gigantic scale."[5]

This is the question I put before you. Is history repeating itself? Has the influx of another 25 million immigrants since 1965 — not to mention millions more of undocumented workers — again made the Negro "superfluous," undercutting black progress? Here was another missed opportunity to integrate blacks into the economic mainstream. Indeed, this new wave of immigration could not have come at a worse time since blacks were poised for progress during the post-civil-rights period, for four reasons:

- Thanks to the civil rights movement, Congress had passed landmark civil rights legislation, not only ending second-class citizenship but also proscribing discrimination in employment (Title VII).
- The black militancy of the 1970s kept up the pressure against employment discrimination. Affirmative action policy, ironically pioneered by the Nixon administration in response to grass-roots protest, drove a wedge into the wall of occupational segregation, resulting in the most extensive deracialization of labor markets since slavery.
- Unlike the earlier period, blacks were concentrated in cities in the North and West, and thus proximate to urban job markets. Although it is often argued that blacks arrived at a time when the industries that had provided opportunity to earlier immigrants were in decline, the fact is that millions of new immigrants were rapidly absorbed into both the residual blue-collar sector and the expanding service industries.
- After 1965, demographic trends favored blacks. The nation's declining birth rate sharply reduced the number of workers, providing for a tight labor market that has always been the *sine qua non* of black employment. I remember that during the depth of the racial crisis in the 1970s, economists issued reassuring forecasts that, given the sharp decline in the birth rate, labor market conditions would improve for blacks around the turn of the century. But, alas, something happened on the way to the new millennium. The 1965 Hart-Cellar Act was passed, which would result in the influx of over 25 million legal immigrants over the next four decades. Not to mention millions of undocumented workers who gravitated to the same urban labor markets where blacks were concentrated.

Why did the United States open its door

to millions of immigrants at a time that deindustrialization was generating unemployment? One answer, or so we are told, is that the huge upsurge of immigration was unanticipated when the Hart-Cellar act was passed in 1965. But even after immigration rose from a trickle to a flood, it came to be viewed as a blessing in disguise, which is to say, a conservative policy in liberal garb. I say this because the champions of mass immigration were not liberals, and certainly not ethnic activists, but free-market economists (now tagged as "neoliberals") who saw mass immigration as a panacea for a variety of economic ills.

A notable example is Julian Simon who published a book in 1988 on *The Economic Consequences of Immigration*. Two years later Simon followed up with an article in *The Public Interest*, entitled "The case for Greatly Increased Immigration." Simon argued:

> 1) That the nation stood to gain technologically through the addition of "top scientific talent." (Never mind that from the standpoint of the sending countries, this amounted to a brain drain.)
> 2) That immigration was necessary to satisfy business' demand for labor, given the declining birth rates that had sunk even below replacement levels. (One wonders if the legions of blacks without jobs were ever part of the calculus.)
> 3) That immigrants helped to pay for the social security pensions of the burgeoning number of retirees. (A recent article in the *New York Times* reported that in 2002 illegal immigrants paid $6.4 billion in Social Security taxes for benefits that they would never receive.)
> 4) That immigration boosted the image of the United States abroad (read: immigrants fit nicely into various foreign policy agendas).

Granted, there were some strident voices on the right, like Peter Brimlow, whose book *Alien Nation* was an anti-immigrant screed in the worst nativist tradition. Simon's book, in contrast, advanced a respectable economic case for mass immigration, and it received rhapsodic reviews in the *National Review*, *Forbes*, *Business Week*, *The Spectator*, and *Barron's National Business and Fiscal Weekly*.

Other cheerleaders of "greatly increased immigration" contended that immigration lowered inflation (never mind that it does this by depressing wages!). Others argued that immigrants lowered the deficit by propping up domestic manufacturing, and generating economic activity through "enclave economies" (never mind that this amounts the creation of a subproletariat of immigrant workers!). Still others exulted that immigrants provided the energy and spirit to renew the fading American spirit of enterprise and innovation (never mind that it amounted to disinvestment in black labor, whose family roots go back to the beginning of the nation!). Quite a pile of expectation to pile on the plate of an uprooted immigrant struggling to make ends meet.

The question of the impact of the new immigration on African Americans has not entirely escaped the attention of immigration scholars. Indeed, Simon reassured readers that "a good-sized body of competent recent research shows that immigration does not exacerbate unemployment, even among directly competing groups."[6] Much the same conclusion was reached in a 1998 edited volume published by the Russell Sage Foundation entitled *Help or Hindrance? The Economic Implications of Immigration for African Americans*.[7] In their introduction, the editors answer their own question by stating that immigration is neither a help (who ever said that?) nor a hindrance, and concluded that immigration "appears to have exerted small negative effects on the economic situations of African Americans." Somebody should tell our crouched black figure that he can get up and grab the fruit off the tree of opportunity! This is precisely the message that emerges from the immigration literature, where immigrant virtues are extolled and invidious comparisons are made to blacks who are portrayed as culturally deficient and lacking the pluck that has allowed immigrants to pursue opportunity.

How is it that these econometricians arrive at a conclusion that defies common sense? Just consider the fact that the ten major gateway cities — Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Francisco, Washington, Houston, San Diego, Boston, and Dallas — are all cities of high black concentration, with notoriously high rates of employment and underemployment. Just imagine the opposite scenario, if immigration had remained at the level that existed in 1965 — at 292,000 immigrants annually, compared to just over one million last year. Clearly, the tight labor markets would have provided incentives for employers to lower their racist barriers, to hire and train black workers, and if necessary, to improve wages and conditions to make even these marginal jobs attractive to native workers. Consider the difference this would have made in a city like Chicago where, according to a recent study, 45 percent of black men between 20 and 24 are out of school and out of work.

Defining Racism Out of Existence

One problem with these econometric studies is that they are methodologically flawed. In an article on "Immigration and African Americans," two economists, Steven Shulman and Robert C. Smith identify several reasons that "the findings of negligible impact should not be taken at face value."[8] For one thing, immigration may have negative effects on low-wage workers and positive effects on high-wage workers, thus canceling each other out. For another thing, most studies are based on comparisons of employment rates and incomes of blacks in cities with high and low immigrant populations, and find little or no difference. However, immigrants flock to cities where the local economies are expanding and labor is in demand, and we do not know what the result would have been, absent immigration. In Los Angeles, for example, the massive influx of Asians and Latinos has actually triggered an exodus of blacks out of the city.

Another problem is that econometric studies are based on massive aggregates. A dramatically different picture emerges if one examines trends in particular industries or job sectors where immigrants have made inroads, often displacing blacks from job niches where they had a foothold. The standard cant among immigration scholars is that immigrants take jobs spurned by native workers, including blacks. This logic may pertain to some notoriously undesirable jobs — in sweatshops, for example. But as we know, immigrants have made inroads into such coveted job sectors as construction, the health-care industries, building maintenance, hotels and restaurants, transportation, and even in government service (which has long been a main staple of black employment). Even in low-wage jobs — in fast food restaurants, for example — black youth have come under severe competition with immigrants.

Several recent studies based on interviews with employers have provided direct evidence that employers prefer immigrants to blacks. This would appear to provide ironclad proof of employer racism. "Don't jump to conclusions," has been the common refrain of the authors of these studies. (Specifically, I refer to studies of employer preferences by Philip Moss & Chris Tilly, Roger Waldinger and Michael I. Lichter, and William Julius Wilson.[9]) Despite their liberal stripes, these researchers uncritically accept the declarations of employers at face value, and in doing so, effectively ratify the self-serving rationalizations that employers put forward to camouflage their racism. The accuracy of employer claims — that blacks are less reliable and efficient workers, that they lack "soft skills," that they have an "attitude" that antagonizes whites — are never subjected to critical scrutiny, much less put to an empirical test. Indeed, Moss and Tilly acknowledge, "We have no independent information about the people or neighborhoods that the employers told as about." Similarly, Waldinger and Lichter concede: "Absent direct observation, one can at best hazard questionable inferences about the correspondence between employers' view and the world." But inserting a caveat does not compensate for the fact that black workers — their qualifications, their experiences, and their viewpoint — are rendered "beyond the scope" of their studies. As a result, we never hear from "the man farthest down," who is not only crouched on the ground but also reduced to silence.

Let us give the employers and these researchers the benefit of considerable doubt. What if it *were* proved that on the whole immigrants make better workers, or that these employers, driven primarily by self-interest, make hiring decisions based on past experience? Does that warrant their preference for immigrant workers over blacks? Most definitely not! To counter this line of argument, I retrieved my dusty copy of Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice*, published in 1954. Allport defines prejudice as follows:

> Ethnic prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group. The net effect of prejudice, thus defined, is to place the object of prejudice at some disadvantage not merited by his own misconduct.[10]

Employers who make their hiring decisions on the basis of what group a person belongs to, rather than on individual merits, are engaged in patent acts of prejudice. This is a case of racial profiling, or what Dinesh D'Souza, in *The End of Racism*, unapologetically calls "rational discrimination" or what Joleen Kirshenman and Kathryn Neckerman call "statistical discrimination."[11] But as Allport reminds us, to deny someone access to a job on the basis of group affiliation is the very essence of prejudice! It is strange and regrettable when so-called race experts do not recognize racism when it is staring them in the face. Or engage in a sophism that defines racism out of existence.

For example, take a recent article by Nelson Lim, a research associate at RAND Corporation, entitled "On the Back of Blacks? Immigrants and the Fortunes of African Americans."[12] Lim wants to know why it is that immigrants have higher employment rates than blacks, and he cites three factors: 1) *the enclave economy*, which he describes as "a giant hiring hall for immigrants"; 2) *network hiring*, the practice whereby employers bypass formal hiring mechanisms and rely on referrals from current workers; and 3) *social capital*, the supposition that immigrants have the requisite abilities and work habits that blacks lack. Note that the r-word — "racism" — that figured so prominently in the editorial in the *Amsterdam News* (remember, the editors railed against "outright, rank racism and discrimination") is absent from his explanatory schema. Upon closer examination, however, the three explanatory factors that Lim invokes to explain why employers prefer immigrants to blacks can be seen as little more than circumlocutions for racism. Let me explain:

- By its very nature, the much-ballyhooed ethnic economy is a racist structure whose hiring practices are in massive violation of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Ethnic nepotism and racial exclusion are two sides of the same coin.
- Network hiring is a device that employers use to prevent blacks from even getting their foot in the door. This is racism, plain and simple! It is a working-class variant of "the old-boy network" that affirmative action was designed to counteract. In other words, network hiring is a *mechanism* of discrimination, and indeed one that employers use precisely because it insulates them from allegations of racism since they are not directly implicated in the recruitment of workers.
- The concept of "social capital" presumes that immigrants have traits that blacks lack. When employers use these prejudgments as the basis of hiring decisions, they are engaged in acts of prejudice. I fear that Lim has committed the fallacy I alluded to earlier: in this case, using the concept of "social capital" as a smoke screen

> for shifting the blame for discrimination from employers who actually make hiring decisions to hapless blacks who are denied employment. This illogical argument is advanced even though no evidence is proffered to validate the supposition that there are not black workers in abundance who have precisely the traits that are ascribed to immigrants and who could be readily hired, but for the prejudgments of employers.

The profound impact of immigration on the fortunes of blacks is evident in Waldinger and Lichter's study of Los Angeles, based on case studies of six industries: department stores, furniture manufacturing, hospitals, hotels, printing, and restaurants. In all six industries, there has been a major decline of whites between 1970 and 1990 and a corresponding influx of Latinos and Asians. In only two of these industries — printing and department stores — did blacks increase their representation. In hospitals, where blacks had established a foothold in 1970, their percentage remained the same, despite an 85 percent increase in the total work force. In furniture manufacturing, hotels, and eating establishments, the black percentage in the work force actually declined.

On the face of itself, this would seem to provide incontrovertible evidence that immigrants displace blacks from jobs, or at a minimum, preempt their access to jobs in the expanding service sector. This is not Waldinger and Lichter's conclusion, however. In a section again entitled "On the Back of Blacks?" they downplay the role of "rank, outright racism and discrimination," and emphasize the role of labor market mechanisms — "network hiring," the "capture" of occupational niches by particular ethnic groups, and employer "preferences" which, like the other writers just cited, they construe not as naked bigotry, but as responses to perceived and actual deficiencies of black workers.

So powerful are these reified labor market "forces" in sifting workers along different occupational trajectories that, according to Waldinger and Lichter, "relatively few African-American workers are even *trying* to compete with immigrants in the latter's industrial and occupational concentrations."[13] This is their explanation of why, several decades after the passage of Title VII, blacks in Los Angeles constitute 2 percent of the workforce in furniture manufacturing, 4 percent in eating and drinking establishments, 5 percent in printing, 7 percent in hotels, 13 percent in department stores, and 17 percent in hospitals (note that these are aggregate figures that obscure racial stratification within these occupational domains). Small wonder that, after the Rodney King verdict, rampaging mobs vented their rage on immigrant-owned businesses.[14] Small wonder that since the 1990s there has been a "reverse migration" of tens of thousands of Los Angeles blacks to various parts of the South. Indeed, nothing better epitomizes the extent to which African-American destiny is linked to immigration. Just as the cutoff of European immigration by the First World War provided a catalyst for the first major migration to cities in the North and West, the resumption of mass immigration after 1965 has led to the first reverse migration back to the South.

Immigration and Race Discourse

EARLIER I ALLUDED TO a tendency in the immigration literature to explain away the negative impact of immigration on African Americans, either by pretending that there are no significant negative effects or by defining "racism" out of existence, or by shifting the blame onto blacks themselves. There is another longstanding discourse based on invidious comparisons between immigrants and blacks. In the popular idiom, the question takes the form, "We made it, why haven't they?" When these comparisons were made between European immigrants and blacks, it was always possible to contend that blacks alone encountered racism. Now that most immigrants are nominally "people of color," the question takes a new and pernicious twist: if Asians and Latinos — and now the clincher, if West Indians can make it — why can't African Americans? Doesn't this prove that racism is not an insurmountable barrier?

Having dismissed "racism" as a factor, these writers then leap to the conclusion that in contrast to immigrants, African Americans are saddled with defective cultural systems — weak families, disorganized communities, dysfunctional subcultures — that prevent them from climbing the tree of success. Thomas Sowell was the first to advance this proposition, and Dinesh D'Souza has given it its most explicit and unapologetic expression. The notion that blacks have only themselves to blame for their problems is emblazoned in the title of John McWhorter's recent book, *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America*. But this logic is also found, albeit in more circumspect language, in the work of such liberal scholars as John Ogbu and Mary Waters, both of whom extol immigrant culture and then use it as the basis for making invidious comparisons to the cultural practices of African Americans.

In his study of a high school in San Jose, California, Ogbu sought to explain why immigrant children have better academic outcomes than African Americans. Drawing a distinction between immigrant minorities and caste-like minorities, he speculated that African Americans, isolated for generations by segregation and poverty, developed an "oppositional culture" that disparaged learning as "acting white." With this theoretical sleight of hand, he shifted attention away from institutional racism and the racist barriers that continue to impede black access to jobs and opportunities, placing them at a disadvantage even to recent immigrants and even within the schools that both groups share. His totally unsubstantiated claim that black youth spurn educational achievement as "acting white" has been projected as a general theory of the racial gap in academic achievement and test scores, thus absolving societal institutions of blame for the scandalous inequalities along racial lines in educational resources and opportunity.[15]

Mary Waters also contrasts behavior and incomes of immigrants and African Americans, with that same pernicious twist since her subjects are Caribbean immigrants. Note that it is not Waters, but her West Indian subjects, along with their white managers, who insist that Caribbean immigrants are more reliable and productive workers, and are relatively free of those defensive and resentful attitudes that put whites off. As with other studies of employer preferences, however, Waters does not subject these claims to critical examination or to empirical validation. Indeed, her own data indicate that the small number of black workers at American Food, the catering firm that was the principal site for her research, had logged in more years than their foreign-born counterparts.

Waters ascribes to immigrants a tendency to compare "their own hard-working, planning, friendly, upward-striving selves with the lazy, welfare-dependent, unfriendly, bitter black Americans."[16] But she commits this fallacy herself, through a failure to explore the social class factors that underlie the ostensibly "cultural" differences between the two groups. Waters seems oblivious to the fact that the West Indians who arrive in New York are a product of selective migration, and that many of them enjoyed middle-class status in their countries of origin even though they are forced to take jobs that, in many cases, amount to downward mobility. Besides, one would think from Waters' account (and the pronouncements of her subjects) that Caribbean youth are all paragons of disciplined and achieving students, and there is none of the disorder — school crime, drugs, shattered families, dropouts — that are so rife in African-American communities. By overlooking selective migration, Waters ends up comparing social class "apples" and "oranges," and it matters little that the "apples" are native sons and the "oranges" are imported from the tropics.

Indeed, *Black Identities* is a virtual catalog of the victim-blaming constructions that permeate the immigration canon. Waters embraces 1) Waldinger's concept of "network hiring" to explain why African Americans are relatively absent in the workplace; 2) Ogbu's distinction between "voluntary and involuntary minorities" to explain why, compared to West Indians, African Americans have a "chip on their shoulder," 3) Ruben Rumbaut's contention that immigrants and their children do worse the longer they stay in the United States, allegedly because they lose touch with the achievement ideology and positive culture that were part of their homeland cultures; and 4) Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou's concept of "segmented assimilation," which holds that immigrants who live in close proximity to African Americans adopt their "adversarial stance" toward white society, including a devaluation on education "as a vehicle of advancement." Stated another way, the children of West Indian immigrants run the risk of assimilating "the wrong way," forsaking the rich and positive cultures of their parents for the aberrant culture of African Americans.

We have here a theory of racial contamination, different only in that it is cultural rather than physical contamination that is to be feared.

This last item deserves special attention, because it comes close to the main theme of Waters' narrative. Think about what is being said here. In effect, African Americans are blamed not only for their own misery, but also for subverting the uplifting cultures of immigrants and thus condemning their children to live on the fringes. Stripped of its rhetorical gloss, we have here a theory of racial contamination, different only in that it is cultural rather than physical contamination that is to be feared.

Again, Waters may plead that she is merely reporting on fears expressed by her West Indian subjects, but what she forgets is that these same fears are commonly expressed by African-American parents, as Mary Patillo-McCoy found in her study of a mixed-income neighborhood in Chicago. Waters' persistent error is her failure to explore the social class underpinnings of the conflict between West Indians and African Americans, even though this conflict is commonly (mis)understood in terms of a West Indian/African American binary. As we know, deep poverty engenders similar cultural responses in poor Asian and Latino communities, with or without the presence of African Americans. And for that matter, in poor white communities as well, as Jay MacLoed shows brilliantly in *Ain't No Making It*.

Despite disclaimers to the contrary, the message that emerges from the canon of immigration scholarship is clear: if only African Americans had the cultural virtues, the perseverance, and the pluck of immigrants — if only they were not saddled with self-deprecating and anti-intellectual subcultures — if only they could get rid of that defiant and surly "attitude" that whites abhor — if only they would stop seeing themselves as "victims" and stop whining about racism — then they too could climb the tree of opportunity. Or at least pluck the fruit off the lowest branches.

Needless to say, none of the writers whom I have criticized above are oblivious to racism. How could they be? Indeed, they uncover mounds of racism in their empirical research. Rather, the problem is that, with a theoretical sleight of hand, societal racism morphs into culture. According to this line of reasoning, racism — that is, past racism — engenders a host of cultural distortions among African Americans who develop an "adversarial culture," lack "social capital," are "obsessed" with race and racism, have problems of "self-presentation," and so and so forth, all leading to the erudite conclusion that it is because of these "cultural" traits that black workers are not hired. What we have here is a new iteration of the discredited culture-of-poverty thesis that shifts the focus away from the societal racism to the putative cultural practices of blacks themselves. On this reasoning, even employers who admit that they do not hire blacks are exonerated of racism, since they are seen as merely responding to the damage that racism has wrought in the cultural practices of African Americans. Totally obscured in this explanatory schema is the persistent role of "outright, rank racism and discrimination," to again quote the unvarnished language of the editorial in the *Amsterdam News*. Thus, with this incredible inversion of logic, blacks are blamed for the racist acts of employers!

A second way that immigrants have impacted on race policy and discourse pertains to the fateful shift from "affirmative action" to "diversity." Affirmative action policy was forged in the cauldron of the black protest movement. However, a nation that had no trouble using all the powers of the state to oppress blacks as a people balked when it came to giving preferential treatment on the basis of group affiliation. This, the sophists claimed with glee, violated the cardinal rule of the civil rights protest movement: that a person should be judged by the content of his character, not the color of his skin.

Thus, even at their inception, affirmative action programs were targeted ambiguously for "minorities and women." As it turns out, the primary beneficiaries were upper-middle-class white woman who gained access to the professions and corporate business. Predictably, other "minorities" with historical grievances — Asians and Latinos — began crowding under the meager umbrella of affirmative action. I do not blame them for doing so: I am only saying that it made a difference, and that it derailed affirmative action from its original objective. After the Bakke decision in 1978, which proscribed "quotas" for specific groups but sanctioned "diversity" as a goal in college admissions, affirmative action programs were no longer governed by the logic of reparations, which is to say, as a remedy for past injustices. Clearly, this turn of events worked to the benefit of immigrants and to the detriment of blacks.

A third way that immigration has impacted on race discourse is that social scientists and government officials puzzled about how to classify these new immigrants who were not white, but then again, were not black either. Immigrant leaders and advocacy groups, too, had to locate themselves on the nation's cognitive map. As the exponents of "whiteness studies" have shown, old immigrants, beginning with the Irish, actively sought to disassociate themselves from blacks, lest they be lumped together with these racial pariahs. Clearly, new immigrants were even more "at risk," given their conspicuous racial differences. The result has been a proliferation of books and conferences with titles like "beyond black and white" (over 15,000 hits on Google); "neither black nor white" (14,000 hits); and "in-between people — race" (800 hits). From the standpoint of Asians and Latinos, this is an entirely understandable and, I suppose, unassailable development. On the other hand, the extension of race beyond the binary of black and white, the admission of permutations in the middle, has deflected attention away from the unique and unresolved problems of race *qua* African Americans. The result is that the nation congratulates itself on its "diversity" and celebrates its "multiculturalism," while the problems of African Americans continue to fester from neglect.

But there is something else that needs to be said, and let me be blunt. Immigrants have a political debt to pay to African Americans whose protest movement led to the immigration reform that allowed them to come here in the first place. Furthermore, thanks to the black protest movement, these immigrants entered a nation with a drastically improved climate of tolerance, and with policies in place that reduced their exposure to the scourge of bigotry and opened up avenues of opportunity that previously did not exist for people of color.

Policy Implications

AS I ACKNOWLEDGED at the outset, the image of that black man crouched on the ground while others climb on his back to reach the tree of opportunity represents only one standpoint, among many, for thinking about immigration. Immigration has obvious benefit for the millions of immigrants who have courageously pulled up roots to pursue opportunity in the United States. And immigration, including "illegal" immigration that is tacitly sanctioned, has conferred immense benefit on the American economy, as the boosters of "greatly increased immigration" had foreseen. In his book *Immigrants and the American City*, Thomas Muller enumerates the many ways in which immigration has been a boon to the economy as a whole and to employers, including middle-class households who rely upon immigrants for everything from childcare to eldercare. At the same time Muller concedes that aggregate data "can mask less benign redistributional effects upon the working class and native minorities."[17] This should come as no surprise. It used to be a truism that blacks were the "last hired," and it has taken a good deal of intellectual artifice and obfuscation on the part of immigration scholars to deny the obvious: that filling the hiring queue with millions of immigrants has had adverse consequences for African Americans, particularly during the post-civil-rights era when blacks were poised for progress.

The question, from a policy standpoint, is how these negative impacts might be mitigated. The first thing we have to do is to take off our blinders, and confront the incontrovertible fact that, like earlier waves of immigration, the post-1965 immigration has been detrimental to African Americans. Immigration scholars have stubbornly avoided this conclusion, not out of any animus toward African Americans, but rather out of sympathy with immigrants and their struggles. Although their intentions might be benign, they have fallen into the pit of what political philosopher Charles Mills calls "the epistemology of ignorance" — a tendency, when it comes to African Americans, "to deny, to elide, to skim over."[18] So, the first order of business is to acknowledge that immigration has come at a heavy cost to African Americans, and that immigration scholars have unwittingly played their part, as chroniclers of the immigrant experience, in propagating the idea that Toni Morrison captured with characteristic acumen: "of American blacks as the real aliens."

There is also a need to take off our political blinders and to confront the neoliberal underpinnings of current immigration policy. There is nothing progressive about flooding the lower echelons of the labor market with desperate immigrants who depress wages for each other as well as native workers. It is also problematic when the nation imports workers to fill higher echelons of the job pyramid, instead of upgrading the skills of native workers. For example, we import thousands of nurses from the Philippines and the Caribbean and then shut down nursing schools that traditionally provided channels of upward mobility for working-class women. Indeed, the traffic in nurses has become an export industry, with the additional irony is that there is a shortage of nurses in the Philippines.

My point is that the left has to get beyond liberal sentimentality on immigration policy, and face some hard choices. Jewish labor leaders who sought to organize the garment trades at the turn of the century realized that their efforts were undercut by the relentless influx of immigrants, and were forced to choose between their coreligionists in Europe and their economic self-interests. Cesar Chavez confronted the same dilemma in trying to organize California farm workers in the 1960s, and he reluctantly opposed the bracero program that was designed to flood the labor market with cheap migrant labor and to undercut unions. To state the obvious, immigration is not a benevolence program for the "huddled masses" of the world, and it behooves us to confront the downside of current immigration policy, not only for blacks, but also for other low-wage earners, including immigrants and their children who are the first to suffer the consequences of the relentless influx of new arrivals.

Even if immigration continues at current levels, as it presumably will, there is an urgent need to address the particular impacts on African Americans. Let me suggest the broad outlines of a policy agenda, although I do so without any illusion that these proposals are likely to be enacted in the present political climate.

1) Immigration should be part of a national manpower policy that protects the interests of immigrants and native workers alike. A laissez-faire policy that relegates millions of immigrants to the vagaries of the "free market" only throws low-wage workers in pitiless competition with each other, and closes off avenues of mobility into more desirable job sectors. As a result, current policy exacerbates existing inequalities along lines of race, ethnicity, gender and class.

2) Candid acknowledgement of the negative impacts of immigration on African Americans carries with it an obligation to address the problem. This should begin with vigorous enforcement of laws against employment discrimination. The current practice, documented but unchallenged by immigration scholars, of giving preference to one group over another must be exposed for what it is: blatant discrimination in violation of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Even the employment practices of "enclave economies" must be brought into conformity with laws against employment discrimination.

3) The employment practices copiously documented by immigration scholars constitute an argument for affirmative action to counter what is deceptively called "network hiring." Affirmative action has been immensely effective in integrating the work force in the professions and in corporate business, and in many blue-collar industries as well. There is urgent need to extend affirmative action to the service industries and blue-collar sectors where immigrants and blacks compete for jobs. Today we have the spectacle of entire job sectors that have become monopolized by this or that immigrant group, and this is precisely the situation that affirmative action was designed to counteract.

4) There is a job crisis today in African-American communities that is being ignored, indeed camouflaged behind the façade of "diversity." As mentioned earlier, a study in Chicago found that 45 percent of black youth are out of school and out of work. Another recent study of New York City found that there are nearly 170,000 "disconnected youth," aged 16 to 24, who are not in school, not working, and not looking for work. Excluded from these calculations is the vast number of black men — nearly 1 million nationally — who are incarcerated. According to journalist Jonathan Tilove, "there are nearly 2 million more black adult women than men in America, stark testimony to how often black men die before their time."[19] This is evidence of a massive crisis that, as is customary with race, is being ignored or pasted over with victim-blaming narratives, combined with contrasting narratives of immigrant success. In his report on "disconnected youth" in New York City, Mark Levitan proposed a system of apprenticeships and a jobs corps for minority youth. Such programs urgently need to be enacted on a national scale.

The lesson of history is that these problems will not be publicly acknowledged, much less addressed, without political mobilization. With this in mind, let me end with a plea. That immigrants — especially ethnic leaders and advocacy groups — reject the temptation to distance themselves from "the black nemesis," and commit themselves to the black struggle for racial justice. It may be a historical accident that made immigrants part of the problem, but it has also positioned them to be part of the solution. Given their own struggles, new immigrants could well provide renewed inspiration and leadership in the ongoing struggle to erase the vestiges of slavery, and I have been struck by Asian and Latino leaders who have spoken out forcefully and with moral conviction on behalf of African Americans.

There is reason for hope, but I fear that there is also reason for pessimism. The danger is that like the old immigrants, the new immigrants, preoccupied with their own struggles, will duck the issue and avert their eyes from that black figure, still crouched on the ground. All through American history, one way in which immigrants avoided pariah status has been to disassociate themselves from African Americans and their plight. Tragically and ironically, it is one way that immigrants "become American." As Toni Morrison has written: "It doesn't matter anymore what shade the newcomer's skin is. A hostile posture toward resident blacks must be struck at the Americanizing door before it will open."

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17. Thomas Muller, *Immigration and the American City* (New York: New York University Press, 1993): 160.

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Guerillas and the Constitution: Two Anti-Death Penalty Views

Constitutional but Wrong?

MARK DOW

LAST YEAR *THE NATION* magazine pissed off a lot of its readers by selling prominent ad space to Fox News. The magazine explained its decision by citing the First Amendment. But the First Amendment concerns government interference in speech. According to the *Nation*'s logic, it should publish every article submitted — and it violated the free-speech rights of my brother David and me by failing to publish our letter criticizing their invocation of the First Amendment.

The *Nation* editors are not alone in their error. Pick you favorite issue and ask yourself whether you've ever indignantly insisted "It's my Constitutional right!" when you really meant, "I should be able to do that!" Or: "That's unconstitutional!" when you really meant, "I don't like that!"

I gave a talk at an anti-death penalty event after a New York performance of *The Exonerated* that didn't go over well with the organizer. I said that I agreed with Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia: a Constitution that says no person shall be denied life or liberty without due process obviously considers the taking of a life to be legitimate punishment. In other words, I think the death penalty is constitutional. And I still oppose it. Even if no innocent person were ever put to death; even if the death penalty were administered equitably among rich and poor and black and white; even if it were beyond doubt a deterrent; even if it were less expensive than life imprisonment; and even if it always brought closure to the families of murder victims — none of which is so — I would still oppose the state sanctioned killing of prisoners. So I asked myself why, and at the risk of educating myself in public, to paraphrase Delmore Schwartz, I'm not sure I can say exactly. It has something to do with my feeling that the fundamental conflict here is between the individual and a faceless entity called the State. It also has to do with what I only know how to call the preservation of a sense of humanity over and against some authority's belief that it brings us the word of God.

I bring up God because Scalia has spoken of his belief in the need to "combat" "the tendency of democracy to obscure the divine authority behind government." Scalia believes that "the government derives its moral authority from God," and that the "minister of God" in turn has the "moral authority" to "execute wrath," — that is, to kill prisoners. Scalia, of course, must be one of God's ministers because of his secular position on the court.

Scalia believes that a judge morally opposed to the death penalty should resign since the alternative is "simply ignoring duly enacted, constitutional laws and sabotaging death penalty cases." A seemingly reasonable position. He continues: "It is a matter of great consequence

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The death penalty is constitutional. And I still oppose it.

to me, therefore, whether the death penalty is morally acceptable." Then he gives the Christian basis for his belief that state killing is indeed morally acceptable. His personal moral code is based on what his tradition — or his interpretation of it — tells him it is. "For he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:4).

He's in good company. The same passage in Romans on which he relies has been used for a long time to justify the death penalty. "Secular Europe" [First 6], as he calls it, was not always so: 15th century French jurists used this passage to rationalize the ecclesiastical curses and excommunication imposed on slugs and locusts menacing the townspeople (see E.P. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*). The fact that they use the same passage doesn't mean Scalia is wrong, but it does shed some light on his sophistry. He says, for example, that if the death penalty is immoral because of the fact that "it will inevitably lead . . . to the condemnation of someone who is innocent . . . [then] so is life in prison." But this is true only if "condemnation to life in prison" and "condemnation to death" are equivalent, and I suspect that the 119 people on death row exonerated since 1973 — and the jurors and judges who sentenced them — would agree that these are not equivalent.

Donald Cabana is a devoted Catholic, too. He is an eloquent death penalty opponent who used to be warden of the Mississippi State Penitentiary. While Scalia uses his doctrine to obscure reality, Cabana has struggled in the face of reality. As warden, he personally supervised the killing of two prisoners in Mississippi's gas chamber. If Scalia uses his religious code and his Constitution to avoid looking humanity in the face, Cabana uses his imagination to see more reality than meets the eye. When I spoke to him a few years ago, he said the most shocking thing I've heard from anyone discussing the death penalty. "I try to remind myself," Cabana said, "I envision a Ted Bundy in his mama's arms, as the same kind of helpless, defenseless infant that any of us are." (The full interview with Cabana is in Dow and Dow, eds., *Machinery of Death: The Reality of America's Death Penalty Regime*. Also see Cabana's own *Death at Midnight: The Confessions of an Executioner*.)

Scalia huffed in one opinion about requiring a jury to be informed that the alternative to a death sentence is a life sentence *without parole* (as opposed to life with weekend furloughs). Such a requirement, wrote Scalia, would come "at great expense to the swiftness and predictability of justice" (*Simmons v. South Carolina*, 1994). Scalia is a careful writer. Note that he is not worried there will be less justice; he is worried there will be less speed and predictability. These qualities are not necessarily compatible with justice, and they may well be antithetical to it. But then, writing in the same opinion, our indignant logician gets something right: "The heavily outnumbered opponents of capital punishment have successfully opened yet another front in their guerilla war to make this unquestionably constitutional sentence a practical impossibility." And yet another since then, in *Roper v. Simmons* (March 2005), in which the court ruled against the state killing of people who were juveniles at the time they killed. During oral arguments, the question arose whether, if juveniles won this case, they would next become ineligible even for sentences of life without parole. "I'm sure that will follow," Scalia predicted. "I don't see where there's a logical line."

But Scalia is so "happy to learn from the canonical experts" that he's overlooked the most elegant logic of all. "As the abolitionists say," Donald Cabana reminds us, "how do you teach kids that killing's wrong by killing?"

Cruel, Unusual, and Unconstitutional

DAVID R. DOW

FOR NEARLY HALF a century, the cruel and unusual punishments clause of the Eighth Amendment has been understood as reflecting society's "evolving standards of decency." Stripped to its core, the idea of evolving standards is that something can be permissible — which is to say, constitutional — at a certain historical moment, and unconstitutional later. Once upon a time in America, states could execute people who committed rape, or even robbery. The Supreme Court has held, however, that a state can execute only those who commit homicide. Our standards have evolved. That's one reason that my brother and Justice Scalia are wrong, and that the death penalty is, in fact, unconstitutional.

A second reason is that the Constitution deals not only with results, but also with procedures. Executing someone is a result. How we go about executing them is a procedure. When Justice Harry Blackmun threw up his hands in 1994 and announced that he would no longer tinker with the machinery of death, he was saying that the procedures are inherently flawed. The Constitution permits the death penalty when it's perfect; Justice Blackmun said that he had been mistaken in believing that we are capable of perfection.

Sometimes the randomness that Justice Blackmun condemned works to our benefit. Three of my clients will not be executed, and none of the credit is mine. They have been saved by the Supreme Court's decision in *Roper v. Simmons*, which held that the states cannot execute murderers who were younger than the age of 18 at the time they committed a crime. Give or take a score, there are 3,500 people on death row in the United States. The Court's decision in *Simmons* saved perhaps seventy. So *Simmons* affected 2 percent of the nation's death row population. (In Texas, the decision has had a broader impact, nullifying death sentences of around 7 percent of the state's death row population.) As a death penalty opponent, I do not want to sound ungrateful or churlish, but, outside of the people whose cases it immediately affects, the decision in *Simmons* is trivial. It is not especially important doctrinally, and in some respects it is actually rather damaging.

Two and a half years ago, in *Atkins v. Virginia*, the Supreme Court ruled that the states cannot execute the mentally retarded. Unlike chronological age, which has well-defined boundaries, mental retardation is a comparatively imprecise concept. A murderer was or was not younger than age 18 at the time of the crime. Whether a murderer is mentally retarded is far less clear and is often controversial. Experts use accepted methods and tests to ascertain mental retardation, but they disagree among themselves on how to interpret those tests. Yet despite the difficulty of saying whether a particular death row inmate is retarded, a conservative estimate is that 5 percent of the nation's death row population satisfies the clinical criteria, and perhaps the number is as large as 10 percent. *Atkins* was an important decision, however, not simply because it affected two to 5 times as many inmates as *Simmons*, but as well because of the impact it has had on death penalty advocacy.

Like the decision in *Simmons*, the decision in *Atkins* will immediately help only a modest number of inmates. Unlike *Simmons*, however, *Atkins* has dynamic consequences that reverber-

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ate throughout death row. The reason is that even though only 5 or 10 percent of death row inmates will prove to be retarded, a much larger number have plausible claims under *Atkins*. Of the dozen death row inmates I currently represent, easily half of them have plausible mental retardation claims. They will therefore now receive the benefit of an investigation that they would not otherwise have received.

> The Constitution permits the death penalty when it's perfect.

These investigations are vital because lawyers often find unexpected information, and so the likelihood that something useful will be found is increased. In *Simmons v. South Carolina* (a different Simmons), Justice Scalia complained that death penalty lawyers are like guerillas, always looking for another battlefront to open. I'm not sure why Justice Scalia used the word "guerilla" to describe what death penalty lawyers are supposed to do, but *Atkins* did open the front for us. *Roper v. Simmons* has no such effect.

To take just one dramatic example: A death row inmate in Texas was recently set for execution. We believed there was a chance he was mentally retarded, within the meaning of *Atkins*, and therefore sought out evidence to establish it. We found no proof of his retardation; however, we did locate evidence tending to suggest that the inmate was not in fact guilty at all. Without *Atkins*, the investigation that led us to conclude that he is innocent would never have been undertaken. Unlike *Atkins*, *Simmons* has no such dynamic consequence. There is no mystery as to which 2 percent of the death row population benefits from *Simmons*. There is no incentive for lawyers to do something that they were not already doing. And in fact, exactly the contrary is true. Under federal law, as well as under the laws of every death penalty state except one, death row inmates are entitled to lawyers to represent them in state and federal habeas corpus proceedings. That is not true for prison inmates not on death row — which means that as soon as the seventy or so juveniles who were on death row when *Simmons* was decided get moved off of death row — they also lose their right to counsel.

Yet of the three juveniles I represent, two of them have exceedingly strong claims of actual innocence, and the third has a nontrivial claim of innocence. Even if I were willing to work on these cases without the prospect of having expenses paid for by a state or federal court, I also have to confront the fact that these cases are no longer urgent. Put somewhat actuarially, my clients still on death row face imminent demise, meaning that my clients not on death row — even assuming I continue to represent them — are constantly pushed to the bottom of my "to do" list.

In the long run, cases that draw lines are trivial because the enterprise of drawing lines has little if any legal or moral content. It doesn't much matter whether the legal age for voting is 18 or 19. In contrast, saying that states cannot prevent women or blacks from voting is a point with profound moral content. I am relieved that, because of *Simmons*, three young men whom I believe should not be executed will not be executed. At the same time, I recognize that even if it is true that the death penalty will die from a thousand cuts, the Supreme Court's decision in *Simmons* is barely a pinprick.

And maybe it's actually a styptic pencil. Every time the Supreme Court says "here's something the states can no longer do," it strengthens the states' entitlement to do everything else. When the Supreme Court announces that the Constitution forbids the execution of the mentally retarded or juveniles, death penalty advocates conclude that the problems have been addressed, and the machinery of death can once again move forward.

The Antiwar Movement and Third Party Politics

DUANE CAMPBELL

IN HIS ESSAY "The 2004 Elections and the Collapse of the Left" (*NP* 38), Thomas Harrison claims that the left and the antiwar movement have collapsed — and he is wrong.

The central argument in his piece is that working within the Democratic Party in the 2004 presidential election was an error. The author asserts that if the left had done politics the way he prefers, we would now have a viable third party effort. But he provides no evidence.

Movements have ups and downs. The movements against the Vietnam war, against U.S. intervention in El Salvador, and others, each of which I participated in, had times of growth and times of reorganization. There were major ups and downs in these movements, as there are now. We went from growth to dispersal many times. Often the Nixon administration saved us from obscurity, as with the invasion of Cambodia and the shootings at Kent State. The Reagan administration did the same by blockading the harbors of Nicaragua and funding the death squads in El Salvador.

In "normal" times, a very small percentage of the population pays attention to politics, often less than 5 percent. However, in the electoral season, many more pay attention, at times up to 50 percent. Prior to 2004, only a minority opposed the war. At present, some 53 percent of the U.S. public believes that Bush was wrong to go to war. This is quite an increase. Participation in the presidential election was a vehicle for spreading the antiwar message.

There is a new weakness in the antiwar position that was caused in part by the elections in Iraq in January, not by the U.S. elections. We have a changed insurgency. The new insurgency includes a large number of sectarian thugs, not freedom fighters. They have, for example, targeted civilians, particularly Shia civilians. They murder Shia because the Shia are a majority and want to run their own country. The nature of the insurgency — not the Kerry campaign — is the primary reason that antiwar work is now more difficult. And while I agree with some of Harrison's analysis of Kerry, note that Kerry came within 2 percent of winning. We came close to defeating Bush. And, yes, we would have still needed an antiwar and anti-imperialist movement if Kerry had won. But Condoleeza Rice would not be Secretary of State, terrorist John Negroponte would not be Director of National Intelligence, and Paul Wolfowitz would not be nominated to the World Bank, nor John Bolton as Ambassador to the United Nations. Election outcomes matter.

Harrison's essay continues the debate over left-wing electoral strategy. I will not repeat all the arguments here. But because of the structural constraints of the United States' two party system, leftists such as myself are trying to build a left inside and outside of the Democratic Party — and in a real sense, the class divide in the United States runs right through the middle of the Democratic Party. This can be clearly seen in the recent decline of the Democratic Leadership Council. (Disclosure: I ran as a Kucinich

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delegate in California and I am currently working to build a local of Progressive Democrats of America.)

The debate over third parties is an important one for the left. However, note how Harrison describes the leaders of the civil rights, women's, environmentalist, and labor movements:

> The antiwar movement's semi-hibernation was, in a way, bizarre. The leaders of the labor, women's, civil rights, and environmental movements are longtime Democratic Party serfs; their prostration before Kerry was no surprise. Kerry could throw them a few symbolic concessions and get away with leaving it at that. But what could a frankly pro-war candidate concede to the millions who had come out against the imperialist occupation of Iraq? By what twisted logic could Kerry, who repeated over and over again his commitment to "finishing the job" in Iraq, whose minions quashed any hint of a peace plank in the Democratic Party platform, be considered an antiwar candidate? There were no bones for him to throw.

Now, if you agree with this position, then certainly go off and try to build a third party. I agree with his description of the Kerry war policies, but I don't agree with his description of the leaders of labor, civil rights and other movements. And I have strong reservations about working with people who do accept this. Each of the movements criticized are in a rethinking phase. They are having to adjust to Bush's victory and Republican control of the House, Senate and presidency. If the Democrats had won, the agenda would be different. Before I accept your description of the decline of these social justice movements, please tell me, what have you organized? Show me the organization and the structures with a million-plus people in them which you have created.

As for the antiwar movement, we have to recognize that at this state what we have is a loose network of local groups. The excellent coalition, United for Peace and Justice, is after all just that — a coalition. It can encourage broad participation by a very diverse series of groups and rallies. Some of the larger parts of the network, such as Peace Action, actively stayed out of the two party contest in 2004. Did such groups grow as a result? Show me the data.

I do not think that either side of the electoral politics debate has figured out how to deal with the corruption of the Democratic Party. I am confident that the strategy of third party advocates failed in 2004. But if you want to build a third party, please do so. There are some significant reasons why a third or fourth party is needed (in California it would be a sixth party). While an independent party effort is important, it also faces some real problems. Among them are single-member congressional districts that tend to ensure a two-party system. I can guarantee that you will have to build your party through organizing and activism — not by blaming others for your failures to organize. You failed to organize in 2004. You failed to recruit others to your cause. Until you recognize your own failures you will remain a marginal footnote in real politics. Blaming others for not following your lead is not leadership, and it is not organizing. It's only crying in your beer.

So, what can the left do — what is to be done? Analyze the current array of forces, pick our battles, and fight these battles. After one battle is completed (such as the 2004 elections), we go on to the next. In each effort we try to bring new people to a leftist perspective — a socialist, anti-imperialist perspective. The various movements, including electoral activity, are educational processes and training opportunities for building a future left.

Harrison's Choice
Playing to Win in the Post-ABB Era

JOHN HALLE

IT MIGHT NOT SEEM that Tom Harrison's itemization of the myriad failures of nerve and brains on the part of progressives during the 2004 electoral season provides much reason for hope. In fact it does, though in a somewhat backhanded way. For inasmuch as Harrison's piece demonstrates that our collapse was assured by a dogged pursuit of strategies which could have been (and were) predicted in advance to have been suicidal, the way out of our malaise is clear. Namely, to use our heads and stop denying the self-evident truth which Harrison reminds us of: "The creation of a progressive third party is the sine qua non of radical change."

Puncturing the climate of denial involves going a little bit deeper and recognizing it as a symptom of the left's inability to come to terms with the fact that politics is not about protest, it is about power: we need to pursue it, achieve it and exercise it. I won't discuss that here[1] except to note that, in addition to Harrison's piece, there are encouraging signs that some of the taboos surrounding discussion on this subject are beginning to fall.

For example, it is only in the wake of the progressive collapse of 2004 that Ruth Conniff is able to pose questions that we should have been asking for years: Where is the left's strategy and vision? What is the big picture strategy that could lead to a turnaround in American politics like the one we've just lived through from the right?

Obviously, political organizing doesn't happen overnight. Working together, the various right-wing groups put together their winning coalition over many years.

Reading about them now — how they maintained their vision of a conservative America throughout the liberal 1960s and 70s — actually makes me slightly hopeful.[2]

We should be hopeful, though one's optimism is dampened slightly by Conniff's vague use of the expression "political organizing." Organize who, organize what, for what purpose? Conniff doesn't say.

Harrison's piece goes one necessary step further and names the system around which we must organize — the formerly unmentionable third party option. That our choice is "between death by lesser-evilism or life through independent political action" has never been clearer. And for this reason, the collapse of 2004 should not be a cause for despair but for real hope.

OF COURSE, KNOWING WHERE we need to go is only part of the answer. We need to figure out who will help us get there and figure out how to work with them effectively. Here, Harrison also provides another reason for hope in reminding us that our potential allies are not only the usual ones: they "consist of the millions of Americans who are sick of wars, insecurity, declining wages, worsening schools, racism, and homophobia, and long for peace, equality, and social justice."

But there is a more compelling reason for hope that Harrison does not mention: the advanced state of decay of the main opposition to the development of independent politics, namely the Democratic Party. No amount of bluster from Katrina Van den Heuvel and Robert Borosage will mask the fact that the party is unreformable for a simple structural reason: its

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addiction to corporate cash. It is this institutional fact and not the personal failings of individual politicians that makes its adherence to the right-wing consensus on tort reform, bankruptcy, the estate tax, and continuing involvement in Iraq inevitable, and drearily predictable.

While there is plenty of rot at the top of the party at the national level, more relevant to where we are now and where we need to go is the rot at the bottom, most starkly in the machines which have dominated the politics of big- and medium-sized cities for more than a century. If the national Democratic Party is a tragedy, the officials who operate the machines of the twenty-first century have made local politics into a farce typified by the following scenes from news items of the last few weeks.

• "A New York City councilman reportedly presented a staffer with a novelty figurine with a 'spring-action moveable penis,' squeezed her and told her to keep the doll on her desk, wink-wink. This moment should not be confused with the times when, according to her testimony, he grabbed her when he was clearly aroused, or mentioned how her breasts were 'firm for a grandmother,' or required her to clean his house." (*New York Times*, 4/22/2005)

• Chicago West Side Alderwoman Emma Mitts was "courted by Wal-Mart and easily seduced, (becoming) a strident advocate for the retailer. Like many other organizations and individuals, she wasn't much of an expense; according to campaign disclosure documents filed with the State of Illinois, Wal-Mart rewarded her efforts last November with $5,000." (*The Nation*, 3/28/2005)

• In the "small but vicious world of Brooklyn politics . . . D.A. Joe Hynes . . . in 1996 indicted John O'Hara on a trumped-up 'illegal voting' charge as revenge for challenging Democratic machine candidates . . . for almost a decade Hynes pushed the case through three long trials and the nine appeals" devoting "thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of court time in a crime-flooded jurisdiction to a politically motivated prosecution." (*New York Press* 4/6/05)[3]

• "Mayor Dick Murphy of San Diego, beset by federal investigations of the city's finances and surrounded by questions of his political legitimacy, announced today that he was resigning effective July 15 . . . In the meantime, the interim mayor is expected to be Michael Zucchet, a member of the city council who is under indictment for receiving payments from a Las Vegas strip club owner in exchange for a vote to relax the no-touching rule at San Diego's topless clubs." (*New York Times*, 4/26/05)

Anyone who reads a local paper or spends a few afternoons at a city hall could almost surely augment these with examples of their own. They are merely the vulgar local expression of a national politics defined by greed and cynicism. The difference is that, unlike in the U.S. Congress and Senate where incumbency and access to corporate cash, for the moment, guarantee major party dominance, local machine candidates can be defeated by effective door-to-door campaigns. Money and media buys only count for so much on the neighborhood level.

IN ADDITION TO THE LOW COMEDY which it sometimes provides, the combination of crass opportunism, political cluelessness, and mediocrity of low-level Democrats should be seen for what it is: a gift presented by the Democratic Party to the third party movement — a golden opportunity for building the foundation of an insurgent politics exactly where it needs to be built. And this is not the only gift which machine politics in its dotage offers us. Another is the low rate of electoral participation in cities, something that the machines have tacitly encouraged, as low turnout makes their control of voting blocks through patronage and favors disproportionately significant. It also makes them highly vulnerable to insurgent challengers who require a comparatively few votes provided by social and community networks and little funding in order to upset machine candidates.

That progressives have not taken advantage of this opportunity is baffling.

Why, for example, do progressives in Brooklyn's Park Slope continually return to office James Brennan, the machine candidate, whose collaboration with corrupt party boss Joe Hynes (referred to above) is now a matter of public record?

Why have so few activists in college towns not followed the lead of New Paltz mayor Jason West in registering voters and taking over their local governments with progressive majorities?

Why did the progressive media almost completely ignore the candidacy of Matt Gonzalez whose heartbreaking near victory for San Francisco mayor, had it been achieved, would have been an enormous shot in the arm to third-party organizing?

Why has the Labor Party failed to run a single local candidate for local office?

The answer goes back to the taboo mentioned earlier: the suspicion of organization and power, and the contempt for electoral politics as "celebrity-driven affairs . . . unworthy of the attention of serious activists" cynically exploited by Democrats who have long since learned that we have neither the means nor the will to enforce our demands.

It is these reflexes that we need to reprogram and this reality we need to address.

THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE for me to assume the role of third-party evangelist and urge everyone reading this to run for local elective office. But doing so would be silly. Very few of us are in a stage of our lives where we can make the sacrifices required to run a serious campaign. It would also be strategically unrealistic because only a few localities are ripe for third-party challenges. These come about in response to specific local circumstances, a particularly egregious sell-out by local government to a developer, gross financial mismanagement, or when an outstanding community leader has become fed up with the endless capitulations and compromises and is ready to break ranks with the Democrats. Given the required conditions, potentially successful third-party insurgencies are necessarily sporadic and geographically dispersed.

This reality raises a pragmatic question for those of us who are past debating the necessity for independent politics and want to move on to directed action: what are the mechanisms by which we can meaningfully encourage the development of viable independent candidacies?

A useful starting point is provided by the elections section on the Green Party website www.gp.org/elections.html which links to all of the party's local-and-state level candidacies. Many of these campaigns are quixotic, some are naïve, and a small number are disturbingly right-wing. More than a few are impressive and represent precisely the sorts of campaigns that have the potential to form the base of a broader political insurgency. While the majority of these, at the moment, are on the West Coast, the rest are dispersed, including an excellent state organization in Maine, powerful Green voices in Madison, Wisconsin, and in Minneapolis. Other encouraging, albeit losing candidacies include Linda Schade's campaign for Maryland House of Delegates, Jill Stein's campaign for Massachusetts State Legislature, the Brooklyn City Council campaign of Gloria Mattera, a slate of antimachine candidates in Baltimore. Had these candidacies been better known, and had they attracted national support, they might have been successful and we might now be building on their foundation. As it is, they represent promising first steps.

While the Green Party has been by far the most successful of existing progressive third parties at winning local offices, it would be a mistake to limit our attention to it. Doing so would mean ignoring the Labor Party's sophisticated platform and the small but impressive group of union activists working within it. Alas, to repeat, it has yet to run a single candidate nor does its most recent monthly bulletin even mention participation in electoral politics; it needs to be strongly encouraged to use its resources to run serious campaigns.

The Working Families Party is more problematic in its faith-based relation to a "reformable" Democratic Party — precisely that which Harrison demonstrates has led us into the hole we are trying to crawl out of. That said, the WFP should be supported when it runs its own candidates on its own line. Finally, we shouldn't rule out the possibility that the alphabet soup of old left political parties may resurrect themselves and mount credible local candidacies and we should be prepared to support these as well.

As a practical matter, one can advance independent politics by doing nothing more than visiting a few of these sites and making on-line contributions to selected campaigns. The obvious drawback to an individualized, uncoordinated approach is that it will result in duplication of effort as we attempt to determine those candidacies that are most promising. What is needed is an organization that would take responsibility to research insurgent candidates, form a judgment as to which are most viable and worthy of support and disburse funds from a war chest amassed from the pooled contributions of progressives who have committed themselves to supporting the development of independent politics.

The creation of a national network devoted to offering organizational, financial and moral support to independent electoral politics would, even on a relatively small scale, go a long way to creating a climate in which more of us would be willing to make the necessary step from protesting to participation in power. For the majority of us, those who are sympathetic but who are unwilling or unable to take this step, it will give us the opportunity to at least to put our money where our mouth is. Many would be more than willing to contribute generously to this enterprise.

Of course, only a few sponsored candidacies would be successful in each electoral cycle and it is likely that some will turn out to be disappointments. We should not allow these to obscure the "big picture strategy that could lead to a turnaround in American politics" which Conniff and many other progressives now see as the best hope for our future.

While initial progress will be slow, once a critical mass has been reached, the basic dynamics of the partisan equation change and the essential contradictions that lie at the heart of the Democratic coalition become blindingly obvious. A pro-business party supported by labor? A war-mongering party supported by the peace movement? A party complicit in bankruptcy reform claiming to speak for "the middle class"? A party refusing to implement minimal fuel efficiency standards and rejecting the Kyoto accords supported by environmentalists? A party signing off on the racist drug war, a prison population of more than 2.1 million and welfare reform overwhelmingly supported by African Americans and Hispanics? How could we have believed anything so absurd, many of us will ask ourselves in retrospect.

The result will be first a trickle of defections followed by mass exodus as the progressive wing, now seeing a viable electoral alternative, is no longer held captive and coerced into voting against its own interests. A variation on this theme may now playing out in Britain as defections from New Labour mount while the right abandons its traditional alignment with the Tories in order to shore up its investment in the Labour Party. We should not be surprised if something similar happens here — and sooner rather than later.[4]

While we will be pleased to see this future materialize here, it will not come as a complete surprise to those of us who accept Tom Harrison's powerful statement that independent politics are the only game in town. For us, it is long since time we learned the rules and started playing to win.

NOTES

1. On the new left's deficiencies along these lines see Robin Hahnel's "Wheat from Chaff" at www.zmag.org: "Nowhere did the new left create organizational vehicles to participate successfully in electoral politics. Nowhere did the new left succeed in maintaining the libertarian, antimaterialist cultural revolution that accompanied its emergence in the 1960s. And nowhere did the new left establish a solid and lasting base in any significant segment of the body politic." Cynthia Peters addresses related concerns in "Talking Back to Chomsky" at www.chomsky.info/onchomsky/20040427.htm. My attempts to deal with some of these questions can be found at prorev.com/2005/03/beyond-wrong.htm and prorev.com/whyiran.htm.

2. www.progressive.org/blogs05/rcarc.php

3. For a comprehensive treatment of this scandal and a perceptive historical overview of machine politics see Christopher Ketcham, "A Machine Grows in Brooklyn," *Harpers*, December 2004.

4. A similar redrawing of the partisan map occurred in the San Francisco mayoral election where, it appears, a majority of registered Democrats voted for Gonzalez; Newsom's victory was achieved through nearly unanimous Republican support.

The Green Party and the Collapse of the Left

SCOTT MCLARTY

There's lots of good analysis in Thomas Harrison's "The 2004 Elections and the Collapse of the Left" (*NP* 38), especially his point that John Kerry's campaign for the White House pulled the Democrats even further away from any claim to represent progressive ideals.

But if Mr. Harrison had studied the Green Party a little more closely and observed what the party and its candidates really accomplished in 2004, he might have reached some different conclusions about the Greens and third party politics in general.

Mr. Harrison makes the fallacy of associating Green presidential nominee David Cobb with the "safe-states" strategy and of claiming that Ralph Nader, who ran an independent campaign, rejected safe-state voting.

In fact, Mr. Cobb never adhered to a safe-state strategy and campaigned in as many states as possible, including 'battleground' states.

Furthermore, Mr. Nader blessed safe-state voting several times during his campaign, with a particularly ironic quote in a *CounterPunch* interview (8/8/04, www.counterpunch.org/frank08072004.html).

Joshua Frank: "Why, in swing states, where voters may be worried about your candidacy tilting the election to Bush, should people vote for you instead of John Kerry?" Ralph Nader: "If they are worried, let them vote for John Kerry. Voters should follow their conscience."

Mr. Nader expressed the same sentiment in an appearance at Harvard University:

> "How can you sleep at night with the blood of the soldiers who died in Iraq on your hands?" an audience member shouted out. Nader responded by stating that he is certain that Bush is self-destructing, and that those who live in states where Democrats are expected to win by a wide margin should vote Nader/Camejo. (July 23, 2004, www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx? ref=503219)

Nor is it true that the Green Party "lost its nerve and joined the panicky stampede into the Kerry camp" when a majority of Green convention delegates declined to endorse Mr. Nader and instead nominated Mr. Cobb.

Greens who favored David Cobb and running mate Pat LaMarche did so for a variety of reasons, most of them having nothing to do with desire for an Anybody But Bush victory. Some preferred Mr. Cobb's state-based campaign strategy, according to which he pledged to work with state Green Parties in planning how and where he would campaign in each state. Others wanted candidates who had worked their way up through the party — Mr. Cobb had already run for Attorney General of Texas and served as the party's legal counsel; Ms. LaMarch had run for Governor of Maine.

Many Greens believed the party had an obligation to nominate rather than merely endorse, after Mr. Nader decided in early 2004 to run as an independent and announced that he would reject a Green nomination but would accept a Green Party endorsement. For these party members, it was difficult to reconcile "The Green Party must run a presidential candidate" with "The Green Party must back a candidate who is neither registered in the party nor willing to run as a Green nominee."

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Many Greens worried that a Nader endorsement would do little to expand the Green Party or promote local candidates, or might cause ballot line problems, especially after Mr. Nader prohibited some state Green Parties from placing his name on primary ballots. They favored Mr. Cobb because of his pledge to use his campaign to promote state and local Green campaigns and registration in the party.

It's true that Mr. Cobb drew less than a quarter of the number of votes that Mr. Nader received (130,000 versus 550,000), but this is less significant than the fact that Mr. Cobb's and Mr. Nader's totals combined equal only a fraction of 1 percent of all votes cast in 2004.

These numbers would have been minuscule whatever the Green Party's choice of candidates or of its national campaign strategy. Mr. Cobb and Mr. Nader did poorly because the race between Bush and Kerry was especially contentious. A lot of voters who might otherwise have considered voting for either of them were determined to vote John Kerry in order to evict George W. Bush — maybe the worst U.S. president since Richard Nixon — regardless of Mr. Kerry's own anti-progressive positions, and there was nothing Greens could do to persuade them otherwise.

No Green would dispute Tom Harrison's assertion that "a very grim future indeed awaits us if the left does not declare its political independence." But neither "the left" nor the Green Party can compel voters to vote third party if the priority of such voters is to remove a president as awful as Mr. Bush.

The lesson for the Green Party in 2004 has less to do with "what did we do wrong?" than it has to do with accepting that election dynamics differ from year to year. The party needs to come up with alternative ways to keep itself growing when it faces a national election in which it's unlikely to make a dent. At the top of the list: promoting state and local Green candidates, gaining new party registrations, and fundraising.

David Cobb understood this, and stated several times during his campaign that whether he himself received 0.05 percent or 0.5 percent or 1.5 percent was less important than promoting the party and its down-ballot candidates.

Greens should always run a candidate for the White House, in order to take part in the national debate (even when closed out of "The Debates"), to help state parties achieve and maintain ballot access, to provide a leader at the top of the Green ticket, and for the experience of organizing national campaigns. But the Reform Party's schism at the end of the 1990s teaches us the danger of investing a party's destiny in a single personality. In nominating David Cobb, the Green Party repudiated the idea that one candidate in one election is more important than the party itself.

The Green Party might some day be powerful and large enough for a chance to win nationally, but for now Greens run presidential campaigns to build the party, rather than maintain a party merely to run presidential campaigns. Winning the White House is not realistic for at least another generation.

On the other hand, winning some more state legislative seats, a couple of seats in Congress, and the mayoralty of a large city (remember Matt Gonzalez, who drew 47 percent in San Francisco, including a majority of votes cast on election day) are quite achievable for the Green Party in the next ten or fifteen years. But it won't happen if Greens spend all their energy and resources on the presidential spectacle every election cycle.

Finally, there's a gaping hole in Mr. Harrison's essay: the aftermath of the 2004 election. Shortly after November 2, David Cobb announced that, because of widespread reports of election irregularities and evidence that Republican officials had obstructed many voters, especially African Americans and young people, his campaign would contest the results in Ohio and New Mexico.

The recounts in those states were not launched in order to overturn the Bush victory

— Mr. Cobb and other Greens knew this was unlikely — but to advance the Green Party's own agenda for democratic reform and to expose the growing corruption of the electoral process. Rep. John Conyers and other Democrats joined the recount effort in Ohio, but it was obvious that no challenge would have taken place without Mr. Cobb's leadership. It was the Cobb campaign that quickly raised the hundreds of thousands of dollars ecessary for fees and other expenses.

Thanks to the recounts, it's safe to say that David Cobb emerged as one of the real progressive heroes of the 2004 election year, that his challenge proved the vital necessity of a progressive third party, and that the recounts have exorcised the 'spoiler' label that the Green Party has suffered (without justification) since 2000. Greens showed that they were willing to stand up to the GOP long after the Democratic Party and its nominee capitulated.

Mr. Harrison laments that "[t]he third party to which we aspire does not exist." It does exist, and it's Green. Any progressive third party would encounter many of the same dilemmas, frustrations, and controversies that the Green Party faces, and maybe some others, too. (Consider the short life of Tony Mazzocchi's Labor Party.) If we sit on our hands and wait for the perfect third party to surface somewhere before we commit ourselves to building it, another century of narrow, corporate-based Democratic vs. Republican politics will slip by.

Almost Reason Enough

MORRIS SLAVIN

THOMAS HARRISON WRITES that Bush's reelection last November is "the victory of a viciously reactionary Republican administration, perhaps the most cynical, dishonest, and ideologically fanatical in our history."

This is almost reason enough to vote for any opponent the Democrats nominate. Had we a Norman Thomas, or someone like him, to lead even a small socialist party there would have been no reason to vote for any Democratic Party candidate, no matter how virtuous. But given the reactionary political and social atmosphere in the United States today, what can a left, which hardly exists, do? It is true, the Old Left — and here I speak for myself — supports *New Politics*, *Against the Current*, *Dissent*, and, yes, *The Nation*. And the hope is that out of this group a new left will emerge.

No matter how stupid, and backward Kerry's campaign was, his victory would have depended on opponents of the "viciously reactionary Republican" party. I doubt if Kerry would have been free to pursue Bush's war in Iraq for "four years." The voters he would have been forced to lean on for support for any of his policies would have been opponents of the religious fanatics, enemies of Bush's tax policies, haters of feminist rights, and foes of organized labor. In addition, the left could possibly have been revived — if not to its former influence then to a stronger one than it is today. Of course, we could have sat on our hands — and there are times when that is the only alternative — but helping to mobilize Democrats and others helps strengthen such organizations as the ACLU, Nation Associates, NARAL, ACT, and others which may help form a future left.

I doubt if any of the old or new left voted for Kerry except as an alternative against Bush. This would have been no small matter. Reestablishing the "normal" governmental process of many years by defeating the "most…fanatical administration" would have made a difference in many fields.

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Response

THOMAS HARRISON

SCOTT MCLARTY'S CLAIM THAT David Cobb did not support the "safe states" strategy is puzzling. Cobb may have campaigned in as many states as possible, but his message in states that were considered safely "blue" was not the same as the one he pushed in states that were either "red" or borderline: in the former he urged voters to vote Cobb/LaMarche and in the latter he told them to "vote your conscience" — adding that if a voter's conscience said to vote for Kerry, the lesser evil, he/she should do so.

Now in a literal sense, this advice is pointless: should voters ever be asked to vote *against* their conscience? In fact, it was just a wishy-washy way of endorsing the idea that independent political action was only legitimate in 2004 if it did not endanger the possibility of electing a Democrat — a position with fatal consequences for building a left alternative, for reasons I explained at some length in my article. LaMarche, as I recall, even said publicly that if she lived in a red state she would not have voted for herself. Would McLarty have voted for Cobb if he lived, say, in Virginia? I doubt it.

McLarty is right that Nader was often ambiguous or inconsistent about the safe state strategy. Often he sounded as though his mission was to move the Democratic Party to the left, rather than to build an alternative to it. McLarty quotes a remark in which Nader sounds just like Cobb. On the whole, however, Nader argued throughout the campaign that it was a mistake to believe that rallying behind Kerry would do anything other than perpetuate the conservative deadlock of American politics. The "spoiler" charge clearly made him nervous and defensive, but not enough to get him to withdraw his candidacy in the "unsafe" states, as many urged him to do. If Nader did not reject safe state voting, as McLarty alleges, why did the Democratic Party and its liberal and labor supporters spend so much money and effort trying to keep him off the ballot?

McLarty asserts that "neither the left not the Green Party can compel voters — including left voters — to vote third party if the priority of such voters is to remove a president as awful as Mr. Bush." He says that we just have to accept "that election dynamics differ from year to year." The reassuring implication here seems to be that 2004 was an aberration, that by 2008 or 2012, politics will be back to "normal," presumably with much less scary Republicans running for president than Bush and his ilk. In 2004 we had to defeat Bush at any cost, but four years from now things won't be so dire.

Unfortunately, however, as the right grows ever stronger and more aggressive (itself a function, in part, of the left's subordination to the Democrats), we can almost certainly look forward to cries of "Anyone But (Jeb) Bush" or "Anyone But Frist," or Sensenbrenner, or Brownback, or god only knows what loathsome creature will emerge to become the Republicans' standard bearer. Election dynamics change, but there is an obvious trend in one direction: from bad to worse. McLarty's solution — to build the Green Party while foregoing the most attention-getting, potentially educational race of all, the race for the presidency — will not only fail to reverse this trend, it will also limit party-building itself to small-scale accretions.

If third party advocates can never persuade (not "compel") voters to break the lesser-evil habit, we are doomed. It won't be easy, admittedly, but McLarty is effectively giving up in advance. In our effort to influence progressive and discontented voters, what we've got going for us, in a way, is the rottenness of the Demo-

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crats, which would be much clearer to all if the left would stop providing political cover for them. I think that the left *can* make a convincing case to voters that lesser-evilism guarantees rightward drift. A promising beginning was made in 2000, only to be followed, tragically, by the left's retreat to its habitual timid defensiveness at election time.

Duane Campbell seems to think I exaggerate the collapse of the antiwar movement. While he would probably not deny that the movement has shown little sign of life since the Republican National Convention, Campbell insists that this has nothing to do with its relation to the Kerry campaign. Instead, he ascribes what he mildly calls "a new weakness in the antiwar position" to the Iraqi elections and the politics of the insurgency. There can be no doubt that the elections disoriented some sections of the antiwar movement. In addition, the brutally reactionary character of what appear to be the dominant elements in the Iraqi resistance and their targeting of Iraqi civilians have encouraged many progressives to accept the position that the U.S. cannot "just cut and run," that American troops must stay on until "order is restored" and the Baathists and Taliban-style Islamists are defeated.

WHAT CAMPBELL CALLS A "weakness" I would call near-total paralysis of the antiwar movement, beginning with the presidential campaign, during a crucial period in the formation of public opinion concerning the occupation. Campbell does not say where he stands on the issue of immediate withdrawal, but from what he does say, I suspect he is among those who opposed the invasion of Iraq but now favor a gradual pullout and think the U.S. can do some good there. I hope I'm wrong. In any case, it beats me how he can believe that "participation in the presidential election" — in support of a candidate who opposed everything the antiwar movement stood for — "was a vehicle for spreading the antiwar message."

I argued that by subordinating itself to the Kerry campaign, the antiwar movement lost its way, and I would add that it still has not recovered the wasted momentum or cleared up the political confusion that this entailed. In light of the growing public disillusionment with the war, and from the standpoint of the movement's political and moral obligations, this is a disaster. There are plenty of people who understand that the occupation of Iraq is imperialism in its rankest form, that it is all about U.S. power and control of resources, and that it cannot be justified in any way. This sizeable core needs to be mobilized to make the case for immediate withdrawal through militant demonstrations, teach-ins, mass civil disobedience, student strikes — in short, all the tactics used during the Vietnam era. Only in this way can we bring millions more to an awareness that the U.S. military and political presence in Iraq has weakened rather than strengthened secular and democratic elements there, and that instead of effectively combating terror, the occupation has only served to recruit more terrorists.

Campbell's taunt that the strategy of building an independent Left by breaking with the Democrats has been a failure is misdirected because it has scarcely been put to the test. The insider strategy he advocates, on the other hand, has been one long story of abysmal failure; it's been tried over and over again and the record could not be clearer. I appreciate John Halle's positive comments about my article, and I think he makes some strong arguments of his own. As he wittily suggests, the politics of people like Campbell are "faith-based," and faith is notoriously resistant to evidence and rational argument. At the moment, third party advocates must swim against the stream. Blind faith in the Democratic Party, and the irrational conviction that there can be no life outside it, will die hard. All we can do is to keep chipping away at the great monolith of American politics, looking for points of stress and preparing for the day when it will split wide open.

Introduction to Mario Savio Speech

ROBERT COHEN

THIS PAST FALL, VETERANS of Berkeley's Free Speech Movement (FSM) held a week-long series of panels and political rallies to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Berkeley student revolt and to raise awareness of the recent restrictions of civil liberty that have been a product of President George W. Bush's War on Terror. We mark this anniversary by bringing into print for the first time a speech FSM leader Mario Savio (1942-1996) made at Queens College on December 11, 1964.

This speech came only three days after the FSM had won its major victory for campus free speech rights, when the Berkeley faculty — assembled in its Academic Senate — finally and overwhelmingly endorsed the FSM demand that the content of speech not be restricted at the university. This victory emerged after a semester of exhausting and exhilarating mobilizations of the student body. It took a nonviolent 32-hour blockade around a police car, a student strike, and the occupation of the administration building (culminating in some 800 arrests) to overcome the University of California administration's resistance to allowing students to continue using the campus as a base for political organizing — and especially for organizing civil rights protests that involved civil disobedience.

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Mario Savio speaking at Columbia University, 1964. Photo: Art Gatti.

At the time of the Queens College speech, Mario did not know yet whether the FSM's free speech victory would prove enduring or whether the UC Board of Regents would in its mid-December 1964 meeting reverse that victory by overruling the faculty and enforcing the campus regulations restricting the content of political speech on campus. Mario alludes to this concern about the Regents in his speech, a reminder that the battle for free speech seemed by no means over when he came east. A week after Mario's Queens speech, the Board of Regents, though expressing support for UC President Clark Kerr and affirming existing campus regulations, also pledged for the first time that UC rules on speech would not violate the First and Fourteenth Amendments. The board was in its own grudging and ambiguous way conceding that it would not dare to explicitly overrule the faculty by turning back the clock on free speech. The FSM's free speech victory would stand.

Savio's Queens College speech was part of a campus tour that he and other FSM leaders — Suzanne Goldberg, Bettina Aptheker, and Steve Weissman — made to spread the word of the Berkeley revolt to other campuses and to raise funds for the legal defense of those UC student protesters who had been arrested. The trip was paid for by Les Crane's television talk show on the ABC network, which had invited these FSMers to appear on the show to discuss the Berkeley revolt.

Unknown to Mario at that time, the FBI monitored him and the other FSM leaders on this tour and planted hostile questions in the press, which generated negative media coverage of the tour. In fact, at the news conference Mario held at JFK airport, FBI special agents attended "under the guise of newspaper reporters." This was only the start of years of FBI work against Savio, which included placing him on a list of national security threats, making pretext calls to his family members, and scouring the country for "any information relating to Savio which might connect him with any subversive groups." The FBI mindset is captured aptly in a December 30, 1964, memo from the Bureau's Cincinnati office that made Mario sound like a public enemy. That office had been contacted by the President of Ohio State University, who was worried that Mario might be invited to his campus by students battling to lift restrictions on their free speech rights. In response, Cincinnati FBI agents wrote the Bureau's San Francisco office, requesting "any information of an adverse nature regarding Savio's character or morals. In addition, any derogatory information from public sources concerning Savio would be welcomed."

This was the FBI's negative way of acknowledging that the protests at Berkeley symbolized a new and effective form of campus militancy. The FSM signaled the dawn of a new era in American student politics, when New Left activists began to use mass civil disobedience on campus to empower students, a tactic that would spread across the United States in the mid- and late 1960s as the movement against the war in Vietnam mobilized college youth.

As for the 1964 campus tour that took Mario and fellow FSM leaders to Harvard, Columbia, Brandeis, the University of Michigan, and Queens College, it proved a very successful event. As Bettina Aptheker put it, "everywhere we went we were greeted as heroes, with standing-room-only crowds of thousands of students (and some faculty). It was a jubilant time. As a result of the FSM… schools across the country changed their regulations concerning freedom of speech, and I think all of us believed at the time that the reception we received on our tour had something to do with this."

Recovering this speech, however, enables us to connect not only with the FSM and a powerful moment in this history of social protest, but also with Mario himself as one of the most effective insurgent voices of 1960s America. Mario, a veteran of Mississippi Freedom Summer, had been influenced by the highly democratic style of leadership and oratory pioneered by Bob Moses and the early SNCC. Mario did not harangue people in his speeches, but instead used a narrative style free of cant, and dogma to promote dialogue and reflection. While radically egalitarian in his social and political views and in his disdain for UC's bureaucracy and hierarchical decision-making, Mario refused to let President Kerr get away with depicting himself as the defender and the FSM as the revolutionary enemy of the university.

In fact, Mario at Queens would argue that the FSM was traditionalist in its approach to the university, standing up for the free speech rights of its members, the community of scholars and students, while Kerr, the "revolutionist," was striving to replace that community with a corporate multiversity that devoted its service and subordinated its freedoms to the military-industrial complex. This kind of playing against stereotypes, refusing to be pigeon-holed politically, saying the unexpected, was vintage Savio, as was his use of humor, his serious engagement with issues of freedom and constitutional rights, and his unpretentious invocation of literature, in this case *Moby Dick*, with which he would end his speech.

For all his intellectual depth, Mario would nonetheless be derided by UC administrators for using "the language of the gutter" during the FSM. On one level, such dismissive comments suggest that the FSM's political foes had no understanding of the Berkeley rebellion's most eloquent orator. Mario often spoke the language of the First Amendment, the language of moral, even existential rebellion, the language of the civil rights movement calling on individuals and communities to resist unjust authority.

But the Queens speech is a reminder that the administration's negative reading of Mario's oratory was not entirely groundless. Mario brought to the student movement a lack of deference not only to university authorities but to the conventions of academic speech. Mario spoke with candor, reported without censorship what those at the bottom of the university community were experiencing and saying. Thus he told the Queens College audience that a UC student alienated by university bureaucracy had spoken of feeling "shat upon." Mario's willingness to speak in this way shocked administrators, and one can see in this a clash between the button-down campus world of the 1950s — the era in which many of UC's officials had begun their administrative careers — and the new campus world of the 1960s, which was freer, far more iconoclastic, and less proper.

College students today, if they know of Mario Savio at all, know him through history textbooks or the documentary film *Berkeley in the 1960s* that quote his most famous speech, the one he gave at Berkeley on December 2, 1964, just before the FSM's culminating sit-in. Here Mario denounced the UC administration as "an autocracy which runs this university," and called on students to put their "bodies on the gears" of the heartless university machine. So that "unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from operating at all!" Because this speech had Mario at his most defiant and dramatic, it works perfectly for historians and filmmakers searching for a symbol of 1960s protest. But in some ways that speech was far less typical of Mario's FSM oratory than was his Queens College speech. The December 2 speech had at its heart militancy and conclusions expressed angrily, while the Queens speech and most of Mario's dozens of other FSM speeches were more about evidence and calmly making the case against the university administration for its free speech violations, abuses of due process, and refusal to engage in dialogue about campus rules.

At Queens, and in many of his FSM orations, Mario effectively used a narrative mode of discourse to document the arrogance of power that the Berkeley insurgents confronted from UC and state leaders. Thus Mario told the Queens crowd of his futile phone calls to California governor Pat Brown and his aide, futile because Brown was unwilling to listen to the protesters' grievances, siding instead with Kerr and refusing even to consider that those on the other side of the Berkeley dispute might deserve a hearing. Similarly, the Queens speech gives us the fullest account ever published of Mario's unsuccessful attempts to get Kerr and his close faculty ally Robert Scalapino to allow him (Mario) to speak at the meeting they were organizing on the FSM crisis at Berkeley's Greek Theater. With humor and irony Mario's narrative evokes the arrogance of Kerr and Scalapino in planning a campus-wide meeting on the free speech crisis in which students, the central party to the dispute, would be barred from speaking. The headline-making news from that meeting came as Mario, defying Kerr and Scalapino, walked to the podium to speak, and was dragged away by the police before he could utter a word, in front of some 7,000 shocked students and faculty — an event which may have done more than all others to discredit the UC administration and carry the FSM to victory. Mario's speech at Queens makes clear, however, that his defiance was not reckless or impulsive; that he had first tried to get permission to speak, leading us to see that UC's leaders were undone as much by their own intransigence as by Mario's defiance.

The Queens College speech was a homecoming event for Mario since he had grown up in Queens and briefly attended Queens College before transferring to Berkeley. It was at the Queens campus that Mario took his first steps towards political activism, traveling with a student group to do antipoverty work in Mexico in the summer of 1963 — and in fact it was a fellow volunteer from that summer project, Art Gatti, a lifelong friend of Savio's, who captured Mario's Queens College speech on tape, and made it possible to bring this speech into print. The speech reflects Savio's devotion to free speech, and a critique of the corporate university that still resonates today.

* * *

Mario's speaking style tended to be extemporaneous. He usually worked from notes rather than a prepared text and so converting it to the printed page requires some abridging of his remarks, a task complicated in this case by the uneven audio quality of the 40-year old tape of the Queens speech. What follows is not a full verbatim account of the speech but a somewhat abridged version that faithfully relays its central ideas and texture.

The Berkeley Knowledge Factory

Mario Savio

JUST ONE LITTLE NOTE of explanation. When I was here [as a student at Queens College] I was Bob Savio. My parents had always called me Bob. And when I had to register for the draft I had a hell of a time proving who I was [because his birth certificate named him Mario Robert Savio] and I found out then that I had to go by the name I was given originally, my first name [Mario], and I have come to like it very much.

I've chosen the title "The Berkeley Knowledge Factory" because I thought it would strike some responsive chords among people going to Queens College. [University of California] President [Clark] Kerr is kind of an ideologist for a new view of the university which we hope can stop before it gets started. In a book that I recommend to everyone here, *Uses of the University*, President Kerr describes what he calls the multiversity and using the following metaphor, the following very frightening metaphor, he called it a knowledge factory. He said that it has a president, a president of the university. There's a board of directors, a Board of Regents. It has employees, the faculty members — I'm sure faculty members here don't like that; they don't like it there [at Berkeley] either. And it has raw materials, the students, especially the undergraduates, and these are molded into finished products — two batches every year. The kind of talent necessary to run it are managerial skills, skills of labor-management mediation and arbitration. And President Kerr is well suited for this kind of thing. He was professor of industrial relations. He's had a wealth of experience in labor-management negotiations and as I say he is very skilled in the kind of management that he describes in *Uses of the University* and in a book that he collaborated on — and I mean collaborated — *Industrialism and Industrial Man*.

We have counterposed to this a more traditional view of the university. It turns out that we're the traditionalists and he's the revolutionist. Our view of the university is a community of scholars and students completely free to inquire and to profess — that's what the word professor means — to inquire and profess all points of view, intellectual points of view, political points of view, and that the university best serves the community when it has the freedom [for such inquiry and expression].

In President Kerr's view, the university serves society in a somewhat different way. And he describes the warm and intimate relationship which exists between the knowledge factory and what he calls, and has been called now by many, the industrial-military complex. That the university has its defense contracts and is mostly concerned with the graduate schools (that's a problem you don't have here [at Queens College] the way they have it there [at Berkeley]. That has two products. It has the students, especially the undergraduates, who are turned out as finished products at the end of four years. And then the graduate students turn out a product which is sold at a higher rate: knowledge.

Mario Savio, a veteran of the Bay Area and southern civil rights movements, was the Free Speech Movement's most influential orator and its most famous organizer. Before coming to Berkeley, he attended Manhattan College and Queens College. Savio received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in physics at San Francisco State University and taught mathematics, logic, and interdisciplinary courses in science and literature at Sonoma State University. His contribution to a symposium on "The New Radicals" appeared in New Politics*, Fall 1965.*

President Kerr says it now has the largest percentage of the gross national product, knowledge is the largest percentage of the gross national product. That's what he maintains, and that therefore he is a great industrial leader. A captain of bureaucracy — I didn't invent the phrase, I give credit to Hal Draper; it's a very apt description. Our traditionalist view would liken the university to a classical Christian concept of men in the world but not of the world. That it [the university] exists. That it has safeguards built right about it. So that it's protected, it receives financial assistance from the state but it's not dictated to in the matter of what is to be discussed, how it's to be discussed, what is to be taught. And that those people who are to run the university are faculty, in consultation with, and giving responsible voice to, students. That the administration is to take an ancillary role, assistance the administration should be to the university proper, maintaining sidewalks clean, seeing that there are good buildings. If the society at large insists upon grading — which is often degrading — then the university can arrange for how many credits courses are supposed to be. But the important matters of educational policy and the regulation of speech and to its form, these are matters for the university community and not for the administration.

It turns out that we're the traditionalists and he's the revolutionist.

The view that Kerr presents reminds me of nothing so much as a Brave New World, that only those ideas, and only that mode of presentation which is safe can be permitted. But the First Amendment exists to protect consequential ideas, exists to protect speech with consequences. So on the Berkeley campus the aura of a free university could have been maintained if students wanted to speak on two kinds of matters. If they wanted to advocate the status quo — Republican or Democrat — or if they wanted to advocate changes in the social structure so radical as to not be about to come off. Civil rights people advocating real things like picket lines and sit-ins and changes in discriminatory hiring policies, and those things that we can bring off this week and next week, and we've been bringing them off for quite a few weeks now. This the university, because it maintains an intimate connection with the financial community, can't tolerate — it would rock the boat. The university then is possibly in the position of having its appropriations reduced or not having quite so many Defense contracts. The state government, the Democratic Party of California, these people they can't take too much of this boat rocking. They can't take too much of the pressure from people like Senator [William] Knowland and Assemblyman [Don] Mulford. They can't take too much pressure from the Republican Party in California which tends to be *pretty conservative*.

And so the university reserves to itself the right under certain circumstances to regulate the content of speech. And I'll try to explain the circumstances, the whole question of freedom of advocacy. We hold that only the courts are justified in regulating the content of speech. And that the form [of speech] should be decided upon by faculty and students. And that the form should be decided upon in such a way as 1) to encourage political expression; 2) to see to it that the normal educational functions of the university be not interfered with. But on the question of the content of speech only the courts [can rule].

The university by contrast, I should say the administration, the administration maintains that students may not on the campus advocate actions off campus which are themselves unlawful or have actions flowing out of them which are unlawful. I wonder what they are talking about. Civil rights activity in the Bay Area would be crippled if students could not advocate sit-ins — where people are often arrested (I know I was, at the Sheraton Palace [protest against racially discriminatory hiring practices]). They would really be crippled if they couldn't advocate picket lines, and very often illegal actions occur on picket lines. There already are laws governing speech. Speech under certain circumstances is illegal. And when it is illegal, the courts provide proper punishment. It is not the business of the university to be doing their job. It is not the business of the university to be deciding that the legislature has not already set sufficiently strict barriers about speech. It is not the business of the university to be interpreting the powers of the court to be providing punishment for transcending those barriers about speech. The university wants to do both. Neither the faculty nor the Berkeley students are about to let them do either.

I'D LIKE TO NOW go through a little bit deeper description of the manner in which President Kerr and the other university managers had a plot to manage the university. He describes in his book [that] he divides the university community into the managed and the managers. The managers are the administration and the managed is everybody else. And one of the methods President Kerr has used, and this he describes at great length, is the following. One of his peculiar skills, the mediator, he talks to the governor, to the legislature, the Board of Regents, the faculty and the students. There's only one person who talks to all of them. That's President Kerr. So there's only one source from which they're all getting information. It ends up that he develops a kind of monopoly on the information they get.

I was speaking with [California] Governor [Edmund "Pat"] Brown over the phone, and I pointed out "Wouldn't it be a good idea if he heard from the other side in the dispute?" And he said "no (at that time) it would not be appropriate." The next day, it was a bit later than that, I spoke with his executive secretary (apparently it was no longer appropriate for me to speak with Governor Brown) and his executive secretary said that "it was the opinion of the governor's office that it was a controversy without parties, and he had already spoken to President Kerr and was fully confident President Kerr was handling the matter. That the council of department chairmen had been set up to handle the matter by President Kerr, that the governor was fully confident that President Kerr was doing a good job. He'd let the president handle the case." I pointed out that the president's been a party to the dispute. That was a scandal, [to imply bias on the part of] the president of the University of California.

Their problem has been that when complaints occur — this is what a bureaucrat does — when complaints occur they don't ask, "What are you complaining about?" But [instead they ask] how they can stop you from complaining? What can I do [to stop the complaining]" See? It ends up that President Kerr has succeeded in devising a technique designed to stop the students from complaining. If you keep them from complaining it's not too important what they're complaining about.

President Kerr, in addition to all his connection with all these famous people, all these official types, has had control over the press. See? And so there appeared, among other things, a series of articles in the *San Francisco Examiner*. One of them named a particular person who was bringing us orders from Cuba. [Laughter] Somebody told me about the article. I was in southern California when the article was printed. It was the person who was named who told me about it. I was walking down Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley and someone came up to me, a fellow I'd never met before, a Cuban student at the University. And he said, "look at this article" I looked at it. And he said, "well that's me. I didn't get any money!" [Laughter] Well it's one thing when they exaggerate but when they start making up stories! We're going to sue them for libel. [Laughter]

Then they have another technique. And they've used this very well until we shafted them, which I'll describe. The president has to be able to maintain the image that he consulted faculty [since] it's a university. It turns out that [there is] one group of quasi-faculty members over whom he has considerable control because their interests coincide more with his than with the faculty's, namely the department chairmen. So I mention in particular, single out for special note, Professor [Robert] Scalapino, chairman of the department of political science. I've got to explain something about his title first because that really points up what the problem is. He's the chairman of political science. First, political science [and what it] means. In America, there is no political philosophy associated with political science. That's the first problem [with] political science. In America political ideas of all kind, the idea of political ideas this hasn't been popular at all. So there isn't much politics in political science. And then *chairman* of political science. The problem with chairmen is that they're administrators. They're more closely plugged in to the administration than to the faculty. And the result, Professor Scalapino became chairman of the council of *chairmen*. [Laughter]

On Monday last, a meeting was called at the Greek Theatre on the Berkeley campus. And Ralph Gleason [one of the few Bay Area newspaper columnists friendly to the FSM] described it as appropriate for the Greek Theatre because it was a genuine tragedy. Before the meeting I asked President Kerr if I could make a response at the meeting. And he may have more style but we have quite a bit, we have a kind of monopoly on drama on the campus…President Kerr said, "Well this meeting isn't being called by me but by the council of department chairmen" — which was true in only the most formal sense. Well I said "oh," you know it's hard to argue with him. I pointed out that it wasn't completely honest [arranging a meeting in which he was] excluding one of the parties in the dispute [from the right to speak]. He said, "you'll have to speak to the department chairmen." So I went to where they were meeting and there were a couple of them who had assembled. This is some time before the [Greek Theatre] meeting. I presented the case to them. They said "Well we can't help you. You'll have to see the man in charge, Professor Scalapino," the chairman of the chairmen.

> It is not the business of the university to be deciding that the legislature has not already set sufficiently strict barriers about speech.

I saw Professor Scalapino. Professor Scalapino said, "Well no, you see." These were his words: "This will be a structured meeting not an open forum." All right. We argued with him in some way. He said, "Well you see it is a faculty meeting. You're a student. It's really not appropriate for you to speak at that meeting." Well, just then to my left was Professor John Leggett of the Sociology department. And he said to Scalapino, "I'm a faculty member and I'd like to speak at the meeting. Can I speak at that meeting?" And Professor Scalapino said "It's a structured meeting not an open forum. It would really be inappropriate [Laughter]. The meeting was not an open forum." We were clear on that by then. [Laughter] We fought it out for a while. And behind the Greek Theatre stage it was getting quite messy. There were other department chairmen there. Some of them had just been totally snowed by Scalapino.

So I waited down in the audience near the stage. And I made it clear to Scalapino when I talked to him when he said I couldn't make a response "Well I just want to make an announcement," I told him. I pointed out that we're having a meeting at the end of this meeting lower down on campus so that people could come and hear our side of it. I made it clear I only wanted to make an announcement. And that too was not appropriate. So I sat down near the stage and then I realized it was going to be necessary to get that microphone. [Laughter]. At first I thought in terms of rushing it. And I spoke to a friend, Tom Miller, a member of campus CORE who had experience with rushing a microphone [Laughter]. And I said "Well you can run interference with the department chairmen while I get [the microphone]. [Laughter]

Then Bettina Aptheker had an excellent idea. She said, "Why don't you just walk up there [to the stage] very slowly? I'm sure that all the students out there [in the Greek Theatre audience] will want you to speak." And so that's what we did. I walked by the stage. I waited until President Kerr had concluded his remarks — kind of half and half fabrication and platitude. [Laughter] Then Professor Scalapino, who had spoken previously on *law and order*, he got up to adjourn the meeting. So the meeting was adjourned and I walked up to the microphone. And I didn't even say a word. I think the *Times* article had said I was catching my breath [getting ready] to speak. And then there were these three policemen and there was one with his arm around my throat. [Laughter] They could have done lots of things if they really wanted [to halt this use of police violence]. President Kerr could have gotten up and said "Ok Mario you can speak." And that wouldn't have worked nearly so well [for the FSM] as what they did do. They detain you without arrest. And I insisted, "either let me go or arrest me." That kind of thing. And our lawyer pointed out they were abridging civil liberties. And there were people banging on the door [of the room on the stage in which the police had dragged him] to get me out. So [the police released me] I went up and made the announcement.

Professor [Joseph] Tussman, chairman of the philosophy department was one of those most concerned that I speak. And he said "Well Scalapino didn't tell me anything about that. I didn't know you'd been denied the right to speak here. And I know that if I and other department chairmen who feel as I do had known that you had wanted to speak we would never have denied you the right." And then they started to realize what was going on. And they held an emergency meeting of the council of department chairmen with gasps and tremendous splits at that meeting. They really turned out. And that was the beginning of the demise of the Scalapino-Kerr axis. [Laughter].

Early the next day, it was the date of the Academic Senate meeting [of December 8, 1964], I saw Professor Tussman and he was jubilant. I'd never seen him so happy. The man had finally been freed. He'd been able to do what he'd wanted to do all along, support the full free speech demands that we'd been making. He'd been so convinced prior to that if you don't settle the thing this [Kerr's] way then there are going to be further riots on the campus and they'd cut off the money from Sacramento and so on. The man had finally been freed.

He hadn't wanted to go along with the Scalapino and Kerr plan. You know this is what they said at that meeting at the Greek Theatre. They presented their five points. Their plans always seemed to have five points. [Laughter]. And only one of them, number two, even hinted at the issue. And it said we're going to wait for a meeting, for a report from the Academic Senate's academic freedom committee. We had been debating the issues, waxing eloquent for three months on the issue of free speech. This plan was going to cut off all dialogue now, put the thing to rest. It was a way of stopping them from complaining without finding out what they were complaining about. That's what they were going to do. And the next day [after the Greek Theatre meeting] they were going to present the plan to the Academic Senate, which met the very next day, Tuesday, for ratification. Rubber stamp congress. It was going to be a *fait accompli*. They were going to present it to the Academic Senate for approval, a plan which was being backed by President Kerr and the unanimous declaration of the department chairmen. You know that's called democratic centralism. [Laughter]

So they were going to go to the Academic Senate for the plan to be ratified. And Professor Tussman, he was so relieved. He was so happy and I was so happy because there were many really, really good men among the council of department chairmen who didn't have the political slickness of Scalapino, weren't as clever as Kerr, who really thought that this plan was necessary in order to insure peace on the campus. Really, what was really necessary was listening to the free speech demands of the students. That was the shafting at the Greek Theatre.

Now we have the problem with the Board of Regents. On the next day the Academic Senate in the most heavily attended meeting [of the Berkeley faculty] ever recorded voted 824-115 to support the Free Speech Movement demands. It was magnificent. Now the faculty and students are really united on the issue that only the courts not the university, under no circumstances can the university regulate the content of speech. The faculty and students powerfully united. The matter is coming up before the Board of Regents on December 18th. And technically they have the power to repudiate the faculty position. And some of their members, [Regents] Hearst, Chandler, Rafferty, these are people who don't like our having this free speech because of the civil rights movement and the fact that we advocate that sort of thing. But to me it would be unthinkable for them to repudiate that mandate of the faculty. And yet before we can be too optimistic we should think back upon the [Loyalty] Oath fight [the purging during the McCarthy era of faculty who refused to sign an anti-Communist Loyalty Oath]…where the faculty were decimated. The administration had no concern that they were destroying the university. They lost some of their best faculty members. And we're hoping that they're not going to try something like that again.

I'D LIKE BEFORE CLOSING to deal with just one more matter, the motivation of the students. Jack Weinberg, a key starter of this movement, a brilliant tactician, the fellow who was in that [police] car for 32 hours [during the October 1-2 sit-in around the police car which had helped launch the FSM]. He was working late one night after the October demonstrations with a student who just joined the movement. And the student said to him "You know Jack I don't give a damn about free speech." Jack was really surprised.

The student didn't mean that he didn't want free speech, although that [the free speech issue] wasn't what had brought him into it [the FSM]. Jack was quite surprised and asked him what was it [that had brought him into the movement]. And the student said, "I am sick and tired of being shat upon." That is the issue. For instance, a totally unresponsive bureaucracy, a managerial conception of the university which results in a student body terribly alienated from the administration and until recently from the faculty. No one really gives a damn about undergraduate education, not really, because the product coming out of the graduate school brings a higher price.

I think the clearest description of the depths of this alienation would be a description of the last [November 1964] Regents meeting in which the Regents adopted this policy that we're protesting. We turned in all kinds of petitions, we'd be working with passion for two months to get our free speech. And five spaces had been reserved for us in the press gallery. We'd made a request to appear before the Regents and present our case. We're sitting there and there was this long oval table around about which were seated the members of the Board of Regents. This thick pile rug. All the sounds were muffled in the room. And above the table long fluorescent fixtures covered in one of those translucent plastic shades so that even the lights were confusing.

There was one member of the Board speaking in monotonous low tones citing off a list of numbers. At first I couldn't understand what he was saying and I tried to. He explained how it was that the university was coming along. He was describing the progress of the investments of the University of California. He was describing how its endowments were increasing, how its alumni were supporting it in this way, and was reciting these figures as evidence of how well the university was doing.

Then it was President Kerr's turn and he stood up. And he had his secretary there. And he had her pass out to the members of the Board thick packets, folders containing all of the petitions, letters, recommendations and plans for free speech…Then he says "gentlemen the issues are complex and subtle and you may want time to study them in some detail after this meeting. That's why I've prepared for you packets. But for now I just have two recommendations." And he presented the first, which was to stiffen the recommendations an Academic Senate committee on student conduct had made concerning eight suspended students [this was the Heyman report of the Academic Senate which Kerr viewed as too lenient in its punishment of FSM leaders]. The Board of Regents without discussion, with *no* discussion, voted unanimously to accept that recommendation. Then he had a recommendation concerning free speech. He said, "well these are complicated matters, where the microphones go and things like that. That doesn't interest you. This is one main question, the constitutional question," with the general counsel cutting in with what he had prepared more than a month in advance. This recommendation had two parts.

The first was an endorsement of existing university regulations. And then a policy of advocacy, that in certain circumstances the university could indeed regulate the content of speech. And then the first discussion. One of the members of the Board asked that the question be divided to hold these discussions. On the first part the vote was unanimous. On the second part there were two dissenters who thought the policy [of the university on political advocacy] too liberal. And that was it. He concluded in ten minutes upsetting what we'd been working on for more than two months. And then he just sat down.

You try to picture how, I mean it seemed Kafkaesque, a frightening thing. We'd made use of every official channel open to us. We followed the channels through to the very end. We'd opened up some new channels, the Committee on Campus Political Activity and the Heyman Committee — that's that Academic Senate Committee on Student Conduct, those came out of the agreement we'd signed [with Kerr, ending the police car sit-in] on October 2nd. We followed those channels through to their conclusion. All these channels proved fruitless, totally fruitless. All doors were closed to us. Those least inclined to civil disobedience, the Goldwater supporters, they [along with hundreds of other FSM activists] sat in at Sproul Hall and were arrested. All channels were closed to us. Jack has described it not so much as a political revolt but rather as an existential one. We wanted to be heard, someone should listen to us. So we went into Sproul Hall [and sat-in on December 2, 1964, sparking the largest mass arrest of students on a U.S. college campus].

"Woe unto him who would pour oil on the waters when God had brewed them into a gale."

THERE IS A QUOTATION from the ninth chapter of *Moby Dick*. [Laughter] It's a very serious book. There is a quotation from the ninth chapter of *Moby Dick* which I think is very appropriate, kind of our motto: "Woe unto him who would pour oil on the waters when God had brewed them into a gale."

Art for the People? Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "The Gates"

Jesse Lemisch

HOLY SAFFRON! FROM February 12 to 27, New York City's Central Park was the site of an exhibition called "The Gates: Central Park New York 1979-2005," by the artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude (C/J-C). The Gates consisted of 7503 vinyl structures straddling 23 miles of park pathways, each gate 16 feet high, resting on steel bases (the equivalent, the city boasted, of two thirds of the steel used in the Eiffel Tower), with orange drapes (described by C/J-C as "saffron") hanging down from the tops. This thing was ardently and uncritically supported and promoted by the *New York Times*, the local TV stations, NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and a private entity that has taken the Park somewhat out of public control, the Central Park Conservancy (CPC).

As we will see, the CPC offers a local example of the worldwide privatization of the commons. In this "public-private partnership," CPC's "Corporate Partners" include Bloomberg, J.P. Morgan Chase, Citigroup, Consolidated Edison, ABC, Prudential, Goldman Sachs, Martha Stewart Living, NY Stock Exchange Foundation, Pfizer, and others.[1] (The Board of Trustees includes, among others, such right-wing types as Richard Gilder, founder of the Manhattan Institute, and John Stossel of ABC).[2] CPC has taken what should be public decisions out of public hands. And it was the boast of C/J-C that no public money was spent on The Gates: the artists' unexplained calculations indicated that they had laid out from their own pockets 21 million dollars plus 3 million for various expenses (See below for a debunking of this claim.)

For the *New York Times*, The Gates was a mini-WMD moment of uncritically retailing official handouts (with chief art critic Michael Kimmelman playing Judith Miller). Along with other media, the *Times* was largely unwilling to look beyond official puffery.[3] With a compliant press unwilling to investigate the financial arrangements, it is impossible at this point to know just what scandals lay behind this event.[4]

When asked about the meaning of The Gates (or, often, when not asked), C/J-C repeatedly peddled delphic and opaque statements, for example, "Every true artist does the same. We create . . . works for ourselves and our friends, and if the public enjoys it, that is only a bonus but that is not created for the public."[5] The CPC's FAQ put out similar answers in the third person: "The Gates have no purpose, they are only a work of art . . . As all true artists do, they create their art for themselves, if other people like it, it is only a bonus . . . There was no graffiti problem at previous projects because the visitors are touched by the beauty of the art. Beauty is disarming . . . " (The pomposity of all this was matched in lesser ways, too. C/J-C insisted that The Gates were "saffron," which is in fact a kind of yellow. The *Times* slavishly followed this nomenclature while millions of ordinary empirical folk poured through the park and saw that The Gates were clearly orange.)[6]

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A frequent visitor to the park, I was among the first of the millions who would see The Gates, one of 450,000 people the CPC estimates came to the park the first Sunday, February 13.[7] I spent a couple of hours looking at The Gates. I walked my usual route, the better to judge the affect of the installation on familiar scenes: enter at West 72nd Street opposite the Dakota, south to the Sheep Meadow, east to the roller dancing area, northeast past the band shell, down to Bethesda Fountain, and back west along the 72nd Street Transverse. Surprised by the enormous disparity between my experience and the media paean, I wrote up a short critical account. This was posted on the H-Net American Studies list on February 14, and on Portside on February 16, and later the same day on Z-Net. In the weeks following, there was much debate, particularly on the American Studies list. Below I present my original critique (I), then parts of the ensuing debate (II), and a short conclusion (III). Throughout, I add later clarification and comments in headnotes and/or in brackets in the text.

I. My Original Critique

Christo/Jeanne-Claude, "The Gates," a critical view (posted on H-Amstdy on February 14; submitted to Portside on February 13, posted there (www.lists.portside.org/mailman/htdig/portside/Week-of-Mond-20050214/007277.html) and on Znet on February 16 (www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=7259) (All Portside postings are available at www.portside.org; for Znet see www.zmag.org)

Dear Portside:

> Media coverage of "The Gates," which opened yesterday in Central Park, has been utterly uncritical. I saw The Gates today and offer below a critical view. I hope you will post it, both to offer a preliminary critique and to kick off discussion: leftists should develop . . . distinctive view[s] of this phenomenon.
>
> Jesse Lemisch

* * *

I've been dismayed by the media's uncritical adoration of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "The Gates," which I saw in Central Park today. In the arts, as in politics, the media are often content to retail official handouts. This is an attempt to provoke some more critical discussion than I've heard.

I firmly believe in the complex of ideas around art enhancing our perception of reality. To take one related example: some years back, I [walked through] Red Grooms's subway car, full of wonderful New York stereotypes in three dimensions. After that, you couldn't look at New Yorkers in the street, or in subway cars, without seeing them in some ways through Grooms's lens. [And I enjoyed Jeff Koons's floral "Puppy" (2000) at Rockefeller Center.]

So I have no objection to the general idea, nor do I object to the careful use of Central Park that has been made by this project. (I don't see here any of the kinds of obstruction issues that were raised in the 80s around Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc.") But, as I say, I am concerned about the uncritical adoration. What we have heard from Christo/Jeanne-Claude is contentless claptrap: art is art; we have no purpose; we do this for ourselves and don't care whether other people like it; etc.

One of the justifications offered has been that "The Gates" is not only art, but . . . a great public event. [Much of the praise for The Gates skips over aesthetic matters, leaving the exhibit to stand (or fall) as an event.] Certainly [it looked like a great public event] today. But Central Park is hospitable to some public events and inhospitable to others. It should be kept in mind that Central Park is partly privatized, under the control of the Central Park Conservancy. Readers may recall that the great antiwar demonstration of August 29, 2004 was prevented from going to Central Park by the Conservancy and city government, and the organizer, United for Peace and Justice, yielded.

Nonetheless many of us (estimates indicated about 25,000 all told, though at different times) did make our way to the Great Lawn on that day, and it was just glorious. A sixties be-in; warm feelings; clown shows and Billionaires for Bush; pot and nudity; and all over the Great Lawn, political debate. (All this was watched over by the Fuji blimp, which Fuji had graciously given to the New York Police Dept. to facilitate their surveillance.)[8] In short, what does it mean that the Central Park Conservancy says yes to C/J-C, and no to a great political event?

In the arts, as in politics, the media are often content to retail official handouts.

There was no political debate in Central Park today. Nor, interestingly, was there much discussion of art. Indeed, the snatches of always wonderful New York conversation heard today — "I'm getting more confrontational"; "there aren't many Jews in Vietnam" — rarely included comment about The Gates. I think we all enjoyed them, but they were nowhere near as great as the hype had suggested they would be, and people didn't have much to say about them. Indeed, I spent a large part of my time in the park enjoying the weekly roller dancing, with great music, wonderful exhibitionism, cross-racial and cross-generational partipation, and sexual frisson. I like The Gates, but the roller dancing (which has been penned up and restricted over the years) is more compatible with my own ideas of what makes New York great. [Similarly, I think of the great annual Greenwich Village Halloween Parade — a celebration of deviance — as deeply New York, in contrast with the mainstream Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.]

Then there is the money question. Christo has been working like crazy, grinding out drawings, some of which sell for as much as $600,000. Much has been made of C/J-C laying out 21-24 million dollars to get this thing done; but they will clearly come out way ahead. And of course the value of the Christos already owned by Mayor Bloomberg will be enhanced. Indeed — not to introduce a vulgar economic determinism — the whole thing reeks of enormous profit and conflict of interest, and the media hasn't even considered the question.

In short: I like The Gates, but it's not the big deal it's been made out to be, and there has been no serious discussion so far. I hope we can have it here.

II. Debate and Discussion

My original posting led to prolonged debate and discussion. Since much (but not all) of this constituted a discussion within the left, it tells us something about the left, the notion of "art for the people," and, more generally, the left's conflicted relationship to art. There was a variety of responses. There was a significant amount of feel-good mystique: some Gates fans who, in real life, are almost as uptight as I am, nonetheless bizarrely represented themselves as released by The Gates to be happy Free Spirits, frolicking ecstatically from gate to gate in slow motion, as in a shampoo commercial. Others, mainly academics, saw themselves as participants in a kind of authenticity competition: since they saw The Gates as people's art, they sought to demonstrate their own authenticity by getting down with the people, sharing the people's alleged passion for The Gates. And there was a great deal of what I came to think of as faux communalism, an uncritical rejoicing in the outpouring of crowds without regard to the quality or content of the crowds' experience. I present this discussion (through selections) as it evolved in conversation and argument. This sequential discussion gave me a chance to develop my thinking further and also to explore what I have seen as failings in some left views of The Gates as, in effect, art for the people.

Nation columnist Katha Pollitt posted on Portside on February 21:[9]

> I went to see The Gates today and found them (it?) quite delightful. There were lots of people in the park, enjoying the art and the day, despite the cold. As my cousin, who has explored The Gates every day, says, "they put a smile on people's faces." I like their whimsicality, the way the orange contrasts with the silvery gray of the bare trees, the way they stir in the wind, the way they alter a very known and loved bit of landscape. I like the way they create a kind of festival feeling — and in February, the bleakest month of all. I like the fact that they are outdoors, that you don't have to pay to see them, that you can make of them what you will. Close up they look a bit like motel curtains, but when you see them parading up and down the byways and pathways of the park they look like the billowing standards carried by the samurai in Kurosawa's films. There is something mysterious and dreamlike about them. Whatever issues Portsiders may have with the financing, and with the use of the park for this when it was denied the RNC protesters, I would think people on the list would appreciate the art-for-the-people aspect of them and the way they bring people together in a shared aesthetic experience — an experience that is actually kind of challenging, if you choose to get into it, but that can also be appreciated as fun and playful. I'm glad The Gates are here!

Subsequent postings on H-net American Studies list:[10]

> February 18 Rebecca Garden: "[The Gates] deeply annoy me from afar, because they're part of the continuous tourist-izaton of New York art . . . all I see is a tourist attraction . . . "

February 18: Following the suggestion of another listmember, Pat McDermott, I posted a link for one of the best critiques I have seen: Blake Gopnik's "Christo's Gates: A Little Creaky."[11] I said, "I don't agree with it *in toto,* but it's certainly a far more serious and informative piece than the puff pieces the *New York Times* has published." Here is a sampling:

> [The Gates] reminded me of how nice it feels at Christmas time when lighted garlands stretch out across downtown streets. What it didn't remind me of, much, is the kind of puzzling, complex, probing experience we're supposed to get from significant art . . . The project encourages New Yorkers to come out and socialize — but so does any decently sunny Sunday . . . The truth is, by New York standards the gates are even a touch dull. Watching families promenade, you realized that after a minute or two of oohs and ahs, they switched back to their previous, more compelling subjects of conversation. ("Chloe, I've had about enough of your attitude." "I don't haaaaaave an aaaattiTUDE.") After decades of living in New York, Christo and Jeanne-Claude should know how much it takes to get a rise out of Manhattanites. It takes more than an orange schmatte or two . . . There is an era in which The Gates seem to belong, but that's three decades back. They remind me of a certain kind of celebratory public sculpture that you could see in the 1970s, and that represented a kind of last gasp moment in grand modernist abstraction . . . Now, with [Park]-view condos going for a few million bucks, the artists' gates just seem like the latest thing in bourgeois beautification. (Crate & Barrel must be due to launch a home-and-garden version any day.) Somehow, despite seemingly unending war and nuclear-armed tyrants and gaping social safety nets, we've decided that it's time to revive the look and feel of America at its most buttoned-down . . . After all, it was New York's corporate mayor, and the gentry that he leads, who decided that the time at last had come to fill the park with elegant day wear.

February 22 Anne Swartz of the Savannah College of Art and Design wrote in part, "What I find surprising is that so far, no one has commented on what I observed on the first day; that is, that the project is incredibly boring from street level unless the wind is blowing. It only really has any impact when one gets a view of the fabric blowing."

February 22 Jesse Lemisch:

> After only a week, The Gates are beginning

to be seen as kitsch, comedy and a racket. Click below for a funny example: www.not-rocket-science.com/gates.htm

The hilarious Somerville (Massachusetts) Gates, by Hargo (Geoff Hargadon) consist of tiny orange plastic gates, 3.5 inches high, twisting through various part of a house — including the "poopatorium." The site offers comparisons with C/J-C, including: NYC Gates took 26 years to make, Somerville took .002 years; estimated visitors, NYC: 4 million; Somerville 4; estimated visitors (cats): NYC 0; Somerville 1; viewing period NYC 26 days; Somerville "until the cleaning lady comes"; estimated cost, Somerville: $3.50.

The discussion on this list has been very good. Critical reviews have appeared in *The New Republic* (Jed Perl), in the *Washington Post*, and elsewhere. The pattern at the *Times* is interesting. They published multiple puff pieces, even one by their art critic. But yesterday's "Boldface Names" (2/18/05, B4) was among other things a comical critique of media coverage and of the bullshit and self-promotion coming from Christo and Jeanne-Claude . . . I assume the value is high on eBay, but I think this whole thing will go into memory as an embarrassment to those who promoted it.

And yet to come is serious consideration of the money questions I raised earlier: who is profiting, how much, and what about conflicts of interest involving Bloomberg, the Central Park Conservancy and others?

Paul Lauter, a professor of literature at Trinity College, Hartford, has a long and honorable history as a left activist and academic. In the sixties, he worked with the American Friends Service Committee and the Mississippi Freedom Schools. A PhD in English from Yale, he was a founding member in 1968 of the Modern Language Association Radical Caucus, and, in the same year a founder (with me and others) of a left academic organization, the New University Conference. In 1994-1995, he was president of the American Studies Association. We are old friends, dating back to 1968 and perhaps before. But we were about to collide in strong disagreement about The Gates, as he painted my critique and those of others as implicitly slanted towards high art attitudes, elitist and disconnected from "ordinary folk," and joyless — as well as insufficiently appreciative of the jobs created by The Gates.

Since they saw The Gates as people's art, they sought to demonstrate their own authenticity by getting down with the people.

Unlike some who have commented on "The Gates," I've actually been around a good deal of it, a few times now. Here's what I saw:

A huge number of people, New Yorkers and others from everywhere in the world, enjoying Central Park on bitterly cold February days when (as I know because I often run there) there would normally be very few out at this gloomy time of year. More smiles per square foot than I've seen around the City in quite a while. Also more photographs of anything since Ground Zero — Kodak and Fuji stock probably leaped. Lots and lots of people with jobs they would not otherwise have; restaurants and just about anything else in the area you would like to name unusually, wildly busy. (Is it a bad thing that people, many, many of them, are earning a buck? That's what some of the comments sounded like.) Very little overt commercial activity by way of picture and t-shirt sales, and that only at the very periphery of the Park, and to the profit of the CP Conservancy (not one of my favorite charities, but hey, they do work for us all). A good deal of care NOT to have The Gates themselves intrusively placed where, for one reason and another, some people would be unhappy with them (e.g., Strawberry Fields). An occasionally beautiful, sometimes pedestrian, often interesting and fun work that changes from second to second and that engages people in many different ways. Best of all, unlike much of what's designated as "art" in more than one of the City's museums, this one will not outstay its welcome.

Many of the comments, it seems to me, illustrate precisely the disconnect between progressive academics and ordinary folks that haunts American politics. I began to wonder whether this was an American Studies list or a convention of Malvolios.

On February 24, Frank Couvares of Amherst found "much of the negative commentary silly and reflexive disputatiousness" and agreed with Paul Lauter that "it's hard to think of a crowd bigger, more diverse, and happier." (Later there was to be disagreement on the diversity of the crowd.) On the same date Rebecca Garden found Lauter's language "barbed: 'elitist'! Ouch!"

February 24 Jesse Lemisch response to Lauter:

> Those who are too young to have experienced a 60s guilt trip and quest for authenticity via downward mobility should cherish the possibility of reliving these things by studying my friend Paul Lauter's condemnation of critics of The Gates as antipopulists who are out of touch with "ordinary folks." My friend, now Allan K & Gwendolyn Miles Smith Professor of Literature, sees us critics as Malvolios (check out *Twelfth Night* to see just how insulting this is), while conveying that he has somehow escaped his professorial role and is down with the people. Together with this is an attack on the "art" (his quotation marks) in museums. He all but revives Spiro Agnew's characterizations of intellectuals as "effete snobs" and "nattering nabobs of negativism."
>
> But what about the substance of Paul's charges? First of all, the outburst of uncritical approval of the Gates has come from such sources as the *New York Times* (including its art critic), the wealthy officers of the Central Park Conservancy, the billionaire Bloomberg, NY TV stations and others — apparently Paul's smiling noble proletarians. The list of those who adore The Gates hardly supports Paul's notion of class difference underlying the response to them. (Indeed, as I suggested, there is a serious conflict of interest problem, with wealthy supporters directly profiting from the display).
>
> Paul approves of The Gates as a kind of a capitalist WPA, providing jobs. And, while he acknowledges that the Central Park Conservancy is not "one of my favorite charities," he says, "but hey, they do work for us all." As I pointed out at the beginning of this discussion, they hardly worked for a lot of us on August 29, when they kept us antiwar protesters from demonstrating in the park. And in fact, they don't work for us all. I would hope for more sensitivity about the Conservancy's role as a NYC manifestation of the [worldwide] privatization of the commons — something that is going on all over the city, always under the guise of doing work for us all.
>
> Other points: [Paul] saw lots of people taking pictures. Of course: American Studies 101 would at least entertain the notion that everybody wanted to be able to claim that they were present at an event that the media had raised to the level of a Great Event. People take pictures of all kinds of things — including, as Paul mentions, Ground Zero. I don't think this is a measure of popular approval, as he suggests it is.
>
> I'd like to add to my earlier critique disagreement with the idea expressed in the media that The Gates will somehow leave the park enhanced when they go away. Like Paul, I go there every chance I get. It is absolutely full of marvelous New York experiences, like the roller dancing I mentioned, plus the Asian weddings, the comedians and musicians, the dogs swimming off the Bethesda Fountain, the Segway riders, the illegal beer vendors [with their side-of-the mouth cries], the scene on a summer day in the Sheep Meadow [where I used to take my dog "Riot," who went to heaven in an ecstasy, thinking he was back in Yorkshire]. All of this — which is quite real — needs no enhancement from the artificial "saffron" display now there. It's in some ways as alien to New York City as would be Bloomberg's football stadium.[12]

February 27 Jesse Lemisch:

1. Naomi Weisstein says [off line]: "If 'The Gates' are people's art, what are we to make of the graffiti accumulating on them?"

[Lemisch:] I would add: if graffiti writers rank higher on our scale of authenticity, does this mean that such extremely authentic people :-) approve of The Gates? Or, isn't it more likely that these most authentic of people write on them in disapproval, or criticism? If so, what becomes of the notion that "ordinary folks" love The Gates, regardless of what us Malvolios think?

2. Joanne Landy says [off line]: "Whoever on the American Studies list (I think) wrote about the way the exhibit draws aesthetic attention to the park itself is off the mark, in my experience anyway. The flags just draw attention to themselves, period, and there appears to be no particular relationship to the shapes and colors of the park. That's part of the problem."

[Landy added later]: "Of course a work of art could be so interesting and exciting on its own that it wouldn't have to be related to the park. It could just shine there. But The Gates aren't particularly compelling in and of themselves — and in fact few of their fans venture to claim that they are."

[Lemisch:] There is nothing in The Gates that resonates with, or plays with, themes in the park and thus no enhancement of our perception of it. I guess if it were autumn, there would at least be some color connection between the trees and the orange banners (calling them "saffron" is, I think, allowing ourselves to be taken in.)

3. One writer saw the crowds in Central Park as "diverse." The fact of the matter is that when I went (on a weekend) there were fewer nonwhites there than usual. Indeed, when I ran into a noted sociologist, a person known for keen observation, the first words out of his mouth were, "All the white people in New York are here!" This voting with the feet (away from the park) by authentic non-whites further undermines the Malvolio thesis.

4. I have just read the art critic Jed Perl's review ("Aestheticism Lite," The *New Republic* On Line, 2/16). He speaks of "the mix of obscurantism and feel-good communalism . . . The acres of saffron cloth that Christo and Jeanne-Claude are unfurling across Central Park are a fashion statement, nothing more. It's public art for the cocooning generation."

For a later harsh review, see Tony Hendra, "Gated Community: The Christos' Laundry is no longer hanging in Central Park. Good Riddance":

> What were they supposed to symbolize, these thousands of dishrags hanging from their thousands of kitchen rails? The rigid banality of the urban fabric, gridding and right-angling the rich asymmetry of life into mathematical oblivion . . . meaningless tacky curtains . . . mindlessly flapping laundry . . . This was art? By whose standards? This was beauty? Where was redemption? Social merit? Universality? What was some hint of humor, or even entertainment — ironic, mischievous, affectionate? Where was fond amusement or delicious regret? What was it about the garish dishrags that made us laugh or cry, or filled us with outrage or longing? What about them moved us to lofty thoughts or nobility of purpose or self-sacrifice? There were no such reactions because this was not, by even the most rubbery of modern standards, art, just the banal obscenity of self-seekers who'll go to any lengths to thrust their talent-free obsession with laundry into our unwilling faces. Self-seeking this craven makes Damien Hirst look like Duccio.[13]

March 3 Jesse Lemisch:

I appreciate this latest round of interesting postings. Here's an afterthought about what I might call "faux communalism" — not necessarily in today's postings but nonetheless frequently popping up in discussions of The Gates.

People turning out in large numbers and having a good time is fine. I join every crowd I can here in NYC. But the appreciations I've seen of The Gates as great communal event seem to me to ignore the shallowness of the thing. As I said earlier in this discussion, there is a delightful communal feeling at the roller dancing, both among the inter-racial and inter-generational skaters and among people staying, often for a long time, to watch — and smile, and move with the music. To each her/his own, but to me this is a deeper experience than The Gates, and much more fun. (For more info about this NY treasure, see www.centralparkskate.com/faq.shtml and www.cpdsa.org. In season, it starts around two and really gets going by three weekends at the northeastern end of the Sheep Meadow. But they seem to be there during the winter as well.) And the Village Halloween Parade, largely gay in its origins, is a wonderful NY celebration of deviance and comedy.

In addition, the crowd for the Gates is very shallow communalism indeed when compared to the crowds for great political demonstrations in the Park down through the years, including the great August 29 demonstration, which though prohibited by the city and the Central Park Conservancy, nonetheless took place spontaneously and without permission, and with much comedy and mutuality.

No, everything doesn't have to be political. But it does seem to me a mark of the bad times we are in that large numbers of happy tourists snapping pictures is taken for a Great Communal Event.

> The appreciations I've seen of The Gates as great communal event seem to me to ignore the shallowness of the thing.

March 3 Hal Foster, Townsend Martin Professor of Art, Princeton, "In Central Park," *London Review of Books*," Vol. 27 No. 5, 3 March 2005 [posted on Portside] (excerpts)

If the actual location of The Gates was the park, its effective site was the global media (including the souvenir market online): that is to say, its site was everywhere. But what if we consider the piece, perversely, in terms of the old criteria of colour and line? Christo and Jeanne-Claude chose dead winter to open The Gates so that it might be seen to greatest effect. Yet the hue was off, at least to my eyes: the light orange was too close to both the bleached green of the grass and the smoky grey of the trees to make for a vivid contrast. Sometimes the banners did catch the light or the breeze to flow like veils or shimmer like kites, but often the nylon hung rather dull and limp like big tarps or giant laundry. Red would have been better, or black or white, but all these colours have political associations, and everything about The Gates was dictated by an assiduous avoidance of any such significance . . . Perhaps as a result, the colour, the materials, the very design are bland, stripped of any edge. It was quite a feat to set up so many gates in America today and not prompt any reference to security checks and immigration outrages. But no colour is entirely without association. 'It's the orange of police cones,' my wife said as we entered the park; 'it looks like a Princeton reunion run amok.' . . .

I don't want only to pee on this parade. There was generosity of spirit in The Gates, and pleasure too, and they did encourage more promenades in this great urban space . . . some of the revenue from the souvenirs will go to the Park Conservancy. Nonetheless, two other problems — one artistic, one political — cannot be skirted.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude emerged with the movement called Nouveau Réalisme more than forty years ago . . . The object was not the thing; the wrapping was — and the wrappers. In effect, they turned a semi-Situationist strategy of détournement, or the diversion of official sites to subversive ends, into a semi-touristic form of packaging.

The Gates also played into the bread-and-circus policies of Mayor Bloomberg, a patron of the project (he also bought two drawings, reportedly for $800,000). Bloomberg wants a new football stadium on the West Side, as part of New York's bid for the 2012 Olympics, and The Gates suits his post-9/11 strain of 'Don't Worry Be Happy' (otherwise known as 'Big Business Don't Leave'). The Gates made for friendly city politics and nice holiday aesthetics, and no one can be against sociability in the park. Yet for what exactly was this festival

> of the people staged? The Gates prettied up an extraordinary public place, but the fanfare was empty of social consequence: the city blocked a demonstration against the Republican Convention in the park, but gave a green light to Christo. Out of one eye, then, I saw an enjoyable mass art event; out of the other, a telling instance of high kitsch in the Bloomberg-Bush era, a cross between the Yellow Brick Road and a grand opening where the packaging was literally all.

March 5 Jesse Lemisch, Portside (also posted March 7 on H-Amstdy):

> Today's *New York Times* now begins to address a topic ["the money question"] raised in my original posting here . . . the *Times* carries an article on "Enough about 'Gates' as Art; Let's Talk About that Price Tag." This openly ridicules C/J-C's dismissiveness and evasion ("the manner of royalty") as regards their repeated failure and refusal to present the basis for the claim that they spent 21 million dollars: "it appears that at least some of the grand price tag for 'The Gates' may be as conceptual as the work itself."[14] This article seems to me a modest beginning to exploring that I called "enormous profit and conflict of interest" all around, including Bloomberg and the Central Park Conservancy. I suppose that those who appreciate The Gates as art or Great Communal Experience will want to separate these issues from the project itself, but I think it will be harder and harder to do so: the thing is tainted by fakery.

March 10 H-Amstdy Harold S. Forsythe, Golieb Fellow, New York University, School of Law:

> I thought that the sharpest short comment on "The Gates" was Peter Schjeldahl's in *The New Yorker*. He observed, "[t]hose who deplore 'The Gates' as ugly aren't wrong, just poor sports. The work's charm-free synthetic orange hue — saffron? no way — it is something you would wear only in the woods during deer season, in order to avoid being shot. The nylon fabric is sullen to the touch. The proportions of the arches are graceless,and dogs alone esteem the clunky bases." (02/28/05)

> . . . I, too, noticed the absence of brown and black people in the Park during the event. Apparently American-born whites seemed a little surprised to see my wife and I strolling though the Park — we are black — but not hostile, but rather startled, like encountering us at the Harvard Club or someplace, and not being sure whether we were alums or just "the help." My best bet is that something as contrived as "The Gates" will be forgotten in 3-5 years . . . [By 2009, students in] their college dorms . . . will flub the Jeopardy question about "The Gates" and kick themselves.

III. Conclusion

As I send this off, the debate is far from over. With the passage of time, perhaps more considered opinions will be offered [15] But, for now, much of the left seems content with the kind of uncritical euphoria that was thought by some to be an adequate response to my critique. The left needs to do better. Art is an important part of the good society, and we won't find our way to the good society without more sophistication about art, and the ability to distinguish the specious from the worthy. Some non-left critics often came closer to making sense about The Gates than did the left. In comparison, left engagement with The Gates and with questions of popular art around them seems shallow. Is The Gates a good instance on which to hang the case for "art for the people"? This is faux populism. There is also MIA in left responses to The Gates an old socialist ideal rarely heard any more: "ordinary folk" have a right to truth and beauty and access to high art. What kind of good society will we build if leftists confuse art for the people with faux populism?[16]

Afterword, May 2, 2005: Breaking News from Central Park

As we have seen, writing in the March 28 issue of *The Nation*, Rebecca Brandes Gratz and Stephen A. Goldsmith spoke of Central Park as "democratic public space" and contrasted it with other space where "public assembly . . . can be legally denied." If this failed dismally as a description of reality at that time, it was about to be even more starkly contradicted. On April 18, the NYC Department of Parks took formal action to reduce the size and number of public gatherings that would be permitted in Central Park. (For the Parks Department's "Notice" in *The City Record*, see www.nycgovparks.org; also see "Keeping Great Crowds off the Great Lawn," *New York Times*, April 27, 2005, B1.) Under these rules, gatherings on the Great Lawn would be limited to 50,000 people, and only six such gatherings would be permitted in any calendar year, four of which would be reserved for the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic. As a further limitation, the remaining two permitted public gatherings would be allowed to take place only during a four-week period in August and September. The well-being of the grass ("sound horticultural practice") is the rationale that is offered, and the Department assumes that performances of classical music ("extremely low impact events") are less harmful to the grass than are rallies.

We might speak of the Wal-Martization of Central Park.

Recall that I had earlier written that "Central Park is hospitable to some public events and inhospitable to others." Concertgoers, the Parks Department says, make only "passive use" of the space. (In addition, the requirements concerning the amount of bond to be posted by those seeking permits seem to be worded so as to allow ample leeway for discrimination against political events.) And the New York Police Department further restricts expression by dividing the crowd into penned-up sections, as was done most recently in the May 1 United for Peace and Justice "No Nukes! No Wars!" rally at Central Park's Heckscher Ballfield. Thus a space-starved Manhattan is about to lose one of the few remaining public spaces that can suitably serve as a *zocolo*, a large public square. (For criticism, see "Making a Not-So-Great Lawn," editorial, *New York Times*, City Section, May 1, 2005, 13: "The lawn . . . is being kept like Aunt Millie's couch under a layer of plastic, protected from being used as it was intended.")

This is very much a part of Bush's repressive America manifesting itself in Bloomberg's increasingly repressive New York. All in all, the Parks Department's regulations and the rationale for them reads like something out of *Pravda*: in addition to the above, the regulations use the *presence* of "an advanced irrigation or drainage system" as a reason for not permitting large demonstrations on the Great Lawn, and the *absence* of such a system as a reason for not allowing demonstrations in the Sheep Meadow. (Meantime, *Allure* magazine sells tickets at $37 plus for a May 21 event in Central Park's Rumsey Playfield: "Allure Beauty Live" will feature "makeovers . . . a fashion show, expert skin care, hair tips and lots of FREE beauty goodies." www.subscriberdirect.com/allure/0504/event 11.cfm)

In regard to the Central Park Conservancy, newly found data calls further into question Paul Lauter's characterization of CPC — "not one of my favorite charities, but hey, they do work for us all." A document that I had not previously seen shows that the privatization of Central Park has been, among other things, an instrument for union busting. Indeed, we might speak of the Wal-Martization of Central Park. The document in question appeared in the right-wing Manhattan Institute's *City Journal* under the title "Set the Parks Free" (Winter 1997: www.manhattan-institute.org/cfml/printable.cfm?id=348). It was written by Richard Gilder, founder of the Institute, a member of the board of the Central Park Conservancy, and one of the thinkers behind George Bush's efforts to sabotage Social Security by privatizing it. (And for Gilder's corruption of U.S. history through an exhibit at the New-York Historical Society, see Lemisch, "Are Gilder and Lehrman Tilting American History to the Right? A Case in Point," *History News Network*, November 8, 2004: www.hnn.us/articles/8420.html). Acknowledging — or perhaps we might better say, boasting — that CPC is "the de facto manager of Central Park," Gilder presents a Grand Plan for expansion of CPC's empire:

> After years of remarkable cooperation under an informal partnership, the city and the Conservancy owe Central Park and its 15 million annual visitors a further step. The Conservancy should assume full contractual responsibility for managing the park. In exchange for freeing the city from most of its expenses there, the Conservancy would receive, as its management fee, all of Central Park's concession revenue, and it would oversee all work in the park with a staff entirely its own. The city would pay for essential services like security and maintaining the park's lights.

Today Central Park, tomorrow the world.

> What about the rest of the city's parks? . . . Nonprofit groups already connected to a number of parks make excellent candidates for management contracts . . . Over time, the better managers would emerge and win contracts for more parks. The Conservancy, for instance, should take its expertise into the parks of northern Manhattan — Riverside, Morningside, Marcus Garvey — and should eventually manage all the borough's parks.

GILDER'S IMPERIAL VISION also involves an attack on unions. This attack arises out of an attitude of contempt for unions, combined with the triumphalist capitalism that has had a rebirth in Bush's America. Looking back to what he calls the "dark days" of the sixties, Gilder lays the historical foundation for an attack on union labor in Central Park, employing an anti-populist rhetoric that resonates with today's efforts to keep protest out of the park:

> [D]istress . . . struck Central Park: it became the scene for a growing number of 'happenings' — concerts and rallies that brought crowds thronging into the park, crushing turf and topsoil. Park workers spent so much time on these events that routine maintenance began to slip. Union-dictated work rules and job titles probably exacerbated the problem.

The solution, as Gilder saw it, would be to banish unions from Central Park, and indeed from all the parks.

> The Conservancy's great advantage comes in staffing. It hires and pays its horticulturalists, groundskeepers, and cleanup crews as any private employer would. If they do well, they advance. If they do poorly, they're fired. Conservancy staffers are flexible enough to do more than one task, so they can be assigned to whatever job needs doing most urgently . . . Parks Department [employees] work under a bureaucratic, seniority-based union system. Rigid job descriptions can create a ready excuse for leaving work undone . . . All of New York's parks would benefit from contracting and outsourcing, for these would bring competition and accountability, the discipline of the marketplace, to the management of the city's parks.

Indeed, the discipline of the marketplace has devastated union employment in the park. Writing in 1997, Gilder said that CPC's "payroll includes 172 of the park's 244 workers." The following year, as Gilder had hoped, CPC signed a contract with the city, "formalizing the Conservancy's role as manager and steward of the Park" (www.citymayors.com/features/central_park.html; see also www.centralparknyc.org/thenandnow/partnership/contract). In 2005, CPC stated "We currently have approximately 110 full-time gardeners, grounds tech[s], maintenance techs and 30 seasonal grounds tech[s] who work in the park . . . None of our employees are unionized." (Sheila Kendall e-mail to Jesse Lemisch, 4/25/05) In contrast, the Parks Department has 74 workers in Central Park, almost all of whom are unionized. (Sami

Naim email to JL, 5/24/05 and phone conversation with Naim, 5/25/05.)

But let us not despair. To end on a happy note: at least one wedding took place amidst The Gates, and on April 28 a *New York Review of Books* personals ad presented "smashingly attractive" as desirable because, among other things, she was "charmed by The Gates." (*NYRB*, 4/28/05). For better or for worse, The Gates live on.

NOTES

1. www.centralparknyc.org/support/corporatepartners

2. Thanks to Andrea Hill of CPC for supplying some of the above information. CPC was founded in 1980 under Mayor Edward Koch. It describes itself as "a private, not-for-profit organization . . . that manages Central Park under a contract with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation." www.centralparknyc.org/17613/2110920. Without formal conservancies, some other parks in New York City are partly funded privately, including, in my Upper West Side neighborhood, Straus Park (106th Street and Broadway) where I am a contributor to the "Friends of Straus Park." This kind of financial arrangement means that other parks that rely only on public funding are in poorer shape. As Anne Schwartz perceptively writes, "The reliance upon private funding could weaken the government's traditional role in maintaining public space and ultimately reduce the opportunity for all citizens to enjoy it . . . In Bryant Park, for example, private events held in the park temporarily keep much of the public out. The reliance on public funding could leave the city with a two-tier park system . . . corporations are most likely to donate to a park they care about, favoring parks in affluent areas . . . Parks in poor neighborhoods, particularly outside Manhattan could be left to depend on dwindling public dollars." *Gotham Gazette*, July 21, 2003: www.gothamgazette.com/article/200307201/200/468) Compare with the piece published by *The Nation*, below (note 15), which is utterly obtuse to this issue.

3. For a more serious critique than Kimmelman's, see Blake Gopnik, "Christo's Gates: A Little Creaky," *Washington Post*, February 12, 2005 (partly quoted below). See also below for critiques by Jed Perl, Hal Foster, and others.

4. But we can see their outlines and hope that they will become more visible. Christo was hardly accessible in the days leading up to the exhibit, since he was busy 24/7 (it seems) turning out drawings of what The Gates would look like, which he sold for figures as high as $600,000 apiece (or, according to one *New York Times* article, as much as a million dollars apiece: 3/3/05). The media failed to see that C/J-C might best be thought of as skilled and perservering entrepreneurs, not exactly like Donald Trump but somehow related. CPC bought many of the drawings, as did Mayor Bloomberg, who was already a Christo collector and would now see his Christos skyrocket in value. So, trumpeting The Gates enhanced the value of Bloomberg's and CPC's investments. There seem multiple clear conflicts of interest in all this. If there were indeed, as is widely thought, a ferocious Spitzer in the New York State Attorney General's office, he would be all over them like a tent. Whether legal or illegal, this is big business. The impact of The Gates on the value of Christo's work was large and immediate. The European Fine Art Fair opened in Maastricht on March 3, less than a week after The Gates closed. By March 6, three of Christo's early works had sold for a total of $1,211,826. Annely Juda, his London dealer, commented that The Gates had caused prices for Christo's work to rise: "A lot of people came by to talk about 'The Gates' . . . There is great interest in Christo, and a new realization how important and rare his early works are" ("At the Fair Despite Snow and Weak Dollar," *New York Times*, March 7, 2005, E7).

5. Interview, www.christojeanneclaude.net/eyeLevel.html

6. For a sad coincidence that sheds light on this matter, see "American Jails in Iraq Bursting with Detainees," *New York Times*, March 4, 2005, p. A1. The accompanying color photograph shows five "detainees" dressed in jumpsuits roughly the orange color of The Gates. A sixth wears an identical suit in yellow, closer to the "saffron" that C/J-C claim is the color of The Gates. For discussion of saffron and orange in food, see, "What Color is it, Anyway?" *New York Times*, February 23, 2005, F8)

7. February 16 press release: www.nycgovparks.org. There us no doubt that The Gates were well attended, and were also a tourism gold mine for New York. On March 3, Mayor Bloomberg announced that 4 million people (including 1.5 million out-of-towners, of whom 20% were non-U.S.) had attended, and they had generated 254 million dollars for the city's economy (*New York Times*, March 4, 2005, B4. For Bloomberg's full statement, see www.nyc.gov/thegates). We don't know just how these figures were arrived at. Bloomberg presents a near hysterical listing of hundreds of percentage point increases in all kinds of measures — including Mickey Mantle's Restaurant, up 200% on weekends, and the Parks Department's concession sales, up more than one half million dollars beyond normal, or 448% higher. (The Mayor's statement contradicts itself about attendance: the four million figure has to be compared with the 750,000 which is normal for that period.) Leav-

ing aside for now the escalating value of the CPC's Christo drawings, in addition CPC sold 4 million dollars in Gates merchandise and $70,000 in other merchandise, with trolley and walking tours bringing CPC another $158,760. (Many fans saw the display in cold February as an intended stroke of the artists' genius; but I have seen no mention of the negotiations which must have led to this schedule rather than the more obvious but overcrowded warmer weather.)

8. Full disclosure: In various internet postings, presented as from the "Straus Park Brigade," I had attempted to incite "a walk in the park" for August 29. The Brigade is a wholly fictitous organization consisting, so far, of only me.

9. www.lists.portside.org/mailman/htdig/portside/Week-of-Mon-20050221/007303.html

10. (All H-Amstdy postings are archived and may be located by searching for "Christo" at www.hnet.org/logsearch/)

11. *Washington Post*, February 12.

12. Interestingly, in an interview concerning his project for a stadium, Bloomberg links this project with The Gates as Great Enterprises that ran into small-minded opposition:

> Bloomberg was starting to sound suspiciously like any ordinary politician whose grand vision is under attack . . . His ultimate aim, he went on, is to secure New York's future as a place of risk-taking, innovation, and enterprise, the sort of place where people do things that others question, such as putting up iconoclastic buildings, creating new media companies, and covering Central Park with pieces of orange fabric hung from vinyl gates. "Look at the history of The Gates," he said, referring to the lengthy struggle that his friends Christo and Jeanne-Claude had encountered in putting up their recent art installation. 'Why that many people would be that upset about something that goes on for two weeks, once in a lifetime, I don't know, but it was very, very controversial. Now everybody thinks, looking back, that it was the right thing to do. It was great for the spirit of the city, great for the economy.'
>
> John Cassidy, "Bloomberg's Game," *The New Yorker*, April 4, 2005, 67.

13. www.prospect.org/web/printfriendly-view..ww?id=9309

14. Mark Levinson writes in a letter to the editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, March 9, 2005: "how much more than the $21 million cost of the installation Christo has, or will make from these sales . . . with a single Christo work reportedly going for $500,000, the potential for profit is high. Has Christo, like Max Bialystock ["The Producers"], sold much more than he needed to underwrite his project? If so, this [would be a] violation of the artist's contract with the city that the project be 'not for any commercial use or commercial gain whatsoever.'" www.nytimes.com/2005/03/05/nyregion/05gates.html?hp&ex=1110085200&en=9474399d3865c8af&ei=5094&partner=homepage

15. But not in *The Nation*: See Roberta Grandes Gratz and Stephen A. Goldsmith, "In the Park with Christo," 3/28/05. The following is a letter to the editor that I sent on March 11; *The Nation* published a shortened version in its issue of 4/25/05.

Roberta Brandes Gratz and Steven A. Goldsmith view Christo/Jeanne-Claude's "The Gates" through saffron-colored glasses . . . G & G celebrate Central Park as "dynamic public space" while utterly ignoring its semi-privatization under the Central Park Conservancy (CPC). They celebrate Christo's generosity, without a hint of skepticism about his and Jeanne-Claude's supposed 21 million dollar "gift to New York," and without a hint of awareness of the multiple clear conflicts of interest on the part of such wealthy Christo collectors as Mayor Bloomberg and the CPC, who have a material investment in C/J-C.

G & G contrast Central Park with the spread of "privatized public space . . . like kudzu across the land," including malls where "public assembly . . . can be legally denied." But that's precisely what happened when the city and CPC prevented the great August 29 anti-war march from going to Central Park. This reality mocks G & G's myopic notion of the park as "democratic public space." It's sad that *The Nation*, which has elsewhere shown awareness of the worldwide privatization of the commons, should be so ecstatically unaware of the same thing, right here in New York City. The CPC, a combine of mega-corporations, is taking what should be public decisions out of public hands, inviting some public events and barring others. Surely, this is something to challenge, not celebrate. Astonishingly, G & G never once mention CPC, nor could they do so while insisting on the Park as democratic and non-privatized space.

Even the *Times*, with all its flacking for The Gates — this was for them a mini-WMD moment of retailing official handouts (with art critic Michael Kimmelman playing Judith Miller) — finally could not ignore the holes in C/J-C's claims of a $21 million dollar gift to the city ("some of [C/J-C's] grand price tag for 'The Gates' may have been as conceptual as the work itself": 3/5/05). In addition, Christo worked 24/7 (it seemed), grinding out Gates drawings selling individually for $600,000 and by one estimate $1million. Among the purchasers are CPC and Bloomberg (who had earlier collected Christos, which would now skyrocket in value). Bloomberg/CPC's promotion of "The Gates" enhanced the value of their investments: if there were indeed a Spitzer in the attorney general's office, he would be all over them like a tent. Whether legal or illegal, this is big business. The European Fine Art Fair opened in Maastricht less than a week after "The Gates" closed. By March 6, three of Christo's earlier works had sold there for a total of $1,211,826. His London dealer attributed this appreciation to the display of "The Gates" in New York.)

Like most of the adorations of "The Gates," G & G largely pass over aesthetic questions, leaving the display to stand or fall as "populist spectacle" and Great Communal Event. A few have done better: Gopnik in *The Washington Post* ("dull . . . It takes more than an orange schmatte . . . the latest thing in bourgeois beautification . . . elegant daywear"); Hal Foster in the *London Review of Books* ("Red would have been better, or black or white, but all these colours have political associations, and everything about The Gates was dictated by an assiduous avoidance of any such significance . . . high kitsch in the Bloomberg-Bush era"); Jed Perl, *New Republic* Online ("mix of obscurantism and feel-good communalism") . . . . "The Gates," and the puffery around them, are faux populism, a poor case on which to hang an argument for art for the people.

By the way, as anyone with eyes to see through the fiction knows, they were orange. And why did *The Nation* give the article a title which erased Jeanne-Claude?

Jesse Lemisch

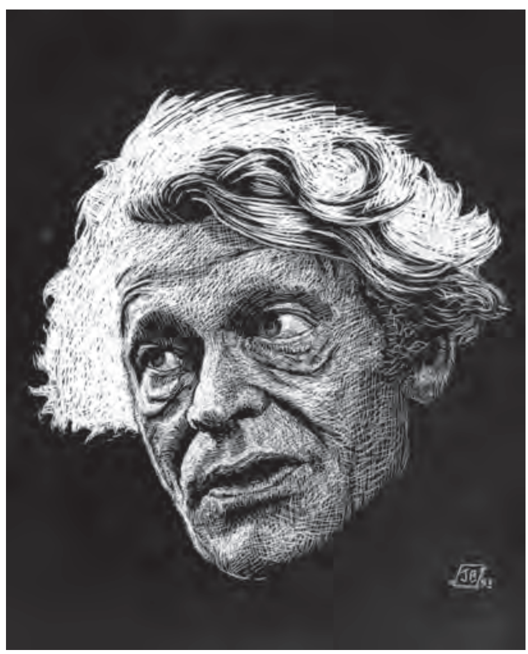
16. For earlier work on the quest for authenticity in the left, and left construction of hierarchies of authenticity, see Lemisch, "Pop Front Culture: I Dreamed I saw MTV Last Night," *The Nation*, October 18, 1986; Lemisch, "The Politics of Left Culture," *The Nation*, December 20, 1986.

E. P. Thompson
History and Commitment

David Renton

Contemporary interest in social history owes much to the work of a pioneering generation of British Marxist historians. Today the best-known member of this group is E. P. Thompson. His book, *The Making of the English Working Class* did more than anything else to translate the concerns of the 1950s and 1960s protest movement into historical practice. Edward Thompson's work has been widely used by many activist historians since, especially for the preface to *The Making*, one of the most often quoted documents of its kind. E. P. Thompson himself was undoubtedly an attractive figure, as much for his prominent activism in the peace movement and the New Left as for his history, important as that was. This article will argue that it was precisely Thompson's partial rejection of history, his democratic activism, which established his greatness as a historian. Yet the point is not merely to praise an important writer and activist. It shall also engage with some of the most important ideas found in Thompson's work and their reception since.

We all know how historians are supposed to live: with winter in our heart, leather patches on sleeve, spectacles on our nose. We should avoid all controversy, or if we must succumb to it, make our complaints known only to the appropriate academic milieu. We should seek full-time employment in the university system, write for a peer audience of fellow academics, and in due course be promoted to a condition of managerial oblivion. Thompson defied this path, exuberantly. At the start of his career, he rejected the comfort of a university history department for the much harder task of adult education, teaching groups of workers. Later in life, when his international reputation was made, Thompson turned his back on history itself, to build the peace movement. As he told one friend in 1981, "I have been so fully preoccupied with matters which concern me as a citizen, the settled direction towards a terminal collision in



Joshua Brown, 1993. Reprinted by permission of the artist.

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Europe that I have had to set aside for a time my work as a historian. I have been forced to take leave of libraries and to spend my time in public meetings and turn my pen to pamphlets and public correspondence."[1]

His history did not suffer as a result of Thompson's activism. His biography of William Morris expresses a belief in legitimate working-class leadership that Thompson thought he had found in the Communist Party's Harry Pollitt. The search for an overarching moral code, a consistent theme of Edward Thompson's socialist pamphleteering, informs not just his peace writing but the conclusion of his book *Whigs and Hunters* which supports the rule of law as a universal good, something to be defended even in an age when the state was guilty of widespread corruption.[2]

> Later in life, when his international reputation was made, Thompson turned his back on history itself, to build the peace movement.

The interaction between the insights of the "activist" and of the "historian" is most clear in Thompson's polemical essays, "Outside the Whale," "The Peculiarities of the English," "The Poverty of Theory." Here Thompson used the traditions of his generation, the familiarity of war, the memory of the Communist Party at its height, the founding of the New Left and CND, as a common fund of experience from which to criticise a series of false arguments on the left, all of which tended to assimilate the story of people's lives to a dull and lifeless, prior model. The alternative, Thompson labelled "socialist humanism." This was both a program for Communist reform, and at one and the same time, an intervention within Marxism, an argument for a different form of socialist literature, a history closer to the fund of people's real experience.

Edward Palmer Thompson was born in 1924. His father Edward John Thompson had been a missionary in India, and was later a champion of Indian independence, and a friend of such men as Tagore, Gandhi, and Nehru.[3] Educated at Kingswood school and Cambridge University, Edward Thompson joined the British army and served in the Italian campaign at Cassino. After military service, Thompson returned to Cambridge where he became active in the Communist Party. Reflecting later on his motives for joining the CP, Thompson described the sense he felt of joining an "international fraternity" of resistance that had liberated Horthy's jails, German concentration camps, Bulgarian police cells, and Italian prison islands.[4] At Cambridge, he met his first wife, Dorothy, who became a distinguished labor historian in her own right, specialising in the early history of Chartism.

The decisive moment in the evolution of Thompson's ideas was the Second World War. At several points in his later writing, he returned to this period and reflected on its politics. Although he would become in the 1950s a savage critic of the leadership of the British Communist Party, E. P. Thompson never expressed anything other than praise for the wartime conduct of the party, or for the milieu in which it operated. "I recall a resolute and ingenious civilian army, increasingly hostile to the conventional military virtues, which became . . . an antifascist and consciously anti-imperialist army. Its members voted Labour back in 1945: knowing why, as did the civilians back home . . . Our expectations may have been shallow, but this was because we were overly utopian and ill prepared for the betrayals at our backs.'[5] Shallow, utopian, ill-prepared, the metaphors all imply error, and yet something better, behind and explaining the fault, a sort of deliberate innocence, the open eyes of a child, the only perspective from which a non-cynical society could be built. One part of Thompson's socialism was the idea that the people of the wartime alliance constituted *the generation* against which any later politics should be judged. Another characteristic theme was the defence of imprecision and of moralism. It was better to be "shallow," but mean well, than to possess the lifeless consistency of a commissar.

The emotional intensity of these years was also set by the loss of his older brother Frank, who died serving alongside antifascist partisans in Bulgaria.

Roots of Activism

GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE he had for E.P., it is worth dwelling for a while on Frank Thompson's legacy. His brother was four years older than Edward. He studied on a scholarship at Winchester and began a degree in classics at New College, Oxford. His friend Anthony Carritt was killed fighting for the International Brigades in Spain. At Oxford, Frank fell in love with the young Iris Murdoch. He was a member of the Oxford University Labour Club. Together with Iris, he joined the Communist Party in spring 1939. Aware of the scale of the threat posed by fascism, Frank left Oxford and volunteered for the army on the outbreak of war in September 1939. He served in the Royal Artillery and then the Special Operations Executive from 1940, seeing action in Libya, Iran, Italy and Yugoslavia. By May 1944, he had been promoted to the rank of Major. Frank Thompson was an valuable asset to British intelligence, speaking no less than seven languages. He was then working alongside a group of Bulgarian partisans near Sofia. He and his friends were ambushed, and Frank Thompson was captured. In his pocket were the poems of Catullus and a Byzantine coin. Tried at Litakovo, he defended himself in Bulgarian, and was executed on 10 June 1944.

In 1947, Edward Thompson had the chance to visit Bulgaria with his mother. "We were received with genuine popular enthusiasm as state visitors, entertained by Georgi Dimitrov, received formally in the National Theatre and conducted along the route of the march and the battle by partisan survivors."[6] One result of this trip was Thompson's first book, published in 1947, which made a provisional attempt at reconstructing the events of his brother's death.[7] Much later in life, E. P. Thompson reflected on his brother's death, and the ways in which that moment had shaped or reinforced the themes of his own life. The result was a lecture series, given at Stanford University in 1981. Following his death, Dorothy Thompson had these notes published as a public memoir, *Beyond the Frontier*.

Edward Thompson's account of his brother's early life was also his own story. Both had grown up in the same family. Both served in the war. Both had been students before fighting. Both joined the Communist Party. Yet despite this fund of common experiences, Edward emphasised the gap between them. Joining the Communist Party in 1939 after Spain, as his brother did, separated him from Edward, who felt himself to be a child of the 1940s war. In other ways, as well, the two boys were made of different stuff. The older brother was tall, clumsy, and notoriously bad at games. Frank was the superior intellect, grounded in the classical knowledge for which Winchester was famous. Edward attended a minor public school. "My own political and cultural drive was already more low-brow, moralising, perhaps even Methodistical, and self-consciously demotic."[8] The emphasis on ethics is revealing. It anticipates a major theme of Thompson's later values.

In the postwar period Frank Thompson was maligned by British intelligence as a concealed Communist and by the governments of Eastern Europe as a likely British spy. According to the British version, conveyed by a drunken intelligence officer, Frank had ordered his sergeant across the border at gunpoint. He had then been robbed himself by Bulgarian partisans who were secretly in league with the existing government. A few weeks later, one high-ranking Bulgarian officer told Edward Thompson that his brother's death had been caused by British intelligence in Cairo. His superiors had simply handed this information to the fascist state. In his careful, patient study, Thompson showed that both stories were false. The British plan had been for the partisans to establish a liberated territory in the North of the country. Necessary as such a course may have been; it was a complete folly. "Some two hundred partisans were threading their way through a countryside thick with informers and police posts . . . they had no guides, they had no food; they were only an hour or so by motorised transport away from Sofia." Contrary to the stories, "No 'explanation' of the defeat is required at all."[9]

Edward did not see Frank as unique, but as representative. His brother incarnated the virtues of an entire, older generation. "Beneath the ironic commentary" of Frank's letters and of his generation's thinking "was a deeper assent to the necessity of the war itself, indeed sometimes an assent to changing its direction and infusing into it a greater democratic content than some subsequent accounts, coloured by the hindsight given by Yalta and the later betrayals, by both sides, of the Cold War, have allowed." Frank, in his letters, read the politics of this struggle through the prism of the previous war in Spain. The antifascist unity of 1941-1944 was no better than the alliance of 1936. If anything, it was less honest, less sure of where it aimed:

> It's more than ever necessary now, with this wave of self-righteousness spreading over British propaganda, with the First and Eighth armies wearing Crusaders' shields, with the Church doing its level best to corner the moral credit for the war on Fascism, to remember those men who, in the sierras and the banks of the Ebro, bore the heat of the day alone . . . This is their victory, Cornford's victory, Ralph Fox's victory, the victory of the Carritts and the Garratts, of the Asturian miners and the Barcelona working men. Those of us who came after were merely adopting an idea, that they proved, that freedom and Fascism can't live in the same world, and that the free man, once he realises this, will always win.[10]

Reason and Tradition

FREQUENT FLASHES OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY illuminated Thompson's writing. In the course, for example, of a tribute to Edgell Rickword he contrasted the "populist euphoria" evident in Communist circles in 1944 with the defensive insularity of 1948. In each period different people came to the fore, first Rickword and Randall Swingler of *Our Time*, and later Emile Burns of the party hierarchy. "I attended a disgraceful meeting, at which Emile Burns scolded Rickword and Swingler for the political, cultural and financial sins and omissions . . . It was a shameful episode and I shared in the shame for however 'youthful' I was, I had allowed myself to be made use of as part of the team of uncultured yobbos and musclemen under the command of the elderly Burns." Thompson's belief was that dissidence, his own and his party's, began earlier than has often been seen. "Long before '1956' there were centres of 'premature revisionism' among Communist intellectuals and others, who resisted the didactic methods of the Party's officers, the wooden economism of the Party's officers, the wooden economism of its policies, and the correct pabulum offered as 'Marxism.'"[11]

In 1948, Thompson left London for a post at the extra-mural department in Leeds. For some years, he taught literature to groups of workers in the area around Halifax. He served on the Yorkshire Committee of the British Communist Party, and played a leading role in the local peace movement. E. P. Thompson's first full-length, independent book was his nine hundred-page biography of William Morris, the craftsman and early British Marxist.[12] Thompson was interested in Morris as a poet and as an organiser: these were important themes of his own life as well.

Thompson's correspondence abounds with letters apologizing for the delay of manuscripts, or for his inability to complete an interesting historical idea. One such project was the second volume of Dona Torr's biography of Tom Mann. By December 1954, Torr was in hospital; suffering from what she feared might be her final illness. She asked the party to appoint a committee to complete the work. Torr named three historians who she thought would help, Christopher Hill, Edward Thompson and John Saville. In February 1955, Thompson agreed to contribute. Much reading would be needed, he warned, and "I cannot withdraw from my political work with the peace movement, since so much depends upon personal contacts (which can't be handed over to other comrades very easily)," but if someone from London could have words with the local party leadership, then Thompson would do his best. Over the next two years, the trail of documents goes cold. Then, in December 1957, James Klugmann wrote to John Gollan, the new secretary of the party, confirming that Thompson would not be asked to contribute and that Torr's papers had been taken back from him.[13] By then, he and many of the Communist historians had of course left the party. The only published consequence of this collaboration was a short piece published later considering Mann's activism between 1907 and 1909.[14]

There was always a movement to build. In 1986, Thompson confessed to one New York gathering of radical historians, "I don't even have a valid ticket to the British Library or the Public Record Office."[15] Yet there were also moments when the experiences gained by a life on the left reinforced the quality of his work. One book informed by the movement is Thompson's best-known study, *The Making of the English Working Class*. The book was shaped by Thompson's experiences both as a Communist and peace activist, and as a lecturer teaching literature to groups of adult workers. Tom Steele has documented the patient determination with which Thompson set about building classes in the small towns, where they were unknown. One such was Shepley near Huddersfield, where Thompson established a group of older workers. Tired as they sometimes were, they pleased him more than any gains in the larger towns. On another occasion, Thompson wrote to a friend, delighted that he had made contact with the surviving members of the Bradford Independent Labour Party (ILP). Edward Thompson himself dubbed *The Making* his "West Riding" book, to remember the activists whose documents and memories had so shaped the book.[16]

Why did Edward Thompson leave the Communist Party? The conventional explanations load everything onto the 1956 crisis. Thompson also had to explain what sort of socialist he was, and why the conduct of Stalin and indeed the Soviet invasion of Hungary, had antagonised him so badly. We find in Thompson's subsequent polemics the argument that his own mature politics, which he termed "socialist humanism," was a critique of Stalinism that learned from the ranks of the left, it was "the voice of a Communist opposition, of a total critique of Stalinist practice and theory."[17] Such humanism, he argued, was the true expression of the best aspects of the workers' movement. In that sense, it meant loyalty to a particular generation of people, and their insights. "For the veteran leader of the Derbyshire miners, Bert Wynn, solidarity with our critique meant (as for many others) severing connections within his own heart; for the full-time organiser of the Leeds Communist Party, Jim Roche, formulating the positions of socialist humanism meant getting out his tools and returning to the cutter's bench."[18] Finally, there was Thompson's open identification with the mass of the people, whenever they rose up against their own rulers. In November 1956, he wrote, "The Polish and Hungarian people have written their critique of Stalinism upon their streets and squares. In doing so, they have brought back honour to the international Communist movement."[19]

It should be apparent from this description that Thompson thought, like any good historian, in terms of traditions. There was the legacy of 1939, lit up by Frank's example. There was the English tradition of dissent, which he invoked in debate. "Talk of free will and determinism, and I think first of Milton. Talk of man's inhumanity, I think of Swift. Talk of morality and revolution, and my mind is off with Wordsworth's 'Solitary'. Talk of the problems of self-activity and creative labour in a socialist society, and I am in an instant back with William Morris."[20] There was the authentic Communist tradition of Jim Roche and Bert Wynn, and the experience of the CP Historians, whose break-up Thompson mourned:

> Marxist historiography was never, in Britain, deformed beyond recovery, even when failing to make a clear intellectual disengagement with Stalinism . . . To work as a Marxist historian in Britain means to work within a tradition founded by Marx, enriched by independent and complementary insights by William Morris, enlarged in recent times in specialist ways by such men and women as V. Gordon Childe, Maurice Dobb, Dona Torr and George Thomson, and to have as colleagues and scholars such scholars as Christopher Hill, Rodney Hilton, Eric Hobsbawm, V. G. Kiernan . . . I could find no possible cause for dishonour in claiming a place in this tradition.[21]

The Historians' Group was a source of valued political discussion for Thompson, the repository of a particular historical method, and a supply of friends.

There was always a movement to build.

A Wealth of Polemics

AFTER 1956, THOMPSON took part in a series of set-piece debates. He was concerned to defend his generation, meaning now the people who had left the Communist Party in 1956 and who had remained in leftwing activity through the New Left. The medium of his dissent was the *New Reasoner* magazine. Critics to the left saw his departure from the CP as an act of treachery. Critics to the right asked why the New Left still kept any loyalty to Marxist commitment. Thompson's 1960 essay, "Outside the Whale," used the morass of contemporary British poetry as a negative guide against which to set a moral critique of Stalinism and of fellow travelling.[22]

Another target was Perry Anderson, the young editor of the *New Left Review*. In a famous series of articles, written with Tom Nairn, Anderson had argued that Britain should be seen as a society that had failed to modernize. The explanation given was that the British bourgeoisie (unlike its European counterparts) had failed to achieve a proper revolution. According to Anderson, the English Revolution was "the first, the most mediated, and the least pure bourgeois revolution of any major European country." Its consequences were felt in the 'permanent partial interpretation" of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, on the terms of the latter.[23] Instead of becoming a normal capitalist society, England was dominated by its aristocracy, which controlled the state and governed long into the twentieth century.

E. P. Thompson's article "The Peculiarities of the English" rejected Anderson at every turn. Thompson disliked his claim that transformation happened once. "I am objecting to a model which concentrates attention upon one dramatic episode, *the* Revolution, to which all that goes before and after must be related; and which insists upon an ideal type of this Revolution against which all others must be judged." Perry Anderson's history of the left was criticized, for neglecting every movement of interest that had emerged. His account of a "British ideology" of empiricism drew more scorn. "Our authors . . . are themselves imprisoned within the myopic vision for which they express such contempt. So what if France had modernised differently from Britain? The result had been much the same. 'It happened in one way in France, and another way here.'"[24] Capitalist development was an amalgam of varied national routes. Differences were neither surprising nor determinate.

One of Edward Thompson's best-known articles was written in a polemic aimed against Louis Althusser, the father of French structuralist Marxism. The essay is probably remembered most often today for the four diagrams of archaic industrial machines, which Thompson used to state his disbelief in the metaphor of "base" and "superstructure," especially in its Althusserian Marxist form. The issue was the same one, which stood behind Thompson's criticism of his former comrades from the 1940s. When he had judged them guilty of "economism," he meant that their Marxism privileged material explanations, and assigned no independent role to culture or other non-economic factors. Thompson found that Althusser had compounded the crime. In claiming that socialist intellectuals had unique access to "science," a form of knowledge that was immune from the distortions of economic reality, Althusser was in fact arguing for a form of Communist practice in which the leaders of the party judged everything, in which the only test was the consistency of their commands, and in which experience and morality had been completely driven out all calculations.[25]

These essays were part of Thompson's consistent opposition to those socialist historians who were so concerned to build models of the past that they left real people out of their equations. Louis Althusser and his local proxy Perry Anderson embodied Stalinism. They were the counterparts in theory to the bureaucratized practice of the Communists. Thompson's history writing was part of a general concern with socialist humanism and a belief in the New Left, both of which were fuelled by its author's negative experience of the Communist Party. Thompson may have learned his history within the CPHG, but his belief in history from below led him outside the party, towards a different conception of socialism.

In the course of his polemic with Althusser, Thompson suggested that socialist humanism was distinguished from Stalinism by the loyalty it maintained to an older conception of freedom. He responded to Althusser's claim that socialist humanism was a rightwing deviation from Stalinism. "From my own position, I cannot conceive of any wave on the working class movement being further to the 'right' than Stalinism. From any consideration of working class self-activity, of socialist liberty, how is it possible to be further to the 'right' than the anti-historicism and anti-humanism of Althusser?"[26] A gap remained, as David McNally observes:

> For all its moral and political fervour, there was something remarkably imprecise about his attack on Stalinism. Thompson described his as a "moral critique of Stalinism" — and there is much to be said for that. Whatever its limitations, revolutionary socialists can only applaud a critique which refuses to countenance slave labour camps, show trials, mass murder, a police state regime of lies and crimes against human rights, as authentic forms of socialism. But alongside the vigour of moral denunciation one needs a clear analysis of the nature of the regimes at issue. At no time did Thompson offer the latter.[27]

The ethical content of Thompson's politics was expressed in "socialist humanism." The roots of this term, he claimed, were broad, "It was voiced by poets in Poland, Russia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia; by factory delegates in Budapest; by Communist militants at the eighth plenum of the Polish Party; by a Communist premier (Imre Nagy) who was murdered for his pains."[28] One further influence may have been the existentialist philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre. Certainly in his criticisms of Communist economism, and amorality, Sartre developed a philosophical counterpart to Thompson's historical critique.[29]

While acknowledging the insights that Thompson gained by means of his distinctive philosophy, including his absolute commitment to the cause of the East European dissidents, the historian of the New Left Michael Kenny has taken our author to task for "romanticism." The theory remained underdeveloped, he suggests, and resolutely negative. Clear as it was in critique of Stalinism, it offered no positive conception of the rules by which people would live.[30] The same critique was made even during the 1950s and in the pages of the *New Reasoner*. Alasdair Macintyre complained that ethical commands were often so timeless as to exist beyond reproach, or so contingent as to provide poor guidance to those who used them. Humanism could not be detached from "the history of the class struggle."[31]

In 1968, Thompson worked with Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall on what became the *May Day Manifesto*, a socialist challenge to the rightward drift of Labour politics under Harold Wilson. Later, in the 1980s, he was a full-time activist in European Nuclear Disarmament. Thompson warned against the danger of "exterminism," the natural right-wing way of thinking about the world, which would sacrifice whole peoples for the sake of victory in the Cold War.[32]

Having turned away from the Communist Party, Thompson attempted to combine Marxism with an interest in human agency. History-writing and political activism succeeded one another in an arbitrary sequence decided by the requirements of life itself. At the end of the 1970s, Thompson saw a need for peace campaigners to challenge the threat of nuclear Armageddon. "For the next decade," as Bill Schwarz records, "Thompson effectively dropped his historical researches to become, again, an activist in the peace movement."[33] According to Kate Soper, this was the most productive period of all. "At any moment he might be found exhorting the masses in Trafalgar Square to `feel their strength' or manning the bookstall at the END bazaar; playing percussion in a fundraising concert or haggling at the Czech embassy over the suppression of the Jazz Group; dialoguing with Charta 77 or marching at the head of an anti-NATO rally in Madrid; exposing the grotesqueries of the SDI programme or railing against the skulduggery of the Soviet Peace Committee."[34] His activism ended prematurely, with Thompson's death in 1993.

The Making

Thompson's most important historical work was *The Making of the English Working Class*. An account of the workers' movement in the decades between the French revolution and Chartism, *The Making* addressed a key moment in the transformation to capitalism. In Karl Marx's original scheme of development, this period was just as important as the 1640s. Although by 1780, a capitalist class was already clearly in the ascendant, it was still a mercantile class. It could generate profits from trade, but not yet in production. Only industry could secure the indefinite creation of profit in this way. Thus for Marx, industrial capitalism was a higher form of capitalism, perhaps the highest form of all. Edward Thompson examined the impact of the Industrial Revolution through the experiences of artisans, weavers and others dispossessed by the change from an agricultural to an urban society.

The Making of the English Working Class begins properly with the launching of the London Corresponding Society in March 1792. The society was shaped by the experience of the French revolution, and began to outgrow the limits of the milieu in which it began. Thompson's account continued through a discussion of the ideas of Tom Paine, and their influence on working class circles. Hundreds of thousands of people absorbed his argument that the people needed neither an aristocracy nor a king. The second part of Thompson's book was largely devoted to the social and economic processes of class formation. Moving away from London, the focus of his book turned towards the textile workers of the West Riding, their conditions and their complaints. Drawing on diverse sources, including parish registers and medical records, Thompson showed that the factory system was based on organised cruelty. Thompson's third section addressed workers' ideas. He explored distinct groups of people, including the Irish in Britain, working women, Luddites and machine-breakers. By the late 1830s, the working class had indeed been made. Its traditions of class loyalty were long established. It was in the political movements of the workers that the existence of a definite class identity could best be seen.

The most famous passages in *The Making* are found in its preface. Here Edward Thompson defended his project of opening up plebeian lives to full historical treatment. The ignorance of other writers should be not seen as history's final verdict:

> I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' handloom weaver, the 'utopian' artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott from the enormous condescension of posterity. Their crafts and traditions may have been dying. Their hostility to the new industrialism may have been backward looking. Their communitarian ideals may have been fantasises. Their insurrectionary conspiracies may have been foolhardy. But they lived through these times of acute social disturbance, and we did not. Their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience; and, if they were casualties of history they remain, condemned in their own lives, as casualties.[35]

The key concept here is "experience." The story of everyone's life was valuable, whether or not the causes that they spoke up for were won. Another passage defines more closely what Thompson by writing the word "class" into the title of his book:

> By class I understand a historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness. I do not see class as a structure, nor even as a "category," but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships . . . Class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) their own . . . Consciousness of class arises in the same way in different times and places, but never in just the same way.[36]

In this passage, the power of "experience" has been magnified. Now experience has become the fundamental historical reality, of greater importance than class or structure, agency, role, ideas, or indeed any of the other generalisations that historians have employed to make sense of the past. Elsewhere Thompson used the metaphor of love to explain class and class struggle. Before seeking to establish the nature of the relationship, we must first see that there are two people, and that they are in love. This was the point of his term, to argue that any debate about the meaning of class could only be resolved on the terrain of history, by looking at the real experiences of people as they lived in the past.

Experience is felt in the passing of time, it is a link between memory and history. Beyond that, Thompson does not say anything definite about it at all. The term is both pregnant with meaning and also frustratingly vague. Indeed its imprecision seems to mirror the partial haze of Thompson's socialist humanism. We know what Thompson was against, a Marxism which lost count of people's values, and a metaphor of human action which portrayed economics as the sole determinant. To avoid this negative trap, Thompson's preface folded the two categories of base and superstructure together, leaving this single category of experience alone.

An intellectual history of this problem might go back to Descartes. How do we act? Because we know. How do we know? Because we think, so we exist. By the time of Hegel, philosophers had developed a notion of collective consciousness and of its progress. After ignorance came knowledge. A prior condition of false consciousness must therefore exist. Mind and matter were two distinct moments in one totality. Marx believed he had solved everything, by turning Hegel's dialectic upside down. Ideas still mattered, but their origin was to be found in material reality. Yet in the hands of Marx's popularizers, the sense of change, the dialectic, was lost. Stalinism took over the formulae of 1900-era Marxism, and in particular its tendency to use economics as a dead weight. The result was lifeless, didactic theory. It obscured ninety per cent of historical reality. That last was Thompson's point.

As with Thompson's emphasis on humanism, so it is with his stress on experience. We find that the same method being applied at much the same time by different writers. In his search for a methodological critique of Stalinism, Jean-Paul Sartre also placed enormous emphasis on the same concept. It fitted with his idea of the human agent rebelling against monstrous unfreedom. One critic Theodor Adorno pointed out that Sartre's choice of concept was informed by a familiarity with Hegelian philosophy. Within this language, Adorno argued, the term experience was not neutral, but carried specific overtones. It tended to result in the neglect of collective choices, and the privileging of the individual. Human consciousness was treated as subjective and episodic. "The schools that take derivatives of the Latin *existere* for their device would cite the realities of tangible experience against the alienated special sciences. For fear of materialization they withdraw from substance." Ironically in his criticism of experience, Adorno ended up with a choice that was not very different from E. P. Thompson's. Either humanity would adopt some plural future, or there would be annihilation. "No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb."[37]

> His criticisms of Stalinism were not the first, nor the most profound.

There are problems with placing too much explanatory weight on this grand concept of "experience." The more specific meaning it is given, the further the concept departs from Thompson's use of it. Yet as Thompson's biographer Bryan Palmer suggests, it was in this case a saving abstraction. In other words, it took a complex argument and made it simple. The emphasis on experience in *The Making* enabled Thompson to advance towards new historical insights. The most important of these was that the working class itself would not have existed as a self-conscious independent agent, without the determined political activity of many thousands of people. Class was a badge of self-identification, a choice. As Palmer writes, "Whatever the difficulties in defining such conceptual terms [as experience] with precision, their utilisation in *The Making* allowed entry to whole areas of neglected importance in the lives of workers, areas that could never again be ignored in negotiating the slippery slopes that connect being and consciousness."[38]

Thompson insisted that no account of long-term historical change could be convincing unless it described the conditions as they shaped the lives of men and women in history. Following its publication in 1963, *The Making* was warmly reviewed, not least in the *Bulletin* of the Society for the Study of Labour History: "Edward Thompson is throughout, and consciously, interested in the minds and in the emotions of the working masses who were hammered into a class in this period. He is unable any longer (and here lies his true originality) to accept either a kind of style-response psychology, or the compartmentalisation of protest movements." Thompson's subjects are fully human beings: "Their ideology is steeped in hunger, and their trade union unionism in political oppression; their resentment of factory discipline is mingled with contempt for the . . . extravagance of Court and Government; their bitterness over enclosures affects their mockery of Christian apologetics. They are not one-dimensional historical figures, but personalities like ourselves, living and dreaming at many levels; needing security and variety in life, an aim to live for and an ethic to live by."[39] *The Making of the English Working Class* was a marked advance for activist history. Years later, it remains a key text.

Culture versus Production?

THE ACCOUNT HERE has so far tended to identify with Thompson's work. But there were many grounds from which he could equally be criticised. "I began to reason in my thirty-third year," Thompson wrote, "and despite my best efforts, I have never been able to shake the habit off."[40] Why did he leave it so long? The lies of the Moscow trials were already well known, as were the murders and the facts of the gulag. Thompson tended to respond to these criticisms in an *ad hominem* fashion, assuming that those who made them could be dismissed on other grounds. Thus, for example, he blamed the organizational demise of the New Left after 1956 not on any weakness of its own but on outside forces of uncertain sociological origin and poor intellectual worth. In such hands, he claimed, "Marxism is conceived of, not as a living tradition, but as a self-enclosed doctrine, a means of flattening and simplifying whatever phenomenon are under investigation so that certain plausible facts may be selected (and all others discounted) in order to ornament or 'prove' pre-existing assumptions. A great deal of what is today most stridently acclaimed as Marxism is no more than thinking of this order, whether it commences with the assumption that the Soviet leaders are all-sinning or all-knowing."[41] The last sentence is the important part of this quote. If we read Thompson closely, there is no obvious reason why the opposite of sin should be knowledge; except that if his last sentence had concluded with the words "all-virtuous" rather than "all-knowing" then the bankruptcy of the middle ground would be obvious. Thompson's principles were as an antiwar activist and as an historian. His criticisms of Stalinism were not the first, nor the most profound.

Other criticisms relate to Thompson's historical method. By making such an open-ended defence of class, it is suggested that he opened up the gates to more subjective readings. Thompson was even guilty, at times, of encouraging this reading. E. P. Thompson explained his argument to an Indian audience, in December 1976, "'Without production, no history' as R. Sharma has properly insisted, But we must also say, 'Without culture, no production.'"[42] Sam Ashman suggests that Thompson's cultural definition of class contributed to the subsequent rise of postmodernism.[43] Another Marxist critic, Alex Callinicos, has taken up the argument: "the trouble with experience is that it is, by definition, subjective. To describe how someone experienced an event is to describe that event from that person's point of view. In principle, therefore everyone's experience is as valid as anyone else's."[44]

The point matters, because in the forty years since Thompson's book, rival conceptions of the past have emerged that stress the national-solidarity of the English, the lack of class tensions, even in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which is the period Thompson made his own. Encouraged by the climate of postmodern theory in the 1980s and 1990s, such writers as Patrick Joyce and Gareth

Stedman Jones have argued that Thompsonian history has itself become outdated. The historian hears only a babble of discordant voices, from which to construct their record. The mass of the people did not share Thompson's politics. If we take "experience" seriously, then his narrative of the past can only be one among several. According to Joyce, for example, "There is a powerful sense in which class may be said to have 'fallen'. Instead of being a master category, it has become one term among many, sharing a rough equality with the others."[45]

Against this new argument, Thompson's deliberately vague conception of class becomes a weaker ground upon which to contest changed critics. For how are we to choose between a liberal and a class conception of history? "The question," writes Alex Callinicos, "is one that cannot be resolved simply by comparing different experiences." The charge is that Thompson's work has ended up being used as if it had endorsed in advance the most subjectivist of later histories. The process is of course deeply ironic, for Thompson's work was conceived in part as a critique of structuralism and allied creeds. He could not know that such writers as Stedman Jones would flip round in their analyses from a didactic, deterministic and objectivist "structuralism," to a free-flowing, relativistic and elusive, post-structuralism" (in other words, postmodernism). In that sense, Thompson's argument was the victim of its own success; his critics fought back by integrating a part of his critique into their own philosophy. By encouraging the possibility that should subaltern groups should speak (and at the same time denying them the right to do anything more), postmodern authors have armed themselves against the radical attacks of Thompsonian history.

Thompson's contemporary critics have argued that the solution to this problem can be found by returning to Marx, and in particular the relationship he described between base and superstructure. The adjectives that Marx used to describe the relationship between social process and intellectual consequence implied first, that material reality was of prior importance, and second, that political, artistic or intellectual choices could in turn have economic results. Having re-asserted the primacy of social fact, we can then ask whether any one interpretation of social fact remains legitimate? We can take an example that was familiar to Thompson, the debate over the consequences of the Industrial Revolution. If we establish that the period between 1780 and 1820 was one of sharply falling living standards, then it follows that we can only understand this experience in one of a limited set of ways. A more optimistic economic history would also have wider consequences. Experience is not infinite; there are limits to the range of historical explanations possible.

Yet to formulate an answer in these ways is only to raise new problems. For writers such as Sam Ashman, the criticism of Thompson is only an intermediate stage in a more important process, the critique of postmodernism. The problems with the latter position are more evident. The argument that all accounts are multiple, and no truths "real," points to a radical break between campaigning and academic knowledge. Democratic activists depend on clarity of insight and purpose, while academics are said to thrive on multiplicity, subjectivism, and chaos. Yet if Thompson is criticized for acting as a bridge towards this "heresy," his was not the crime itself! For not just in its preface, but right throughout the book, *The Making* carried the mark of its moment of origin. Alongside works by Sheila Rowbotham, Sivanandan and others, E. P. Thompson's book is one of the great historical documents of the 1956-1968 British left. Far from discarding economics, in employing the category of "experience," Thompson was only searching for a new and non-dogmatic language in which to phrase an old "Marxist" theme, the commonality behind "class."

For if Edward Thompson had been accused, in his own lifetime, of opening up the path to a purely subjectivist, idealistic reading of the past, then we can imagine that he would have had his response well-prepared. Indeed, observations of this kind *were* made even before 1993. For example, while reviewing Michelle Perrot's *A History of Private Life* for the *New York Review of Books*, David Cannadine observed in passing that the author's postfeminism rested on "vulgarised version of Thompson's arguments put forward nearly thirty years ago." The claim of inadvertent intellectual ancestry drew a sharp response.

> I was surprised to find myself blamed for the supposed sins of this largely French collection, with which I am in no way connected and for which I hold no brief . . . Cannadine exposes the malign influence of *The Making* as more far-reaching than that: it seems that I am responsible for the supposed deficiencies of feminist historiography. Once again I find his account of my views to be unrecognisable . . . Most American feminist historians will not thank him for attributing their basic historical model to me . . . It may be that the influence of *The Making* is now a drag upon historical scholarship. But let the matter be argued out by attention to the issues or to the text, and not — slop, slap, splosh — with a distemper brush.[46]

Similar points can be made, of course, against E. P. Thompson's more recent critics. They blame Thompson for the wave of intellectual defeatism associated with postmodernism. Yet of the various antagonists that appear in Thompson's polemics, several played a much greater role in the genesis of this theory. Althusser in particular deserves a good slice of blame for the argument that any theory should be judged not in terms of its practical application but its internal logic. Indeed if Althusser is the father of structuralism, then he is also the grandfather of post-structuralism, and the great-grandfather of postmodernity. Conversely, Thompson's repeated insistence that the moral conduct of the various Communist Parties, East and West, was more important than their claim to doctrinal authority surely points to at least one potential grounds on which postmodernity is suspect.

> "There is in E.P. Thompson something of the *revolutionary temper,* a disposition towards finding the cracks within the heavy structures of society."

It remains to be seen whether postmodernism will ever be refuted on the terrain of intellectual history. If this does happen, there is no necessary argument to say that the victor will be wearing the clothes of 1848 (say) rather than 1956. Who anyway, has legislated that only one set of influences should be allowed? "There is in Thompson," writes David McNally, "something of the *revolutionary temper*, a disposition towards finding the cracks within the heavy structures of society which enable agency and self-activity to bend history, to shape the direction of things. And it is this which makes the best of his work, whatever its limits, marvellous examples of genuine historical materialism at work."[47] Thompson's history fused empirical research with imaginative, emancipatory politics. Other travellers may since have become lost, but that has not only been the fault of this pioneer.

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The First Neoconservative

Herman Wouk, the Americanization of the Holocaust, and the Rise of Neoconservatism

JOEL BRODKIN

THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE intensive bombing of Serbia in 1999 as part of the need to avoid "another Holocaust" is only a recent event in the Americanization of the Holocaust: specifically its use as a propaganda theme for the defense of U.S. great power interests.

When we refer to the Americanization of the Holocaust we speak not about the atrocity itself, "but only about the rhetorical, cultural and political, and religious uses to which the disaster has been put since then," as Phillip Lopate has written.[1] The Americanization of the Holocaust has been extensive. The sense of horror at Nazi crimes has been used as a foundation to develop self-justifying notions of American righteousness because the Holocaust is about the crimes of others. For any great power, a focus on the crimes of others is welcome, particularly when it is an empire built on a history of slavery and ethnic cleansing.

Herman Wouk's best-selling novels (made into films and TV mini-series) such as *The Winds of War* (1971) and *War and Remembrance* (1978) brought an awareness of the Holocaust to tens of millions of Americans, making it seem an episode in U.S. history and a part of American historical experience. Wouk's work put a U.S. spin on the Holocaust, emphasizing the righteousness of U.S. military and international power and the sanctity of American institutions. In addition, in *The Caine Mutiny* (1951), Wouk created the first American neoconservative hero.

The Caine Mutiny

WOUK'S CELEBRATIVE FOCUS is most evident in his early novel of World War II, *The Caine Mutiny*. Published during the Korean War, *The Caine Mutiny* initially sold three million copies and won the Pulitzer Prize. A whale of a sea tale, it became a Broadway play and a Hollywood movie starring Humphrey Bogart as the ship's captain, Lieutenant Commander Queeg.

Four characters, all officers, are central to the story and the fate of the Caine, a World War I vintage mine layer. Willie Keith, the central character, is a young wealthy WASP piano-playing Princeton graduate. He comes from the Gold Coast town of Manhasset on Long Island's North Shore. The novel is the story of Willie Keith's education in the importance of accepting — indeed embracing — the concept of the chain of command. The second officer, Steve Maryk, is a peacetime fisherman with a feel for the sea. He likes naval service and hopes to make a postwar career in the navy. On the Caine he is the executive officer, the second in command.

The next officer is Tom Keefer, somewhat superior to Willie Keith in both age and rank. Tom Keefer is the villain of the novel and a con-

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temptuous manipulator. An already published writer, Keefer does not plan to let mere naval duty interfere with his self-appointed task in life: writing the great and best-selling American war novel. Queeg, the captain, is a professional officer: an Annapolis graduate, a bit over thirty, physically unimposing and appears increasingly as the story unfolds, vindictive, incompetent, bullying, and cowardly. He is nicknamed by his junior officers "old yellow stain."

Throughout the novel, Keefer, the writer, eggs on Steve Maryk, the executive officer, to take action against Captain Queeg by reporting him to the Department of the Navy for incompetence. When the Caine enters a typhoon and Captain Queeg appears incapable of taking decisive action to save ship and crew, Maryk stages a mutiny, assumes command, and keeps the ship from disaster.

About Face

THE STORY OF *The Caine Mutiny* resembles Thomas Heggen's *Mr. Roberts* published five years earlier (1946). Heggen, like Wouk, was a college educated, wartime naval officer. In *Mr. Roberts*, as in *The Caine Mutiny*, readers encounter a group of civilian officers enduring the joyless routine of life on a noncombatant vessel, fighting boredom as well as their rigid and arbitrary captain. However, Caine has a pointed political agenda, different from Mr. Roberts.

To defend Maryk at his court martial, the Navy appoints Lieutenant Barney Greenwald, a peacetime lawyer and a wartime combat pilot. In the novel, Lieutenant Greenwald speaks for Wouk, the author.[2] When Greenwald first meets Maryk, he is greatly surprised "because he had already formed a clear picture of the exec: slight, thin, nervous, dark with the self-satisfied expression of a petty intellectual." Wouk provides a portrait — or rather a caricature — of the leftwing, often Jewish intellectual. Greenwald further describes the villain: "In fact, he had pictured Bill Pelham, a loud mouthed Marxist of his college days, in naval uniform."

Greenwald tries to get out of defending Maryk but then accepts when he realizes that Maryk, a real salt of the earth type, is merely a dupe for the intellectual of the conspiracy, the writer Keefer. At the court martial Greenwald wins an acquittal for Maryk, depicting Queeg as crazy. But at a party afterwards celebrating the publication of Keefer's novel as well as Maryk's acquittal, a drunk and angry Greenwald dresses down the mutineers saying that, "It is the Queegs of the world, the regular officers of the U.S. Army and Navy" that prevented his mother "from being cooked down to soap over there."

Not lawyers, not "sensitive intellectuals," not the readers of modern literature who like Marcel Proust and James Joyce, but the officers of the regular Army and Navy. They stopped Hitler and saved his mother from the crematorium. Greenwald adds, "[Queeg] stopped Hermann Goering from washing his fat behind with my mother." With that, Greenwald throws his wine in Keefer's s face, the true instigator of the mutiny of the Caine. Later in the war, Keefer is further discredited when he displays physical cowardice in battle, prematurely abandoning his ship under fire.

A Whiteness of Our Own

IN THE 1950S, following postwar red scares and suburbanization, a conservative mood predominated in American society. Several social analysts described both the oppressive atmosphere and conformity that pervaded the social institutions and everyday life of America at the time. Among them were David Reisman (*The Lonely Crowd*, 1950), William H. Whyte (*The Organization Man*, 1957), and Harvey Swados (*On The Line*, 1957).

Whyte and Swados both considered the conformist message of Wouk's novel as an example of these negative trends.[3] While Whyte criticized Wouk's authoritarianism, he said little about the grounding of that authoritarianism in a specific interpretation of Jewish experience coupled with a justification focused on alleged Jewish interests. One comment of Whyte's stands out: "In what must be the most irrelevant climax in contemporary fiction, Greenwald says that he is a Jew and that his grandmother was boiled down for soap in Germany and thanks Queeg who kept the ships going."

Whyte could not see the logic in these remarks because at the time people viewed the Holocaust as exemplifying the intense evil that had resulted from tyrannical state power. The crimes of the Holocaust demonstrated the need for individuals to respond to their consciences and not merely obey superiors. In 1945 and for sometime afterwards, the idea of an authoritarian moral lesson — the importance of "following orders" as the lesson of the Holocaust — seemed unimaginable. Only Wouk's storytelling ability makes this assertion seem plausible.

Fifty years later it appears that the about face in *Caine*, while not logical, was hardly irrelevant. It foreshadows the neoconservative reverential stance towards state authority and the institutions of society. Ironically, Wouk's theme of obedience to authority does come strikingly close to the World War II slogan, "Obey, believe, fight" that covered the walls of fascist Italy.

Wouk set the groundwork for a specifically Jewish-referenced conservatism — a set of values and attitudes that privileged the existing institutions of society, particularly the military ones, and demonized the voices of critical opposition. The character of Keefer would figure greatly in the neoconservative ideology of the 1970s-1990s with its enemy being a new class of intellectuals who allegedly hated their country and its culture.

In short, Wouk helped establish a framework for Jewish conservatism, "a whiteness of our own," a defense of newly acquired privileges and opportunities in postwar suburban America, contrasted with Hitler's murder of six million Jews.[4] Wouk is proclaiming in *Caine* that Americans — and especially Jews — owe a special debt, and need to honor and glorify the U.S. military and the U.S. state for fighting Nazism.

World War II is now remembered not as a war against fascism, Nazism, and racism, but rather as the triumph of righteous American might and the Good War — proof that the United States is on the side of the angels. In the late forties and fifties, writes Gary Wills, "A kind of imperial literature grew up celebrating America's epic destiny."[5] *The Caine Mutiny* was a vivid example of this celebration. As the Cold War intensified, Wouk's novel with its message of obedience to authority served to consolidate the home front by uncovering subversive attitudes, ideas, and behavior. While Wouk's subject is World War II, the overall lessons are intended for the cold war period he is writing in.

Wouk was consciously writing in opposition to much of American literature of World Wars I and II that scathingly critiqued lofty official war aims and the brutal and self-serving conduct of many professional officers. Hemingway, Dos Passos, E.E. Cummings, Norman Mailer, and Thomas Heggen all contributed to this oppositional literature. A critical stance vis-à-vis the military formed part of the modern outlook of American writers in the decades following World War I. The modern view may be defined as a skeptical attitude toward the pieties of family, religion and state, as well as the traditional hierarchies of race and gender.[6] The viewpoint arose in part from the exposure of many writers to the slaughter of World War I. The war had been presented to the public as a "war to end all wars" and a war for democracy. In the aftermath of the war, writers and others realized it had, in reality, been a conflict over power, profit, and empire.

Wouk's anti-modern attitude embraced and cherished the institutions of family, clan, and religion, as well as state and military power. Tom

Keefer, like the writer Noel Airman, a character in Wouk's later novel, *Marjorie Morningstar*, stands for the values Wouk despises. One represents the critical intellectual, the other the free-spirited bohemian.

For Wouk, freer sexual behavior was almost as abhorrent as Nazism and Communism. In *The Caine Mutiny* Keith's girl friend, Marie Minotti, the child of Italian immigrants, demonstrates her fitness for marriage to the wealthy WASP Keith and upward social mobility by remaining chaste amidst the loose living and easy morals of the entertainment world.

Wouk's book is a dual celebration. On the one hand, it hails the triumph of mid-century American power. On the other, it celebrates the arrival of white ethnics in the personae of Lieutenant Greenwald and Marie Minotti. Lieutenant Greenwald embodies both aspects of this celebration. He is an officer, a lawyer, a naval aviator, and outspokenly committed to U.S. power and a parochial self-serving definition of Jewish interests.

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In the character of Lieutenant Greenwald one observes the Jewish intellectual who is on the side of authority and the institutions of society — one who despises the rebels, the critics, the bohemians. In the person of Lieutenant Greenwald, the first Jewish neoconservative intellectual makes his appearance. Conservatives have agreed on the importance of the novel and the significance of its message. Not long ago a reviewer in *Forward* commented favorably on Lt. Greenwald's "eloquent speech about what a generation of Jews owes to Captain Queeg."

Queeg did not Save European Jewry

WOUK'S CLAIM THAT THE U.S. military saved world Jewry is false, as the history of World War II indicates. Auschwitz and most of the death camps where Jews were exterminated were located in Eastern Europe, and the camps were liberated by the Red Army. In fact, 70 percent to 80 percent of all German casualties in World War II were inflicted by the Soviet Union. In North Africa, the first area to be liberated by American forces, the local fascists were reinstated in power. Anti-Semitic laws were kept in place at the behest of Robert Murphy, Eisenhower's chief political advisor. The United States preferred to deal with fascist elements led by Admiral Darlan. This group merely wished to change sides as the balance of power in the global conflict began to shift. Four hundred members of the anti-fascist resistance (80 percent of whom were Jewish) who had occupied the key sectors of Algiers to facilitate the Allied landings were betrayed and had to resume a clandestine existence. Only five months after the landings were Jewish and other anti-fascist prisoners freed.[7]

In Wouk's novel of World War II, *War and Remembrance*, the author has a German general snidely refer to Roosevelt's deal "with the arch collaborator Darlan." However, the consequences of the deal for Algerian Jewry go unmentioned.[8]

U.S. government policies also aided Nazis and fascists in the postwar years. Following World War II, thousands of German and Eastern European members of the S.S. and the Gestapo were brought to the United States by the military. Among these "immigrants" were people involved in carrying out Hitler's Final

Solution. At the time Wouk was writing *Caine* there was some awareness within the American Jewish community of this fact.[9] The influx of Nazis and Nazi collaborators, combined with an initial limitation on immigration to the United States by survivors of the Holocaust, prompted Rabbi Stephen Wise to say in the late 1940s, “As long as we reward former servants of Hitler while leaving his victims in DP camps, we cannot even pretend we are making any real effort to achieve the aims we fought for.”[10]

In Germany, the sabotage of de-Nazification meant that some Holocaust survivors waited until the century’s end to receive reparations from German corporations. Official U.S. policy for postwar Germany had called for the de-cartelization and de-Nazification of Germany’s industrial and financial corporations due to their profit from slave labor and role in creating Hitler’s war machine. However, Major General William Draper was put in charge of administering these policies. In the prewar years, Draper had served as vice president of Dillon Reed, a Wall Street investment bank intimately involved with German finance and industry. This included the Aryanization of Jewish property in the 1930s. Draper’s policies insured that the de-Nazification of Germany’s large banks and corporations did not occur.[11]

In the first half of the 20th century virulent anti-Communism and murderous anti-Semitism were often bedfellows. Neoconservatives strove to obfuscate this fact as they identified Jewish wellbeing with anti-Communist politics. However, Pierre Vidal Naquet pointed out, “in the view of the leader of the Third Reich, Judaism, Marxism and Bolshevism were all one and the same. . .”[12] The numerous crimes of the Soviet Union do not negate this fact. The connection between anti-Semitism and anti-Communism was not limited to Europe. In 1960, William Buckley’s *National Review* opposed the Eichmann trial because it was bad for the anti-Communist cause, and additionally it became an occasion for a display of anti-Semitism in the magazine.[13]

The history of American corporate and governmental collaboration with fascists and Nazis before, during and after World War II — although the subject of repeated Congressional investigations in the 1930s and 1940s — has been ignored and concealed in the years since then. Its acknowledgment would interfere with the portrayal of American power as righteous.

The Myth of Munich

In *The Winds of War*, Wouk echoed the common point of view on the men of Munich as weaklings.[14] A similarly constructed memory of Munich played a significant role in neoconservative ideology. The neocons and the earlier liberal cold war warriors correctly connected the Holocaust to the earlier Western appeasement at Munich in 1938. In their view, the lesson of Munich and the Holocaust was the danger of appeasing totalitarians, such as Soviet Communists and radical Third World nationalists.

Every Secretary of State from John Foster Dulles (“We can’t have another Munich”) to Madeleine Albright (“my frame of reference is Munich not Vietnam”) has invoked and obfuscated the lessons of Munich. But the aims of Hitler’s Munich collaborators (as Clement Leibowitz calls them in his book *In Our Time: The Chamberlain-Hitler Collusion*, 1998) were precisely the containment of not just communism, but socialism and liberalism as well. Upper-class groups in England, France and the United States viewed Hitler’s regime in a positive manner. They saw fascism and Nazism as away to protect their property and privileges from radical social change. In *Why England Slept*, a young John Kennedy wrote, “Germany with its early program of vigorous opposition to Communism was looked upon as a bulwark against the spread of the doctrine through Europe.”[15]

Wouk and the neocons distorted the role played by the U.S. government vis-á-vis fascism and Nazism in the prewar, wartime, and postwar eras. They enveloped the American military in the glow cast by the struggle against fascism and Nazism. They did this to justify massive arms spending, a military buildup, and the global projection of American power in the post-World War II period.

The Two Nationalisms

IN THE MID-1970S, to intensify the Cold War, the neocons and others founded the Committee on the Present Danger II (CPD). On its Board of Directors were such neocon intellectuals as Nathan Glazer, Seymour Martin Lipset, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, and Midge Dector. Richard Perle was a member and would become an Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Reagan Administration. Ronald Reagan, too, was a member.

The CPD had been created in 1976 during the Nixon-Ford detente with the Soviet Union. It propagated the false view that the United States was militarily inferior to the Soviet Union. This became part of Reagan's electoral program in 1980 and led to massive arms spending once he entered the White House. Its premise, like Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, was a fraud, propagated by some of the same people.[16]

Wouk and the neocons cherished a second military, that of Israel. Israel's wars were the subject of two later novels by Wouk, *The Hope* (1993) dedicated to the Israeli army, and *The Glory* (1994). For the traditional U.S. foreign policy elite, Israel was a means to an end — protecting our oil and our Arab regimes. A 1958 National Security Council memorandum stated, "if we choose to combat radical Arab nationalism and to hold Persian Gulf oil by force if necessary, a logical corollary would be to support Israel, as the only strong pro-West power left in the Near East."[17] For the neocons and Wouk, a militarily powerful Israel, like a militarily dominant America, was also justified with reference to the Holocaust and a valued end in itself. Leading neoconservtive operatives worked for both the Netanyahu government in Israel and the administration of George W. Bush.

Neoconservative ideology took on a second institutional form. In 1979, the right-wing Likud government of Menachem Begin created the Jonathan Institute. Meetings held in 1979 and 1984 were attended by such neocons as Daniel Moynihan, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Norman Podhretz, Midge Dector, the Senator from Boeing, Henry "Scoop" Jackson, George H.W. Bush, as well as Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin, and high-ranking intelligence officials of both states. The message conveyed was that the Palestinian struggle had to be understood in terms of Palestinians being practitioners of terror and Soviet surrogates; nothing more. The continuing removal of the indigenous Palestinian population was not an issue and could proceed apace.[18]

A common U.S. and Israeli culture and history of pioneering/ethnic cleansing gave the alliance a basis in shared values beyond mere material and policy needs. Neoliberal Al Gore stated it best when addressing an Israeli audience. "Our founders, like yours, made an errand into the wilderness in search of a new Zion."[19] The two frontier nationalisms had indeed found common ground in the worlds of policy, ideology, and the fiction of Herman Wouk.

The Great Celebration

WOUK'S IDENTIFICATION OF Jewish wellbeing with U.S. military and economic power also reflected the remarkable change in the status of postwar American Jewry. America did indeed become a land of milk and honey for many Jews at this time. It became a place that offered Jews not only personal safety and economic betterment, but also opportunities for assimilation into the American mainstream. Accompanying these positive changes and greater possibilities came increased conservatism.

The change in the status of Jews is reflected in the thoughts of the lawyer Lt. Greenwald while he is waiting to meet the leader of the mutiny. Greenwald is expecting to encounter someone "slight, thin, nervous, dark…" This is the pre-World War II racial image of Jews as people not quite white, as "miserable darkened Hebrews."[20] But the years following World War II would see the incorporation of Jews and other white ethnics into the postwar expanded segregated suburban republic, where African Americans were barred. Moreover, this social rise was federally supported via Veterans Administration and Federal Housing Administration practices. American Jews came to have the full range of opportunities and privileges available to white people, while the society continued to enforce a highly segregated, unequal and unjust racial order.

The Caine Mutiny forms part of that great postwar Jewish American celebration in popular and academic writing lasting through the early 1960s.[21] In essence, Wouk and the above celebratory authors are making an argument that goes something like this. "I worked hard for what I have. I'm a good and deserving person. This society has recognized my moral merit and abilities and that of my group. Therefore, this must be a good society." The argument continues: "Anyone who points out the institutional basis of inequality is raining on my parade, denying me the respect I'm due and is a threat to this good society."

However, there was a hard edge to this celebration: it disparaged those who had not made it. Permeating neoconservative writing is what Robert Alter in a similar context called "the self congratulatory attitude…a sense of complacent satisfaction of having climbed so far, and the deepest self-righteousness between ghettos past and present."

Here, too, the ethnic celebration/denigration would fit well with a national agenda to demonize and marginalize poor people of color and undo New Deal and Great Society programs.

In these ethnic Horatio Alger stories personal success and celebration became ethnic celebration, and the ethnic celebration itself became part of the national self-congratulation. These ethnic tales were privileged because they served wider needs, forming a part of the ideological argument of America as a just society, at a time when basic injustices remain embedded in the social structure.

WOUK WAS A PROPHET in 1951 when *The Caine Mutiny* was published, for anticipating a converging of interests between the American empire, the State of Israel, and organized American Jewry.

However, not all consented to this shortsighted definition of self-interest. In Israel over 500 reservists, soldiers and officers, refused occupation duty in the West Bank and Gaza since performing such service often entailed the commission of war crimes. In South Africa, Jewish heroes of South Africa's struggle for liberation, Ronnie Kasrils and Max Ozinsky, along with hundreds of others, signed a Not in My Name petition protesting the occupation and comparing it to South Africa's apartheid. Some worried about the danger the alliance posed, not least of all to Jews.

NOTES

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2. Herman Wouk, *The Caine Mutiny* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 1951), 377-378.

3. Harvey Swados, "Popular Taste and The Caine Mutiny," in *A Radical's America* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 1962), 235-244; William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (Garden City, N.Y., 1957), 271.

4. Karen Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 138.

5. Garry Wills, *John Wayne's America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 164.

6. Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995).

7. Michael Abitbol, *The Jews of North Africa During the-*

Second World War (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1989); Gitta Amipaz-Silber, *The Role of the Jewish Underground in the American Landing in Algiers 1940-1942* (Woodmere, New York: Gefen Books, 1992); Peter Tompkins, *The Murder of Admiral Darlan* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965).

8. Herman Wouk, *War and Remembrance* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 577-582.

9. Later in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s these policies would be detailed in books such as *Wanted: The Search for Nazis in America*, *The Belarus File*, *Blowback*, and *Secret Agenda*.

10. Tom Bower, *The Paperclip Conspiracy* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1987), 208.

11. Charles Higham, *Trading with the Enemy* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1983), 210-220; James Stewart Martin, *All Honorable Men* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1950); Christopher Simpson, *The Splendid Blond Beast* (New York: Grove Press, 1993), 59-74.

12. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews: History, Memory, and the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 155.

13. Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 130.

14. Herman Wouk, *The Winds of War* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1971), 40-44.

15. See Clement Leibovitz and Alvin Finkel, *In Our Time: The Chamberlain-Hitler Collusion* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998).

16. Jerry Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis* (Boston: South End Press, 1983).

17. Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, *Friend in Deed: Inside theU.S.-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), 88.

18. Edward Herman and Frank Broadhead, *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection* (New York: Sheridan Square Publications, 1986), 66-71; Edward Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan, *The Terrorism Industry: The Experts and Institutions that Shape our View of Terror* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), 104-106.

19. David Hurst, "The Gun and the Olive Branch Revised," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Spring 2003, 42.

20. Mathew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 175.

21. Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* (New York: Collier Books, 1961); Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963); Harry Golden, *Only in America* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1958); Harry Golden, *Enjoy, Enjoy!* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1960); Leon Uris, *Exodus* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958).

Three Elegies for Susan Sontag

ELLEN WILLIS

1. Art

WHEN I WAS FINDING my voice as a writer in the thick of the sixties, Susan Sontag loomed large: she was among the relatively few literary intellectuals who were seriously trying to grapple with a new, rich, and, for many, disconcerting cultural situation. The title essay of her first collection, *Against Interpretation*, combined a formidable erudition about the avant-garde with a manifesto-like plea that critics end their one-sided emphasis on teasing out the meaning of art and embrace their pleasure in it. "What is important now," she wrote, "is to recover our senses. We must learn to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more . . . In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art."

The arch-interpreters of the modernist canon, Marx and Freud, had in Sontag's view outlived their usefulness. Film, she declared, was "the most alive, the most exciting, the most important of all art forms right now" because its vivid immediacy discouraged interpretation. The reason, in part, was "the happy accident that films for such a long time were just movies; in other words, that they were supposed to be part of mass, as opposed to high, culture, and were left alone by most people with minds." Another essay in the same volume, "One Culture and the New Sensibility," argued that the distinction between high and low culture was breaking down and that the hallmark of the "new sensibility" was its orientation toward nonliterary forms. "Sensations, feelings, the abstract forms and styles of sensibility": this was the stuff of contemporary art. Sontag also lauded the psychoanalytic radicalism of Norman O. Brown, who, unlike Freud or the bland Freudian "revisionists" of the day, insisted on the primacy of the body and on utopia as Dionysian ecstasy. And then there was the essay that made her famous, "Notes on Camp," which put all these strains of thought, or sensibility, together in a form that by abandoning linear exegesis for a series of epigrammatic "notes" embodied her point and was fun besides.

These essays were highly iconoclastic works in the context of Sontag's milieu. At the time they were published, literary intellectuals had two major preoccupations — defending high art against mass art, which, in Dwight Macdonald's inimitable formulation, was considered not art at all but merely a commodity like chewing gum; and rescuing civilization from, as they saw it, the barbarians and antinomian nihilists of the radical counterculture. Those few who tried to relate to, say, pop music, did painful things like analyzing Beatles songs to show how much like high art they were. In our turn, writers of my generation who were cultural and sexual radicals and had passionate mass-cultural loyalties — to movies and even more to rock and roll — regarded literary intellectuals as uncomprehending dinosaurs; our models were journalists like Pauline Kael and Tom Wolfe.

I don't remember how Sontag first came to my attention. It could have been through an article about her: she was something of a star, after all. In those days I didn't read avant-garde quarterlies like *Partisan Review*, and it had never occurred to me to write for them. Looking back, I see that it could easily have been otherwise,

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were it not for the fifties' gender politics that still prevailed in my college years. I was an English major at Barnard around the time that budding critics like Marshall Berman and Morris Dickstein were across the street studying with the likes of Lionel Trilling; but the Columbia English department would not allow Barnard women in its classes. Instead, I won the competition to become a summer guest editor at *Mademoiselle*, as Sylvia Plath had done some years before. (Like its masculine equivalent *Esquire*, *Mademoiselle* was once an important venue for literary journalism; in fact, Sontag's essay "One Culture and the New Sensibility" was originally published there.)

Later, the advent of the "new journalism" convinced me that writing for popular magazines could be more than a lark, that it had potent aesthetic and intellectual rewards; and this path also appealed to my interest in mass cultural forms. But Susan Sontag presented me with another possibility, which I must have taken in, though I don't remember consciously doing so: that one could write in her tone of high seriousness, and draw on high-cultural references, and still engage with contemporary pop culture and cultural radicalism on their own terms.

As the sixties' cultural upheaval gave way to seventies cultural austerity, Sontag retreated to a more conservative stance on aesthetic issues. Her prime concern was no longer achieving an erotics of art, but parsing the morality of art. Or rather, the erotics of art — the pleasure we derived from it — became something to be questioned and inspected for its darker, often sadomasochistic aspects. In *On Photography*, it was the potential for aggression, manipulation, and bad faith that caught Sontag's imagination (as it had done Walter Benjamin's): photographer, viewer, and the multifaceted object that lay between them were always guilty until proven innocent. "Fascinating Fascism" eloquently attacked the readiness of critics to abstract the beauty of Leni Riefenstahl's films and photographs from the moral implications of an aesthetic that validated and promoted the Nazis' world view — "the force of her work being precisely in the continuity of its aesthetic and political ideas." The essay implied some rethinking of Sontag's own past standpoint: "Art which evokes the themes of fascist aesthetic is popular now, and for most people is probably no more than a variant of camp . . . Art that seemed eminently worth defending ten years ago, as a minority or adversary taste, no longer seems defensible today, because the ethical and cultural issues it raises have become serious, even dangerous . . . Taste is context, and the context has changed."

> One could write in her tone of high seriousness, and draw on high-cultural references, and still engage with contemporary pop culture.

The changed context was American society's aggressive repudiation of sixties utopianism. In 1996, in the preface to a new Spanish translation of *Against Interpretation*, Sontag wrote that while she still agreed with most of the positions she had taken, "The world in which these essays were written no longer exists . . . The ever more triumphant values of consumer capitalism promote — indeed, impose — the cultural mixes and insolence and defense of pleasure that I was advocating for quite different reasons." Her once-dissident enthusiasms had become widespread, owing to forces she had not at the time understood. "Barbarism," she declared, "is one name for what was taking over. Let's use Nietzsche's term: we had entered, really entered, the age of nihilism." I imagine a smiling Theodor Adorno, welcoming Sontag home. This is the Frankfurt School's language of profound pessimism, a language that most of Sontag's peers never relinquished. I suspect it came more naturally to her than her moment of openness to a short-lived current of hope.

The truth is that the process of assimilating the counterculture to the mainstream — a process to which mass consumption was central — was already going on in 1966, when *Against Interpretation* was published and my rock critic friends and I were trying to make sense of what was happening as the Beatles sold millions of records while announcing they were more popular than Jesus. The culture was complex then as it is complex, if much scarier, now. The question remains: what of human possibility? Do we simply abandon the idea?

A few years ago, listening to Sontag speak at a panel discussion sponsored by the NYU journalism department, where I teach, I was startled by her wholesale, contemptuous dismissal of American popular culture. There was an enormous gap between her critique of Riefenstahl's defenders — which represented high-culture moral indignation at its most cogent and pointed — and this kind of free-floating animus: Sontag, it seemed, had ended up, well, a curmudgeon. Yet her early work remains a testament to boundaries that could be crossed, worlds that could come together in new ways. "Camp taste," she wrote, "is a kind of love, love for human nature. It relishes, rather than judges, the little triumphs and awkward intensities of 'character' . . . Camp is a tender feeling." Yes.

2. Politics

SUSAN SONTAG BELIEVED that intellectuals should, must, take political stands. She was active in the movement against the Vietnam War. She tried, with passion and persistence, to awaken American and European consciences to the genocidal catastrophe in Bosnia. And yet I would not call Sontag a political thinker. For Sontag, politics was an arena for practicing the high moral style. It was about the individual bearing witness. It was, in another of its aspects, about the writer defending literary values, the values of civilization, when they were under siege, as they were in Sarajevo. It was a question of will. Politics, however, is preeminently about social structures, collective behavior — or mass psychology — and the relation between the two. It is a question of understanding, and a question of power.

If Marx and Freud were enemies in the quest for an erotics of art, they were even more clearly antagonists of a politics of personal morality. They regarded morals as the product of social and psychic structures, respectively: this was why moralists' lofty values were never achieved in real life. For Marx, understanding the social structure was key to political revolution; for radical Freudians if not for Freud himself, understanding the libidinal structure made possible a revolution in culture.

Sontag's attitude was more in line with the strain of American liberalism that, in the years after 1945, regarded morality as the antidote to totalitarianism of the right and left: it was this stance that impelled her to statements like "Communism is fascism with a human face" — though in fact fascism and Communism, while having certain features in common, are fundamentally different in social structure and mass psychology both. This has also been the ethos of dissident Eastern European intellectuals, which characterizes the post-Soviet era. My own approach to politics owes much to Marx and Freud. In my view, Eastern Europe has suffered gravely from the refusal of its intellectuals to think seriously, in a political way, about structures like class, gender, and religion. I believe Bosnia was able to happen, and people who should have known better were able to ignore it, because we have never really come to terms with the confluence of historical, power-political, cultural and psychological forces that produced the Holocaust. Moral condemnation alone will not keep these atrocities from happening again and again.

Individuals bearing witness do not change history; only movements that understand their social world can do that. Movements encourage solidarity; the moral individual is likely, all unwittingly, to do the opposite, for bearing witness is lonely: it breeds feelings of superiority and moralistic anger against those who are not doing the same. Sontag often succumbed to this temptation. Frustrated that the Bosnian cause did not arouse intellectuals as the Spanish Civil War had done, she accused them of middle-class selfishness and complacency. That there might be reasons other than personal moral turpitude that others did not share her urgency — a depoliticized time, the confusion and despair of the left, the lack of a social analysis that could put the Balkan events in context — did not occur to her, or so it seemed.

For Sontag, politics was an arena for practicing the high moral style.

Still, I do not dismiss Sontag's moral challenge. For along with understanding, there must after all be will. It is one thing to understand how our conscience is formed; yet since we can't, except in the most marginal ways, undo the twists and turns of our formation, conscience is what we are stuck with — if we are lucky. Conscience may be a false front, but its absence is deathly. Individuals bearing witness cannot do the work of social movements, but they can break a corrosive and demoralizing silence. It was, then, a good thing, an important thing, that Sontag went to Sarajevo, and kept going there, and wrote about it, and wouldn't shut up. Her voice was hectoring, irritating, cranky, on-her-high-horse superior. But what it said was true.

3. Death

ALTHOUGH SONTAG LIVED for many years with the disease that finally killed her, she never wrote about that experience, except obliquely. "Illness," she declared in one of her more famous polemics, "is *not* a metaphor . . . the most truthful way of regarding illness — and the healthiest way of being ill — is one most purified of, most resistant to, metaphoric thinking." Disease, as Sontag conceived of it, was a brute, dumb fact. The cultural baggage that produced the imagination of cancer as a "ruthless, secret invasion" or the expression of a sexually inhibited, emotionally resigned character was an artifact of mystery; just as the romanticism that had once surrounded tuberculosis lost its potency with the advent of antibiotics, so would the myths that defined our fear of cancer, once "its etiology becomes as clear and its treatment as effective as those of TB have become." In the meantime, metaphor merely served to terrorize and stigmatize the sufferer, on whom the public's anxiety-ridden fantasies were projected.

"Illness as Metaphor" — which originated as a lecture, became a *New York Review* essay, then a small book, and eventually acquired a companion essay, "AIDS and its Metaphors" — is, like so much of Sontag's work, at once bold and problematic. It is also, in a sense, out of date. Since 1978, when it first appeared, both the ubiquity, which is to say familiarity, of cancer and improvements in its treatment have robbed the disease of much of the mythological aura that Sontag railed against. At the same time, the backlash against psychoanalysis has banished from the public conversation the theory, advanced by the radical psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich, that most excited Sontag's indignation: that cancer has its genesis in sexual and emotional repression. The conventional wisdom now tracks Sontag's own views, in some measure, perhaps, because of her influence. Yet as a Sontag document "Illness" retains its fascination, in part because it is her only commentary on this fateful passage in her life, but more, perhaps, because of the conundrum it poses: this is the work of a writer whose passion was language rejecting metaphor as a means of understanding; a critic whose central subject matter was aesthetics, morality, and the relation between them stating categorically that illness has no aesthetic or moral meaning.

It makes sense to resist metaphors that aim to punish or control, reduce or falsify experience — indeed to acknowledge that even the aptest metaphor is a flawed prism, that we see through a glass darkly. But it does not follow that metaphoric thinking can simply be purged in favor of a "healthy" transparency. I am not of the school of thought that regards all human experience as reducible to language; the body, in my view, is not simply a discourse; but describing the body and its relation to the mind and the world is another matter. What Sontag does not seem to grasp is that the allopathic medical model of disease, as an entity entirely external to the person, with an objective cause and cure, is as metaphorical as any other, based on the larger metaphors of Cartesian philosophy and Newtonian science. And as a description, it's at best incomplete. We float in a sea of pathogens, microbial and chemical, natural and artificial, yet only some of us, sometimes, become seriously ill; or more precisely, our bodies falter and die at different rates, on different timetables, in different ways, despite the shared hazards of our condition. So too with our ability to recover. As a way of recognizing these facts, the psychoanalytic metaphors of libido and repression, conflict and defense may be closer to the mark.

What Sontag does not seem to grasp is that the allopathic medical model of disease, as an entity entirely external to the person, with an objective cause and cure, is as metaphorical as any other.

Disease takes hold when the immune system fails, when external agent meets internal vulnerability. What makes us vulnerable? Today's common sense says "genes" — yet we know that genes represent the potential rather than the actual, and that the relation between genetic potential and its expression is complex and obscure: what mediates is our environment, but also our experience. We know that emotion affects the body — its heart and respiration rates, its hormone flow, its muscle tensions. Surely it is conceivable that disappointments we cannot bear to acknowledge or express directly might express themselves in physical form.

That this idea has so often been crudely translated into blame — as if the ill deliberately and perversely choose their disappointments, and their denials, and so their diseases — is the result of people's tendency to conflate it with yet another (and in our culture far more powerful) metaphorical system, a system dedicated to the idea of the abstract, disembodied will: Judeo-Christian morality. The *New Testament* tells us "the wages of sin is death"; the Jewish formulation is *mida k'neged mida* (measure for measure). If the concept of psychosomatic illness is regularly misused to add to the misery of the ill, is this justification enough to discard it altogether? What might sufferers themselves lose by doing so?

Shortly after I was asked to write an obituary for Sontag — a woman whose writing and public statements always made me feel as if we were enmeshed in an ongoing conversation, usually an argument — my ruminations on her and "Illness is Metaphor" took a more personal turn: I received my own cancer diagnosis. Caught early, amenable to the latest advances of allopathic medicine — still, the disease did not strike me as a brute, dumb fact. A life-threatening illness, it seemed to me, was a spiritual crisis by definition. Unanswerable questions about etiology were the least of it (though in truth I was instantly swamped — I imagine the ghost of Susan stifling a smirk — by a wave of superstitious terror and guilt, produced by the fantasy that every mean-spirited thought, let alone act, I'd ever committed had somehow converged in an unlikely spot on my non-smoker's lung). The real questions were about the future.

When clichés (that is, stale metaphors) about the precariousness of life suddenly present themselves as nothing less than the simple, compelling truth, it concentrates the mind. How best to further one's recovery, and how to live in the meantime? Exert all one's energies toward forging on, so as not to be dominated by the disease? Or revise one's priorities, focus on what's most important and jettison the rest? (And what *is* most important — love? work? attention to the precious sensations of living?) Make health a central project, or refuse to be obsessed? What to put on the soundtrack — the Clash or John Fahey? Mahler or Arvo Pert? And if it is not possible to do without metaphor, what metaphors suit? "You are in a war," a friend wrote me: the military metaphor being the most common of all and another for which Sontag has no use. Was I in a war — a civil war, perhaps, against my own rogue cells? Who was the enemy, exactly? Or was my ordeal more like a marathon swim against an undertow?

Interestingly, "Illness" begins with a metaphor. "I want," Sontag tells us, "to describe not what it is really like to emigrate to the kingdom of the ill and live there, but the punitive or sentimental fantasies concocted about that situation: not real geography but stereotypes of national character." This is a book without a protagonist, set in a terrain without inhabitants; or rather they are opaque, their presence revealed only by the tropes that surround them, as black holes are detected by a bent gravitational field. It is a somber silence, befitting the author's funeral; for death is truly the kingdom where metaphors come to an end.

Dorothy Sue Cobble's book, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton University Press, 2002), retrieves the forgotten feminism of the previous generation of working women. Their reform agenda — an end to unfair sex discrimination, just compensation for their waged labor, and the rights of their families and communities — launched a revolution in employment practices that has carried over into the present. It is the first book to link the continuous tradition of feminism to the leadership of labor women within that movement. The following talk was originally presented at the Labor and Working Class History Association's Annual Luncheon Address at the Organization of American Historians Convention in April 2002.

Lost Visions of Equality

The Labor Origins of the Next Women's Movement

DOROTHY SUE COBBLE

IN 1937, 23-YEAR-OLD Myra Wolfgang strode to the middle of one of Detroit's forty Woolworth's five and dime stores and gave the signal for the planned sit-down strike of salesclerks and counter waitresses to begin. The main Woolworth's store was already on strike, and the union was threatening to escalate the strike to all of the stores in Detroit. Wolfgang was an art school dropout from a Jewish-Lithuanian immigrant background who had already given her share of soapbox speeches for the Proletarian Party, a small Marxist group, before settling down to union organizing in the early 1930s.

Nicknamed the "battling belle of Detroit" by the local media, Wolfgang eventually became an International Vice President for the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union. But in the 1940s and 1950s, she ran the union's Detroit Joint Council, which represented thousands of cooks, bartenders, food servers, dishwashers, maids, and other hotel and restaurant workers. She relished a good fight with employers, particularly over issues close to her heart. A lifelong member of the NAACP, she insisted, for example, on sending out racially-integrated crews from the union's hiring hall in the 1940s and 1950s, rejecting such standard employer requests as "black waiters only, white gloves required."

In the 1960s, Wolfgang, now in her fifties, led a sleep-in in the Michigan state house to persuade legislators to raise the minimum wage. She also brought Hugh Hefner to the bargaining table to talk about the work conditions of Playboy Bunnies at his Detroit Club. HERE eventually won a national contract covering all the Playboy Clubs by 1969, but Detroit was the first to go union. In these initial bargaining sessions in 1964, Wolfgang and her negotiating team debated with Hefner over the exact length in inches of the Bunny suit, that is, how much

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of the food server's body would be covered. They proposed creating company rules for customers not just for Bunnies — rules such as "look but do not touch." The union also spent time challenging Hefner's policy of firing Bunnies as they aged and suffered what management called "loss of bunny image," a somewhat nebulous concept, I would think. But not so, claimed the Playboy employee handbook. "Loss of bunny image" occurred at the moment bunnies developed such employee defects as "crinkling eyelids and drooping derrieres."

These fascinating labor-management conversations, I should add, came only after an extensive seven and a half-month organizing campaign. Wolfgang launched her assault by sending her younger daughter, 17-year old Martha, in as a union "salt." She was promptly hired, despite being underage. Martha then fed to Mom a steady diet of useful information, particularly about the club's wage policies, or I should say their no wage policies. Bunnies, it turned out, were expected to support themselves solely on customer tips. Wolfgang and her volunteers picketed the club, wearing bunny suits and carrying signs that read: "Don't be a bunny, work for money." They also secured favorable media coverage, lots of it. To the delight of scribbling reporters, Wolfgang "scoffed at the Bunny costume as 'more bare than hare' and insisted that the entire Playboy philosophy was 'a gross perpetuation of the idea that women should be obscene and not heard.'"

I first stumbled across Wolfgang, or better put, she reached out and grabbed me when I came across her papers in the archives at the Walter Reuther Library in Detroit. But it was not just her entertaining antics that kept me awake. I was intrigued by her political philosophy, particularly her gender politics. She considered herself a feminist, and she was outspoken about her commitment to end sex discrimination. Yet at the same time, Wolfgang actively opposed the ERA as late as 1972, defended the woman-only protective hour laws in Michigan when NOW led a push for repeal in 1967, and she accused Betty Friedan and other feminists of demeaning household labor, romanticizing wage work, and caring not a wit about the needs of the majority of women. Indeed, in a 1970 Detroit debate between Wolfgang and Friedan hosted by Women's Studies at Wayne State University, things rapidly devolved into mutual name calling with each accusing the other of being an "Aunt Tom." Friedan called Wolfgang an "Aunt Tom" for being subservient to the "labor bosses" and Wolfgang returned the favor, calling Friedan the "Chamber of Commerce's Aunt Tom."

My curiosity roused, I set out to discover more about the Myra Wolfgangs of the post-depression decades. And what I have come to understand is that there were multiple and competing visions of how to achieve women's equality in the so-called "doldrum years" — the supposedly quiescent trough of feminist reform between the 1920s and the 1960s. And that the Wolfgangs of the world, far from being oddities, were the dominant wing of feminism in that era. My talk today is about this group of social reformers — who they were, what they thought and did, and what difference their history makes to those of us who write history as well as those of us concerned with making it — two groups I should say that are not mutually exclusive, especially in this gathering.

The women I'm writing about could be characterized from a number of angles. First, they could be seen as a "missing wave" in the history of twentieth-century feminism — the wave that existed between the so-called first wave of women's reform that ended in the 1920s and the so-called second wave of feminism in the late 1960s. I say "so-called" since as I speak the history of women's reform is being "re-waved," to use the language from an earlier panel at this conference. But as my friend and fellow historian Nancy Hewitt observed, we should perhaps go further and "ban all permanent waves — referring of course to the need to keep our chronologies of feminism ever flexible."

Second, they are the intellectual daughters and granddaughters of women like Jane Addams and Florence Kelley. As we know from the work of Nancy Cott, Estelle Freedman, and others, social feminism did not expire in the 1920s or even in the 1930s. Indeed, I argue that stimulated by the rise of a new labor movement in the 1930s and the heady experiences of World War Two, social feminism emerged refashioned and modernized by the end of the war. And significantly, unlike the social feminism of an earlier era, it was now led by labor women, women who identified with and worked within the labor movement, arguably the largest and most powerful social movement of the period.

Third, they are the generation who came of age in the depression and World War II. For some of us, such as myself, they are "our mothers" [mine was born in 1912 and was in her teens when the depression hit the South], and for others they are your "grandmothers" or perhaps your "great-grandmothers." Many were the "Rosies" who took on wartime jobs and who at the war's end supposedly returned to the home and embraced a conservative gender ideology centered on domesticity. Yet the majority of women war workers, as we know, had jobs before the war and the majority kept on working afterward. And, many of these women turned their energies to building unions in the postwar decades and to making those unions more responsive to the needs of women.

The story of union growth in the 1930s is the familiar, oft-told tale. But for women, the 1940s proved just as crucial. For one, the labor movement feminized significantly. Yes, the numbers of women in the labor movement skyrocketed in wartime and then plummeted during reconversion, but what often gets lost is that the numbers rebounded in the late 1940s and then remained far above the 1930s levels both in absolute and percentage terms. By the early 1950s, for example, some three million women were union members, a far cry from the 800,000 who belonged in 1940, and the percentage of unionists who were women had doubled as well since 1940, reaching 18 percent. In addition, at least a million women belonged to labor auxiliaries by my estimates. Auxiliaries took in the wives, daughters, mothers, sisters, and on occasion, friends of union men. By the 1940s, however, many of these women were also wage earners, albeit in unorganized sectors. Through the auxiliary, they could participate in the union movement and they did.

Of equal or even greater significance, especially for my story, the 1940s witnessed the move of women into local, regional, and national leadership positions within the labor movement. I'm not talking gender parity here — what they're currently approaching in France with the help of national legislation — but I am talking about an increase in women's influence and the emergence of a critical mass of women union leaders who were committed to women's equality as well as to ending class injustice. Women like Myra Wolfgang but others such as Gladys Dickason, Dorothy Robinson, Anne Draper, or Esther Peterson of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA); Selina Burch or Helen Berthelot or Catherine Conroy of the Communications Workers of America (CWA); Mary Callahan or Gloria Johnson of the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE); or the group of women at the United Auto Workers (UAW) which included Caroline Davis, Lillian Hatcher, Millie Jeffrey, Olga Madar, and Dorothy Haener. Some, like Ruth Young of the United Electrical Workers Union (UE) or Elizabeth Sasuly and Luisa Moreno of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural, and Allied Workers of America (FTA) disappeared from the public stage by the early 1950s, due in part to Cold War politics, but they were the exceptions not the rule.

Obviously, time prohibits me from giving each of these women their due but let me offer two brief sketches — one of Addie Wyatt of the Packinghouse Workers and a second of Caroline Dawson Davis of the UAW. Hired on in 1941 at Armour's meatpacking plant in Chicago, Mississippi-born Addie Wyatt, like most African-American women labor leaders in this period, began her union activism during the war. By the early 1950s, her local, the majority of whom were white men, elected her as vice-president. Later, she took over the presidency of the local and later ran successfully for the UPWA's national executive board on a platform emphasizing women's rights and the advancement of racial minorities. In 1954, she was appointed to the UPWA national staff, a position she held for the next thirty years.

Caroline Dawson Davis, who directed the UAW Women's Bureau from 1948 to 1973, grew up in a poor Kentucky mining family steeped in religion and unionism. In 1934, she got a job as a drill press operator in the same Indiana auto parts plant that hired her father. She helped organize her plant in 1941, was elected vice president in 1943, and shortly thereafter, Davis recalled, she "moved upstairs when the union president was drafted." By 1948, she had taken over the reins of the UAW Women's Department. A year earlier, Life Magazine had run a feature story on "the strikingly attractive lady labor leader," accompanied by a four-page photo spread of Davis. In one photo, Davis lounges at home reading Freud, a thinker whose ideas, she explained to the interviewer, proved indispensable to running her local union.

The group of labor women I'm describing was a diverse group, racially and ethnically. It was also a mixed group in terms of class backgrounds — not what I expected to find when I first began. Many came from working class and poor backgrounds, women like Davis or Wyatt, but others came from decidedly elite backgrounds. A generation earlier, many politically engaged college women would have moved into settlement house work perhaps, or joined the National Consumers' League, or pursued a career in social welfare. But in the context of the 1930s, they gravitated toward the labor movement. And by the 1940s many held union staff jobs — as lobbyists and political action coordinators, as community service reps, in research and education departments. A few also held key government positions.

The central players here are women like Esther Peterson who grew up in Provo, Utah, where her father was the local school superintendent. She attended Columbia Teachers' College and taught PE at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers before becoming ACWA's first legislative representative in 1945, and the AFL-CIO's first woman lobbyist in 1958. (Eventually, she became the highest-ranking woman official in the Kennedy Administration). Or Kitty Ellickson, who graduated from Vassar in 1926, did graduate work in economics at Columbia before joining the staff of the United Mine Workers in the early 1930s. By 1942, Ellickson had secured a full-time job in the CIO research department. She stayed on (moving into the AFL-CIO Research Department after the merger) until 1962 when she became the Executive Secretary for Kennedy's Presidential Commission on the Status of Women. Or Frieda Miller, the life-long partner of ILG veteran organizer Pauline Newman, who headed the Women's Bureau from 1944 to 1953. Miller's father was a lawyer, and she had a college degree plus years of doctoral work in economics at the University of Chicago.

By the end of World War II, these labor women had articulated a broad-ranging and concrete social reform agenda — one that put them in direct opposition to the National Women's Party agenda, to the policies and principles being touted by conservative employers and politicians, and, at times, to the priorities advanced by their union brothers. They came together nationally at a series of Women's Bureau conferences held for trade union women leaders between 1944 and 1946, and they continued to socialize and work together for the next twenty-five years, first through the Women's Bureau Labor Advisory Committee, a group that served as a national think tank for top women in the labor movement from 1945 to 1953, and then through the National Committee for Equal Pay, which existed from 1953 to 1965, and other ad hoc coalitions.

But what was their reform agenda? Their "vision of equality" and of women's rights? Their own language is revealing here. They talked of ending "unfair sex discrimination," of securing "equal job rights for women," and of achieving "first-class economic citizenship" for women. Let me take each of these three phrases in turn, paying attention to how each illuminates the underlying assumptions guiding labor feminism in the postwar decades.

First, "ending unfair sex discrimination." Like their opponents in the National Women's Party, labor feminists recognized that discrimination against women did exist — an assumption not widely shared in the 1940s. Yet their goal was not to end all distinctions on the basis of sex — what they feared would be the result of the passage of the ERA — but to end only those distinctions that harmed women, that is only the "unfair" or "invidious" discriminations. Some distinctions — such as the woman-only state laws setting wage floors or hour ceilings — benefited the majority of women. These should ultimately be amended and extended to men, they felt, but until that happened, the laws should be retained — hence a major source of their opposition to the ERA.

The two sides in the postwar debate over women's equality squared off most dramatically in 1948 before the House Judiciary Committee in hearings called to consider which women's rights bill, if any, should be passed: the ERA legislation supported by the NWP, the Chamber of Commerce, and others, primarily conservative Democrats and Republicans, or the "Women's Status Bill," first introduced by Democratic Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas in 1947, conceived largely by the labor women I've described, and backed by a broad coalition of labor and women's groups.

The 1948 debate opened by both sides declaring themselves in favor of "equality for women" and of removing discriminatory laws. But there the agreement ended. Neither could agree on what "equality" or "discrimination" meant nor on what kind of legislation would, in Frieda Miller's words, "in fact provide equality for the great majority of women." The Women's Status Bill rejected a uniform, gender-neutral legal approach. Instead, they called for a presidential commission on the status of women that would review on a case-by-case basis the laws affecting women. The Commission idea, pressed most audibly by Peterson and Ellickson, would consider the legal status of women but also inaugurate, they hoped, a national debate over "the political, civic, economic, and social status of women." The NWP retained its single-minded focus on a blanket constitutional amendment, and there the conversation remained until the 1960s, stuck in what William Chafe has called a "politics of recrimination."

Yet the battle over the ERA and the Women's Status Bill was only a part of the reform agenda of labor feminists in the postwar decades. Let me move on the second of my three phrases: "equal job rights for women." This phrase often meant opening up jobs to married women, older women, pregnant women and mothers as well as challenging discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and ethnicity. It also meant ending wage discrimination against women and women's jobs. Later in the 1960s, union women would file some of the first grievances and lawsuits under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, claiming the right to move into so-called men's jobs and increase their earnings and status. But in the 1940s and 1950s, the primary approach to gender equality taken by both women labor leaders and the rank and file was to change the way the "traditionally female jobs" were valued and paid, to assert, if you will, a separate and equal sphere. In other words, they imagined ending gender hierarchies without necessarily ending all gender differences.

Their campaign for equal pay is perhaps the best example here. In 1945, they introduced an Equal Pay Bill into Congress, and they reintroduced it every year until 1963 when the Equal Pay Act passed. They also succeeded in passing equal pay laws in some 18 states in the decades following World War II and in pushing a number of unions to bargain, picket, and strike over the gender wage gap. What is significant here is not only their activism but their ideas. They defined equal pay broadly. It meant "equal wages" when women and men held the same job; it also meant raising the pay in the jobs traditionally held by women. The wage-setting practices and job evaluation systems used by employers undervalued women's skill, productivity, and responsibility they claimed and a fundamental rethinking of employer pay practices was in order. To achieve this broad goal, the Federal and state legislation they introduced consistently relied upon the words "equal pay for comparable work" rather than "equal pay for equal work."

They came close to winning comparable pay at the federal level but were defeated by many of the same women they had debated in the 1940s. Katherine St. George, Republican Congresswoman from New York and NWP sympathizer, introduced an amendment to the Equal Pay Bill in 1962 that labor feminists regarded with horror. St. George asked that "equal" be substituted for "comparable" — in part because as she pointed out, women do not need "favors." When the sponsor of the bill retorted that substituting "equal" would destroy the bill, St. George responded: all we want is "identity" not anything more or less. But the labor feminists wanted "more." As Myra Wolfgang put it: we want to have our cake and eat it too, especially, she added, since we are baking it. Women should be paid the same as men when they do the same work, but they should also receive a fair and just wage when they do different jobs. Equality, then, would be messy and would involve a struggle over values and not just access.

As we know, St. George's amendment passed, and the Equal Pay Bill that became law the next year was a far cry from what the labor feminists envisioned. The comparable worth movement did not resurface until the end of the 1970s, led once again by labor women, this time centered in the large public sector unions. Oddly, however, many of these union activists had forgotten or never knew their own history: comparable worth was not new; it had not been invented in 1979. Rather, it had a long historical pedigree: one rooted in the labor movement itself.

WINNING "FIRST-CLASS ECONOMIC citizenship for women," however, the last of my phrases, involved more than "equal job rights" or the right to equal compensation. For these women, there was no equality without a transformation in the work patterns, norms, and practices of the work world itself. They did not want to move women into a sphere designed for men; rather, as Frieda Miller put it, they wanted "to transform the masculine pattern." In other words, they were challenging not the feminine mystique but the masculine, the myth that the way men organized and thought about work was natural and the best for everyone. To transform these "masculine patterns" required a deep cultural shift, and it required new social policies that explicitly recognized women's diverse needs and realities. Thus, beginning in the early 1940s, labor feminists pushed unions to negotiate improved pregnancy and maternity leaves, better health coverage for childbirth and infant care, and more control over work time. They were also among the strongest advocates of governmental social supports for child bearing and childrearing. They sought, for example, to expand disability and unemployment coverage to pregnant women and mothers, and starting in 1943, they lobbied repeatedly for federally funded universal childcare programs. In other words, caring labor was as deserving of social wages or state benefits as any other work.

Here, their efforts are clearly a forerunner to the work-family reforms that have become increasingly central to the current women's movement. Yet the core of their work-family agenda still has not been fully incorporated into today's discussions. For theirs was a work-family agenda that was attempting to solve the particular problems of non-professional women. That meant, for them, finding collective not individual solutions to two crucial problems: low wages and long hours.

In terms of wages, as we have seen, labor feminists argued for a re-evaluation of the wages in women's jobs as well as "equal pay for equal work." In addition, however, many, but not all, sought to feminize labor's historic call for a "living wage" — or what some historians refer to as a "family wage." Rather than abandon the "living wage" tradition, they wanted to de-gender it, to claim it for women as well as men. A just wage was one that recognized dependency and acknowledged that, in many instances, a wage needed to support more than the individual wage earner. This is a particularly important point, given the ideological shift today toward a "market wage" or a wage supposedly determined solely by productivity or supply and demand calculations. "What's after the family wage?" social theorist Nancy Fraser asked not too long ago. Well, unfortunately the answer does not appear to be a breadwinner wage for all but a wage based on what economist Eileen Appelbaum calls an "unencumbered worker ideal." This false ideal and the low wage it justifies extends to women and increasingly to men a new myth of individualism, one that denies the reality of our social interdependence and sets up a false world of always able-bodied, perpetually self-reliant individuals — individuals who exist apart from community, civic life, or caregiving responsibilities. This was not the world labor feminists sought.

Let me close with a brief nod to the time, and to the struggle over time in the postwar era. The search for increased leisure and control of work time did not end in the 1930s. Male-led unions continued to demand leisure in the post-WWII period — not in the form of shorter daily hours but in the form of what Walter Reuther called "lumps of leisure," that is, more vacations, more holidays, more paid sick leave, and earlier retirement. In other words, the struggle shifted from a shorter day to shorter weeks, shorter years, and a shorter work life.

Labor feminists, for their part, supported many of the union campaigns to secure these "lumps of leisure." Nevertheless, as Benjamin Hunnicutt reminds us in his study of the six-hour day at Kellogg, temporal policies were as gendered as wage. The lumps of leisure approach did not do much for those shackled with the "double day"; rather shorter daily hours was still the preferred work time reform for those juggling household and market work. Labor feminists, then, continued to search for mechanisms to make shorter hours a reality. Rebuffed in the bargaining arena, they relied primarily on legislative means. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, for example, they sought to preserve existing state maximum hour laws — some 43 states had such laws in 1957! — and, where possible, make them more flexible and extend them to men. Maximum hour laws, they argued, offered better protection than the Fair Labor Standards Act. The FLSA used the disincentive of overtime pay to discourage long hours but it did not forbid them. The FLSA approach to limiting hours, was, in their minds, an inadequate check on employer power and on the competitive market's relentless drive toward longer hours. The women's model of hour protection, that is, laws setting mandatory hour limits, was the better approach. The women's standard should be universalized to cover all workers.

Yet there were no easy answers, and in many ways it was the debate over hours that ensured the breakup of the long-standing consensus among labor feminists in the 1960s. These debates followed in the wake of the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Law which called into question the legality of all women-only state laws, hour laws included. The UAW women, Caroline Davis, Dorothy Haener, and others, sided with the National Organization of Women and the Business and Professional Women's Groups, insisting that the "opportunity to earn" could no longer be denied women, and that state maximum hour laws should be repealed. Mary Callahan, Myra Wolfgang, Kitty Ellickson, and others dissented. They warned that opportunity for both sexes was important but so was an hours policy that reined in market work and allowed for a life apart from wage work, a policy that allowed for the right not to work as well as the right to work. In short, they wanted the state laws amended, made more flexible, and extended to men.

Despite their pleas, the state maximum hour laws were repealed, and no new mechanisms for putting a ceiling on work time were identified. Rather, the FLSA became the nation's primary regulatory approach to limiting long hours. Recognized as increasingly problematic today, its weakness is certainly part of the reason for why work hours in the United States are longer than in any other industrialized country.

The labor feminists, then, who led the other women's movement in the decades following the depression, articulated their own distinct and evolving vision of women's equality. They defined economic citizenship broadly to include the right to wage work and to a just compensation as well as the right to care for one's family and community. A new feminism would emerge by the end of the 1960s, a feminism that opened up different and at times exhilarating new vistas on equality. Yet like the feminism that preceded it, it too failed to solve many of the crucial economic and class issues that still lie at the heart of women's second-class citizenship. The women's movement of the twenty-first century, if it is to succeed, needs to build on the liberatory gender politics of the sixties and seventies; it also needs to recapture its roots in the social feminist traditions of labor women.

Migration, Domestic Work, and Repression

REVIEW BY JULIA WRIGLEY

In their edited collection, *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild write that Third World women are on the move as never before, filling jobs in the "homes, nurseries, and brothels of the First World" (2002). The rushed and materialistic societies of the First World leave working parents little time to look after their children or their own parents. Women migrating from poor countries fill the gap. The migrants meet the personal needs of families looking for child care, of the disabled struggling to stay in their own homes, of employers wanting help with their elderly parents, and of male sex tourists looking for young, cheap, and compliant women.

Global Women: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy
EDITED BY BARBARA EHRENREICH AND ARLIE RUSSELL HOCHSCHILD
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336 pp. $15

The jobs the migrants fill are among the worst available, but women move to get them, drawn by the prospect of supporting themselves and, even more important, contributing to their parents' or children's upkeep. Increasingly, mothers of young children are joining these migrant workers, often living away from their children for years at a time. Fast travel has brought the world closer together, but these women do not have the money or time to make many return trips to see their children, who know them mainly from phone calls. Despite the mothers' anguish at the separation, they want to safeguard their children's futures even while they cannot comfort or enjoy them in daily life. The radical inequality between the First and Third worlds makes the wages of even exploitative jobs outstrip those available to the women in their own countries, causing separations of mothers and children almost unimaginable to the more privileged.

Global Woman's sixteen chapters are mainly based on fieldwork and are lively and compelling. The editors, both excellent writers themselves, have chosen vivid accounts. Most have been previously published, but they form a coherent and thought-provoking overview of the terrible dilemmas facing women who must choose between earning and caring, or at least, between earning and caring for their own families. The irony of women being hired to care for their employers' children while their own are far away has often been uncomfortably noted but only recently has it become a major focus of research and political analysis.

In the United States black women, and many Hispanic women in the Southwest, used to be trapped in domestic work. Racial segregation confined them to agricultural work or labor in white women's kitchens. The civil rights movement helped free black women and they have never looked back. Migrants from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean have taken their place. The change in worker supply has led researchers to focus on "transnational motherhood" (Hondegneu-Sotelo 2001) and what Hochschild calls the "chain of care," whereby mothers look after other people's children, with their children cared for by women still lower on the occupational ladder or by other family members. The First World acquires a bonus of care, while the Third World suffers a deficit. The consequences for the children at the end of the chain are severe. It might be thought that they can come to terms with their mothers' absences, much as children historically have had to come to terms with fathers who might be away for months or years as sailors, soldiers, itinerant miners, or lumber workers. They are not abandoned, as the great majority live with their mother's mothers. The evidence shows, though, that they experience their mothers' absence piercingly.

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Their frequent emotional distress may, in fact, undercut the value of their mothers' sacrifices. The mothers often hope that their children will be able to stay in school longer with the aid of their remittances. Schooling requires focus and attention, however, and children suffering from loneliness and confusion can lose their ability to deal with schooling's daily demands.

The accounts are striking and, often, heartbreaking in their depictions of the emotional costs of women's migratory strategies. *Global Woman* is thought provoking, without falling into the stance of seeing all employers as monsters, far removed from the people who might be reading the book. The authors argue that the current arrangements exact a huge price from the women doing care work, while also reinforcing gender boundaries in the First World. Couples able to hire caregivers no longer need to struggle over the division of labor, leading feminists to downplay efforts to create gender equality in housework and child rearing. The analysis, though, does not fully address a core question: Is the transfer of care workers from poor countries to rich ones really qualitatively new, as Ehrenreich and Hochschild suggest, or does it replicate older patterns? Or, to put it another way, is what we are seeing today another twist in the long saga of women migrating for domestic work, or are there new, and even more disturbing elements in the picture we are witnessing?

There is no doubt that domestic work has long served as a travel ticket. With all the hardships and loneliness it entails, it has offered women around the globe a chance to break from home with the knowledge that they could almost certainly be employed — and quickly — if they chose to move. They did not actually need to speak the employers' language (although it helped); they did not need education, or experience, or references, although these could land them higher in the (limited) hierarchy of jobs in other people's homes. Women with few opportunities at home could bravely strike out, whether it was Scandinavians migrating to the American Midwest, Irish women fleeing famine and despair to America's big cities, or English women taking vast voyages to Australia, knowing they would likely never see their families or homes again. For women around the world, domestic work has been the always-available job. Hateful though it might be, women knew that they could very likely find work within a week, and not even need a home. They could start out living in the employers' home, at their mistresses' beck and call from early until late, and could, if lucky, gradually establish themselves and move to their own dwelling, even if only a room.

There was, however, a key difference between women choosing to migrate and those suffering from racial oppression in their homelands. For white immigrants, domestic work proved a starting point. For black women, and Hispanic women in the U.S. southwest, it was more often a sentence to hard labor under the eyes of white mistresses. Their mistresses did not work themselves, but had the leisure to exercise their dominance as arbitrarily, pettily, and ruthlessly as they wished. These women did not suffer just under the tyranny of their mistresses, but also under state-enforced repression. Employers were bolstered by this state backing. Generations of black and Hispanic women were confined in the occupation, unable to break out of it until the civil rights movement brought strides toward equality. Significantly, it required political mobilization, and the partial dismantling of state repression, to also break the power and dominance of employers.

GIVEN THE HISTORIC TIES between migration and domestic work, are Ehrenreich and Hochschild justified in seeing women's global migration for care work as being new in its scope and range? Answering this question requires first considering what kinds of work are encompassed in the general designation "care work." Perhaps new forms of care work are emerging on the global stage. To some extent this is true, but the great bulk of careworkers are domestic workers of one description or another, whether primarily house cleaners, children's caregivers, or attendants for the elderly, the disabled, or the sick. Overwhelmingly, they work in private homes, as jobs in more formal settings tend to go to those with greater entitlements in the societies where they work.

Global Woman does not just consider domestic workers, but also sex workers. In amalgamating analysis of domestic workers (whether house cleaners or caregivers) and sex workers, Ehrenreich and Hochschild make an analytical point that all these types of workers labor to meet the personal needs, however, defined of those people in the First World with the money to buy such services and the power to exercise some measure of domination over others.

This point is well taken, but it should be borne in mind that sex workers occupy a small niche compared to domestic workers. Their numbers are hard to estimate, but they probably contribute little to the great migratory streams of women flowing to richer countries to work in private houses. While trafficking of women as sex workers across international borders does occur, and attracts much attention from international agencies (Renton 2005), sex tourism provides a convenient alternative for men, with the "entertainment" industry merging into sexual provision in many locations (Sassen 2002). Domestic work must be done in the employers' home. Sex work can easily be done in the workers' home countries. Men seeking sex often have the freedom and money to go to them. Thailand occupies the unenviable position of being a major destination for such sex tourism. Impoverished families in the drought-ridden north send their young daughters to Bangkok to become prostitutes (Bales 2002). The lure of sex tourism in the country can be seen in male predominance among tourists. In 2003, male visitors to Thailand from the wealthy nations of the United States, Britain, Japan, and France outnumbered female visitors by two to one, a gender disparity unique among major tourist destinations (Renton 2005). In reading about sex tourism for this review, I googled "sex tourism and Thailand" and quickly discovered how easy it is for tourists to receive all the information they need on how to find what they want in the country.

Despite the importance of sex tourism in certain areas, most care work is, in fact, domestic work. As such, it can be analyzed in relation to the great historic migratory flows that led women from their homes in rural areas, or in impoverished countries, to richer areas where domestic work offered a ready — if unappealing — fallback. The flows themselves are not new. There are, however, three features of the current situation that are distinctive compared to earlier patterns and that may justify Ehrenreich and Hochschild's contention that we are witnessing a new era in the transfer of care work from the Third to the First World. These features of the current situation operate to the detriment of women migrating for care work.

First, most migratory streams in the past involved women who settled in their new countries. When they left, they were unlikely to return to their home countries. There is reason to think that returning home was rarer for them than for male migrants. Male migrants could make money and then could return to win a younger bride. Female migrants, though, were more likely to find themselves aged out of the marriage market by the time they had established an economic foothold in their new country. This presumably reduced their incentive to return to their homelands. Women were also unlikely to leave husbands or children behind, as did some men, so in this respect, too, they had less incentive to return. They either maintained themselves independently in their new country, as did many Irish women in America (Diner 1994), or they found husbands in their new homes. In either case, settlement offered them an important option.

The situation of many women migrants today is different. While they continue to be more likely to settle abroad than are male migrants (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002: 21), many women are going to countries where they are not allowed to establish permanent homes. Those who come to the United States, even if illegally, can merge into the their large co-ethnic communities. Settlement thus remains a live option. Women migrants to Malaysia, the Middle East, Singapore, or Hong Kong have far less chance of creating new homes.

These women are modern-day indentured servants but ones who cannot redeem themselves through labor, eventually reaching freedom. Instead, they contract themselves out for specified periods. In economic downturns, they can be repatriated (Huang and Yeoh 1996: 484). As transient workers, they are highly vulnerable. They cannot gradually establish themselves, increasing their ties and resources; instead, they remain legally and socially outside the pale in their new societies. They are not on the low end of a continuum of resources and rights, but entirely outside the system of claims on society.

The second thing that is new in domestic workers' situation is that states play a larger role in regulating and channeling their migration than in the past. This can be highly negative for domestic workers. Migrants to the United States may move to the country illegally and this can impose its own costs in terms of lack of rights and fear of deportation. There are advantages to operating beneath the government radar, however, including the possibility of simply merging into established immigrant communities. This is much harder for women in societies where governments both foster and regulate immigration. Many migrants move from impoverished Asian societies to rapidly developing ones. Almost every aspect of their migratory experience is government controlled and regulated. As an analyst of the migration of Filipina and Indonesian women's migration to Malaysia writes, "The migration of peoples is not a new phenomenon in Asian history. What is new is the degree of overt state support for the transnationalization of migrant or 'guest' workers" (Chin 1998: 94). Countries where development has stalled actively foster women's migration as domestics. They aim to reduce tensions at home by sending some of the unemployed, or underemployed, abroad; they also want the women's remittances to bolster cash flows into the country. Such remittances are crucial to countries such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh (Chin 1998: 100). Many of the receiving countries also act aggressively to regulate the women's entry and control them once they arrive. Their regulations can be highly intrusive. In Singapore, for example, migrant domestic workers must submit every six months to medical tests for pregnancy or venereal diseases (Huang and Yeoh 1996: 485).

Those women migrating from Asian countries to other Asian countries or the Middle East do not receive protection from either their own governments or those where they do their work. If employers abuse or confine them, they get little or no assistance from their own embassies. Worse, if domestic workers appeal to police for help, they are often accused of theft and are themselves imprisoned (Haddad 1999). The level of abuse and dehumanization the women suffer can reach horrific levels. While conditions vary, it is not uncommon for the women to endure conditions of semi-slavery, unable to freely leave their employers' houses. Often their passports are confiscated. Many cannot use the telephone without their employers' permission and some are not allowed to use the phone at all (Hung and Yeoh 1996: 485). The women are legally required to live with their employers (Chin 1998: 142). Often the women are given little food and everything they eat is tallied. The time they go to bed can be set; and they are never able to escape their employers' demands. With governments strictly regulating their stays, if they resist or try to leave their employers, they are likely to be deported. Rather than risk this, most remain submissive, at least on the surface.

Global Woman does not systematically analyze differences in the level of vulnerability experienced by domestic workers in different countries. Overall, however, the situation of those in the Middle East and many Asian countries is very bleak, even bleaker than what is often experienced by new arrivals in the United States and Western European countries. Not only are they at the bottom of rigid hierarchies, their jobs do not bring them any prospects of long-term betterment in the societies in which they work. Overwhelmingly, the women report that they do these jobs mainly for the money they bring. They focus on the money they send home more than on their own loss of personal freedom. New immigrants to the United States working in other people's homes can also experience high levels of exploitation and isolation, but they are likely to gradually adjust and come to recognize that they can find better employers than the ones they first encounter (Wrigley 1995).

There is a third important way in which the situation of women migrants differs from in the past. Today more mothers of young children migrate without those children than used to be the case. The literature provides few examples of such migrations in the past. It is not clear exactly why this shift has taken place. One reason might be that until early in the twentieth century, infants could not be artificially fed without great risk to their lives (Apple 1987). Until formula was developed, the only option other than mothers' breastfeeding infants was to hire a wet nurse, but this choice was not available to the poor. Basically, mothers had to stay with infants, although in situations of desperate poverty they sometimes chose to earn outside the home to safeguard the family as a whole, even at the cost of infant lives (Tilly and Scott 1990). Leaving aside infants, there are traditions of mothers migrating without children in the Caribbean; in former slave areas, including the Caribbean, long-standing poverty required mothers to rely heavily on their own earnings, which sometimes required migrating.

This pattern now appears to be spreading in many parts of the globe. In Mexico and Central America, for example, increasing numbers of mothers leave for the United States, either with or without their husbands. Sometimes they send for their children after they have established themselves; sometimes after many years in the United States they create new relationships and new families; sometimes they return to Mexico to rejoin their children. It is possible that this option appeals most to women whose marriages are faltering. While once they might have had no choice but to stay put, enduring loneliness or abuse within the marriage, they now can now set out on their own. In the Philippines, where women's migration without husbands (or children) has become relatively common, such migration is sometimes called a "Filipino divorce" (Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, as cited by Ehrenreich and Hochschild

2002: 11).

Recent research describes the emotional hardships of children left behind by migrating mothers. Some children fare better than others, with the difference perhaps due to the quality of care they received in their mothers' absence (Parrenas 2002). I have interviewed a number of Caribbean domestic workers in New York whose own mothers had earlier migrated to the United States without them while they were children. Most said that they had accepted their mothers' absences, understanding that they were sacrificing for them. Those domestic workers I interviewed who had left their own children described anguish and longing as dominating their years without their children. When they reunited with their children, often when the children were teenagers, some had trouble re-establishing connections, making the situation one of continuing sadness. Joanna Dreby, a sociology student at the CUNY Graduate Center, interviewed mothers and fathers who had migrated from Mexico to central New Jersey without their children. She then went to Mexico and, with the parents' permission, interviewed the children they had left behind. Although they remained firmly in the family circle, with nearly all cared for by their mothers' mothers, many suffered from emotional distress. This was particularly true for older children. Even though their mothers' earnings helped them stay in school, they had trouble concentrating. Many dreamed themselves of migrating. Their teachers worried about "migration fever" gripping their communities.

Notably, Ehrenreich and Hochschild report that sociologist and migration expert Doug Massey found that mothers' migration without children did not seem to be fueled primarily by economic desperation. Instead, it seemed more related to the presence of manufacturing in the area, which may have raised the women's horizons and their awareness of their own earning capacity as individuals (28). A key change may be a decline in the sense of the family as the core economic unit and a gradual shift toward a more individual way of conceiving of earnings and life chances. And Dreby's finding that "migration fever" can grip entire communities also suggests that children begin conceptualizing of their own earning power as soon as they near the age when they could potentially strike out on their own. The mothers' choices may reverberate downward in ways they might not have intended.

Global Woman drives home the realities underlying the care solutions found by the First World. These solutions do not address continuing gender inequalities in affluent countries and all too often rest on the exploitation and even dehumanization of the women who actually provide the care of children, the elderly, and the disabled in many First World households. Ehrenreich and Hochschild see the situation as new in the scope and range of the migration undertaken by Third World women migrating for jobs as careworkers to more privileged countries, creating care deficits in their own families and countries. In my own view, their analysis could more clearly differentiate between the situations of women in different migration streams. Some are particularly disadvantaged and suffer extreme marginalization in the countries where they work, while others are indeed exploited, but have better long-term prospects.

OVERALL, I THINK IT is fair to say the features of the "new migration" render migrating women even more vulnerable than their predecessors who undertook long and risky voyages, in many cases, with only the promise of jobs in other women's kitchens at the end of them. In important respects, the "new migration" resembles the worst features of the experiences of Black and Latina women who labored as domestic workers. They too suffered from state repression; their lack of political rights made possible extreme exploitation by employers in their homes. Similarly, migrants from poor Asian countries to wealthier countries suffer from total lack of political rights. Domestic work does not occur in a vacuum. Employers can fully indulge selfishness and a family-centric meanness when operating from a toxic combination of feelings of ethnic and cultural superiority, combined with the backing of the state in repressing workers.

No positive gender relations can spring from such a toxic mix. Instead, sisterly empathy is killed at the source. Domestic work is peculiarly antithetical to the workers' own maintenance of a strong and healthy family life. The very qualities employers often value, the flexibility to have workers stay late when the employer wishes, undermine workers' ability to look after their own children. This has now reached a new extreme, with workers increasingly leaving children behind as they venture to other countries to labor in employers' houses. The feminist movement, as Ehrenreich and Hochschild suggest, needs to reconnect with its early roots and to once again raise the banner of gender equality in the home. It is only a generalized egalitarianism that is likely to create deeper respect for those who actually do the care work. Inequality in one sphere transmits itself to other spheres, with patriarchy creating inequalities in the home that then reverberate even more strongly across lines of ethnicity and nationality. *Global Woman* raises these issues in a compelling way.

NOTES

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Relevant, Irrelevant, or Both?

LYNN CHANCER

> The Socialist Feminist Project: A Contemporary Reader in Theory and Politics
>
> EDITED BY NANCY HOLMSTROM
>
> New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002
> 400 pp. $26

WHILE I WAS IN THE process of reviewing this volume, I took it to a party in Brooklyn attended by varied-and-sundry aging baby boomers, early 40s through 50-something types who are generally progressive, educated and (in tripartite terms of classification) middle-to-upper-middle class. One man who saw me carrying *The Socialist Feminist Project*, a lawyer, walked over and commented "That looks interesting but isn't it just a little out of date — a throwback to another era?" Although I responded that socialist feminist ideals had not exactly had a golden age even in earlier decades, he had a point. Amidst the deepening conservatism in America from Reagan through the Bushes, this volume's "project" sounds more "irrelevant" than it might have in the 1970s or 1980s.

Of course, this incident occurred outside the academy, but, even within university walls, socialist feminism does not seem particularly *au courant*. When I teach courses on feminist theory, I regularly include this perspective's development and ask my students to read articles by well-known socialist feminists like Zillah Eisenstein and Heidi Hartmann. But I have noticed students do not sound quite as engaged (and do not elect to write papers) about this brand of feminism nearly as often as they become intrigued by theorists associated with other perspectives on gender — for example, the work of Judith Butler that can, reflecting Foucault's influence, be classified under the aegis of post-structuralist feminism and queer theory.

Nancy Holmstrom apparently shared these concerns about socialist feminism's perceived relevance. Indeed, resuscitating socialist feminism was precisely her goal in this excellent and refreshingly well-organized volume, one that features an extremely diverse array of well- and lesser-known (but, in all cases, quite interesting) contributors. In Holmstrom's words, "Some would say socialist feminism is an artifact of the 1970s…but [that] since then it has been defunct, both theoretically and politically. I think this view is mistaken and this volume will show why." (1) While Holstrom doesn't mention Butler (and may know that Butler liked to distinguish her own poststructuralist orientation from postmodernism), Holmstrom's introduction does identify the rise of postmodern thought in the academy as one factor that has contributed to perceptions of socialist feminism as increasingly irrelevant. Here, Holstrom observes, "Starting from valid critiques of many theories' overgeneralizations and neglect of historical and political context, postmodernists ended up arguing from very anti-theoretical positions. Their emphasis on the local and particular, their attack on what they call 'totalizing narratives' and on the very notion of truth and causality, were deeply discouraging to feminists trying to develop a coherent and systematic theory of women's op-

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pression." (6)

Yet even if socialist feminism has not recently been a "hot" topic, taken as a whole, the myriad essays in *The Socialist Feminist Project* do a very good job of showing that this impression is certainly not based on the direction that advanced capitalism has taken. This raises a key query to which I will later return, namely, if socialist feminist perspectives continue to be germane, why aren't they perceived as such? First, though, let me highlight some of the ways in which writers in this book present convincing cases for understanding what Sennett and Cobb called (in a well-known work of sociology by the same title) "the hidden injuries of class" — and the way these injuries intersect with gender and racial discriminations in both national and international contexts — through distinctly socialist feminist analyses.

Socialist feminism's characteristic trait of combining radical feminist insights with class-oriented awareness allows for appreciating, as Nancy MacLean shows, the extent to which affirmative action has benefited working class as well as middle-class women in the United States. As MacLean argues, women's caucuses in unions, efforts to organize clerical unions for women, and anti-poverty strategies aimed at increasing women's access to "non-traditional" jobs, have been responsible for great progress in these areas — even as these efforts need to be continued. Strikingly, like Holmstrom, MacLean likewise expresses frustrations at her sense that feminist theory came to be associated with "deconstruction" rather than with enlarging theory in other directions. As she concludes, though, "Practical struggles such as those over employment discrimination and affirmative action . . . raise a host of questions about the meaning and effects of different sexual divisions of labor . . . and about the connections between capitalism, labor, and state policy in the shaping of our lives." (192).

Other essays that focus on labor struggles outside the United States struck me as valuable in a different way, i.e., for the data they provide on the degree to which gender is constructed (hardly deconstructed) in workplace settings wherein patriarchal ideologies have been used to justify low pay and secondary treatment for women. According to Leslie Salzinger, whose research on Mexican maquiladoras is well-known in American sociology, employers at a Panoptimex television plant preferred women to men because they considered the former a "calmer" — read: more "malleable" — group of workers. Consequently, what has happened recently at such workplace settings is impossible to grasp without blending traditional class analysis with feminist-based understandings of the gendered ideologies Mexican employers have themselves employed to keep wages low and avoid labor conflicts. Analogously in this regard, Chandra Mohanty's essay draws on two case studies — one of lacemakers in Narsapur, India, and the other of electronics workers in the Silicon Valley — to illustrate how gendered definitions of women (in the first case as housewives whose work was construed as "leisure" activity and, in the second, as women defined as mothers,wives and therefore supplementary workers) have also been manipulated to justify "second sex" and poorly-paid working conditions. Elizabeth Oglesby points out that prescribed notions of masculinity are also being used against men in globalizing workplaces: for instance,in Guatemala, cutters on sugar cane plantations are forced to reach unreasonable production goals by employers' reliance on "macho" standards that endanger male workers' health. And, last but not least, in this section of Holmstrom's edited volume, Jo Bindman and Kamala Kempadoo strongly depict the need of sex workers around the world to become organized into unions to escape the simultaneously class, racialized, and gendered subordinations by which they have been affected.

What do all these essays on working women's and men's situations have in common? Clearly, they call out for analysis in terms of multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination. But each of the essays also attest to common interests that workers have in and outside the United States: their dependence on jobs that subordinate them in class as well as gendered terms cries out for political solutions, and for organizing efforts at least as impassioned as those that have taken place in the past. Thus, regarding class in international perspective, the effect of this volume's essays on workers' struggles is to bring socialist feminism alive as more — rather than less — relevant than ever. When we combine this with other equally interesting sections (such as a part of the book on sex and sexuality that features excellent essays by Emily Martin and Rosalind Petchesky, and one on problems in/about families that includes articles by Judith Stacey, Stephanie Coontz, Cherrie Moraga, and Temma Kaplan), it seems fair to say that *The Socialist Feminist Project* has successfully made the case.

But if the volume fulfills its *raison d'etre* with regard to the ongoing relevance of socialist feminism, it may not fare quite so well at exploring why this actuality is out of sync with perceptions. Let me cite three possibilities by way of attempting to stimulate further dialogue about this dilemma beyond this nice volume's confines. For one thing, socialist feminist perspectives may not be "packaged" as well as necessary if ideas that combine class and gender are to be grasped by a broader American public. A volume like this one is terrific, but will probably be read by a fairly small group of academics and activists already leaning left. On the other hand, when I heard Barbara Ehrenreich speak at a session of last summer's American Sociological Association, she advised her audience of progressive sociologists to write clearly in ways that can appeal to commercial presses and audiences. Ehrenreich's own *Nickel and Dimed* is its own case in point. While it was mostly devoted to illustrating the inadequacy of low-waged labor, the types of jobs that Ehrenreich took — as she conducted a kind of journalistic participant-observation study — are ones, like waitressing and cleaning hotels rooms, disproportionately filled by women. Indeed, the paperback edition of her book prominently features a woman waiting tables on its cover. In these respects, then, *Nickel and Dimed* could be said to be 'socialist feminist' though hardly announcing itself as such. Yet, by writing in an engaging and humorous fashion, Ehrenreich managed to place an arguably 'socialist feminist' perspective on the *New York Times*' bestseller list for well over a year.

Had Ehrenreich explicitly called her book 'socialist feminist,' though, its reach might have never extended so far. This brings me to a second factor that is possibly behind socialist feminism's perceived irrelevance amidst growing applicability — this one having to do with a theoretical conundrum, not with savviness of presentation. Is socialist feminism a theory, or should it be best described as a 'perspective' that combines people's concerns about two (or three, if we include race) distinct kinds of discriminations? If it is a combined perspective, however much an empirically important one, perhaps it is difficult to achieve the kind of conceptual "elegance" — and theoretical systematicity — that can make other types of feminist and social thought (including, much as one may have beefs with it, poststructuralism) appealing. Indeed it was precisely such a concern that motivated Nancy Fraser to try, in an essay recently published in the *Blackwell Companion Guide to the Sociology of Culture*, to bring identity-oriented claims (like those concerning gender and race) and redistributively-oriented claims (like ones involving class) together under the rubric of a common notion: "status." Proposing to use "status" not in a Weberian sense but to signify people's needs to feel powerful across identity and economic issues, Fraser's objective was to advance theory in at once simpler and wider-ranging directions.

Writing presentation, theory development

— but what is a third possible explanation for perceived irrelevance amidst, ironically enough, expanding applicability? Last, but not least, I would argue that without both simplifiable ideas and a more unified movement that combines gender, class, and race-based concerns, socialist feminism will also have a hard time getting its message across. Poststructuralism was not a social movement, surely, but it did enjoy 'movement' like adherence at least in academic communities. I don't think the same can be said now for socialist feminism, either in and outside the academy. Significant pockets of organizing exist in union caucuses, in activist organizations, in departments at various colleges and universities. But maybe the biggest challenge of all will be to combine these remnants of concern about women (and men's) simultaneously gendered, raced and class-influenced situations into movements powerful both for what is specific and general about them. If we can find ways to make common cause politically while still respecting differences, as many authors in this volume intelligently recommend, socialist feminist may come into its own again after all.

Women, Family, Welfare and Work

Betty Reid Mandell

I have seen the welfare system first hand as a volunteer outreach worker at a Boston welfare office (Department of Transitional Assistance). The other day I walked into the office to see a distraught woman sobbing disconsolately on the floor. She had unknowingly parked in the parking lot of the Burger King next door. She moaned, "I begged him not to tow me. I told him that I am homeless and don't have any money to feed my children, but he didn't listen. He still towed me." The woman had just been told that she was ineligible for shelter because she lacked some documentation. The driver of the tow truck lurks inside the Burger King waiting for people and tows someone almost every day.

American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare
Jason DeParle
New York: Viking, 2004
422 pp. $25.95

Soon after that, I talked with a man who had been kicked out of a shelter, along with his four year-old daughter, because he got a job that paid more than the shelter eligibility limit of $1,041 a month, the poverty level for a family of two. He does not make enough money to pay market level rent in Boston, an average of $1,200 a month for a two bedroom apartment, and he cannot get a Section 8 federal housing subsidy because they have been frozen, and no one knows when or if they will be available again.

Next, I talked with a young woman whose welfare assistance for herself and her three-year-old had been cut off because she missed one day at her job search program. The reason she missed it is because her child was sick and she had to stay home to care for him. She had just located a temporary job in medical technology but her childcare had been cut back to half a day and she couldn't start the job until the worker approved her for full-day childcare.

I recently spent a summer in Finland, and a social insurance official there told me that they did not believe families should be in shelters. They made sure families had permanent housing. They also had guaranteed universal childcare and universal healthcare. Those scenes in a Boston welfare office would not occur in Finland.

Not many people know of the daily tragedies that occur at the welfare office, and until the news gets out and the voting public becomes concerned enough to elect officials who will change the system, the tragedies will continue. So I was pleased when I heard that Jason DeParle had written a book about welfare reform.

Jason DeParle has been on the poverty beat of the *New York Times* for many years, writing knowledgeably about poverty and welfare. Frances Fox Piven, a long-time observer of his work, describes him as "an exceptionally careful and sincere journalist."[1] It is to the *Times'* credit that they have a poverty beat. When I called *The Boston Globe* and asked to speak to a

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reporter on their poverty beat, I was told that they don't have one (and they are owned by the *Times*).

American Dream has been reviewed by major newspapers across the country. De Parle has been interviewed by NPR and other stations, and he is on the lecture circuit talking about welfare and poverty. The widespread publicity given the book may contribute to the current Congressional debate about reauthorization of the infamous 1996 welfare bill, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWOA), which DeParle analyzed as it played out in Milwaukee.

Few people are talking about poverty. As Bob Herbert wrote in the *Times*, "Poverty is not even close to becoming part of our national conversation. Swift boats, yes, sex scenes on *Monday Night Football*, most definitely. The struggle of millions of Americans to feed themselves? Oh no. Let's not go there."[2]

In his campaign for the presidency, Kerry told the middle class, "I've got your back. I've got your back because I know what you're going through."[3] He talked about working families and the middle class, but he didn't talk about the 36.9 million Americans who lived in poverty in 2003 including the 15.3 million who lived in extreme poverty (less than half the official poverty line of $18,810 for a family of four).

Welfare and Race

FROM 1991 TO 1999, DeParle studied welfare reform through the lens of a close acquaintance of three women and their children — Angela Jobe, Jewell Reed, and Opal Caples — whose ancestors were slaves and worked on James Eastland's plantation after slavery. When I first picked up his book and saw a young black mother with two children on the cover, my heart sank and I thought, "Oh no. Not again." Welfare and race have been intertwined in the media and in the public imagination since the 1960s. An analysis of media coverage of welfare by FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) for three months from December 1, 1994, and February 24, 1995, revealed that most of the recipients who were interviewed were black, even though the majority of recipients at that time were white. In a *U. S. News & World Report* cover story, "six of the seven pictures were of women of color, mostly African Americans. The only white woman pictured was described as clinically depressed, as if poverty only affects white people who are in some way handicapped."[4] Recipients shown in the media often had several children, even though families on welfare have an average of 1.9 children, slightly less than the national average.

> "I begged him not to tow me. I told him that I am homeless and don't have any money to feed my children, but he didn't listen. He still towed me."

DeParle said that he has been asked why he centered his book around African-American women, and he said it was because in Milwaukee, where he did the study, 70 percent of welfare recipients were black. By that reckoning, there should have been at least one white recipient. He could have found more white recipients in rural Wisconsin, but most journalistic studies of welfare focus on the inner city. Journalists look for compelling stories that will entertain, and black people in the inner city hold endless fascination for the American public. They are assumed to be part of the underclass, and when the media does stories on the underclass, they are always black.

Yet, in defense of DeParle's choice, welfare policy has been powerfully shaped by slavery and Southern legislators who want to keep black people submissive and exploited. DeParle deftly weaves the genealogy of his protagonists — Angie, Jewell, and Opal — with the history of slavery and its aftermath and the history of welfare policy. When ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) was first created in 1935 as part of the Social Security Act, legislators meant it to be for white widows, not for black women. Later on those widows were folded into the other part of Social Security called the Old Age, Survivors, and Dependents Insurance (what people commonly call Social Security).

In 1999, the Census Bureau showed that there were 3,795,000 children, along with their parents who received Social Security benefits because a parent was widowed or retired. A widowed mother or father with two children would have received benefits totaling $20,712 a year. Who knew? It is one of the best-kept secrets of the nation. The families just get their checks until the children grow up, with no caseworkers to pry into their private lives. What a contrast to AFDC (now TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), which has given cynical officials a scapegoat to advance their political careers and has subjected millions of women and their children to demeaning treatment, inadequate grants, and policing of their behavior.

DeParle wonders whether the stories of three welfare families can be representative of nine million people. The answer is obvious — they can't. They aren't representative of the white population, or the rural population, or the millions of legal immigrants who suffered the most from the welfare bill because they lost food stamps as well as TANF benefits, or the welfare recipients who struggle against odds to finish their college education, or the small minority of recipients who are in two-parent families or single dads caring for their children, or the parents convicted of a felony who are denied benefits for their lifetime.

The focus on TANF also misses the disabled children whose benefits were cut in the welfare bill, the disabled immigrants who lost their SSI (Supplemental Security Income), and what Peter Adelman described as the most troubling cut (of the PRWOA), limiting food stamps to three months out of every three years for unemployed adults under age 50 who are not raising children.[5] DeParle does not mention that in most states there is little or no help available for able-bodied single people who have no unemployment benefits or who have used up their benefits. While his deep involvement with these three women reveals much about welfare reform, and DeParle sometimes illuminates the larger picture by citing studies, the larger context is sometimes lost and one is left to wonder just how representative these women are.

Nevertheless, DeParle has written compassionately about these women and their struggles with the welfare system and with poverty. He clearly cares deeply about them. He visited their homes, accompanied them to dentist appointments, and drove them to prisons to visit their lovers and fathers of their children. His description of their experiences gives us a fairly accurate picture of what is happening with black single mothers without a high school diploma who must rely on low-paid work to support their families.

DeParle writes vividly about welfare reform, which he calls "the Middle East of domestic policy." He makes the opportunistic political machinations of politicians to get ahead on the backs of welfare families as compelling as a detective story, tracing the torturous fight between right-wing Republicans and the Clinton administration to craft a welfare bill. On the far right was Newt Gingrich, calling for a balanced budget that could only be achieved by ending all social supports — not only welfare, but food stamps, Medicaid, and school lunch programs. He talked of putting poor children in orphanages. He received ideological support from Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, who had the backing of the Christian Coalition and other conservative grass roots groups. Rector called for ending all cash, food, and housing aid to any women under age twenty-six who had a child outside of marriage. Former cabinet secretaries Jack Kemp and William Bennett urged other conservatives to "discredit the moderate pretensions of the president."

Gingrich had powerful allies in the Republican governors, who controlled thirty state houses after the 1994 elections and who pushed for the freedom to run their own welfare programs. Some, like Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin and John Engler in Michigan, had run experimental welfare programs that received national publicity and had reduced the rolls. Clinton had approved waivers from federal welfare requirements for forty states, setting the stage for states to run welfare programs. Massachusetts, under Governor William Weld, passed a welfare law in 1995, a year before the PWROA, that set a two year time limit. Republican governors campaigned for block grants, and Gingrich saw this as "the starting point for the block-grant revolution, with a hundred other programs to follow, from health care to housing." (126)

In a letter to the federal government, Republican governors Thompson, Engler, and Weld wrote, "We are willing to accept a reduction in funding if we are given the freedom to run these programs with few, if any, strings attached." (126-127) Democratic governors were less certain. Howard Dean, governor of Vermont and the chairman of the National Governors Association, accused the GOP of trying to starve children. (It is no coincidence that TANF grants in Vermont are the highest in the nation.) Some Democratic governors feared a "race to the bottom," with states competing to keep services and tax burdens low.

The Clinton Plan

BILL CLINTON CAMPAIGNED in 1992 on the promise to "end welfare as we know it" and talked of a two-year limit. Peter Edelman described this as " bumper-sticker politics — oversimplification to win votes." The fine print of his plan also said, that people who "played by the rules" and couldn't find work could continue to get benefits as before. David Ellwood, a Harvard professor, had presented Clinton with a plan that "endorsed time limits but only as part of a larger expansion of aid which would include universal healthcare, job training, childcare, and child support 'assurance' — in effect, a guaranteed income for single mothers, since the government would make support payments if fathers did not." (103) The government could limit welfare to between eighteen and thirty-six months; then recipients would be offered a public job. When it became evident that the supports would be very expensive, Clinton lost interest in Elwood's plan.

As support for cold-turkey time limits grew among Congressmen, Henry Aaron of the Brookings Institutions wrote Ellwood that "a feral mood is loose on the Hill," (116) and advised him to resign. Ellwood hung on until it became clear that the Republicans had no intention of going with his plan, then resigned as Clinton's welfare advisor in 1995 and returned to Harvard, "where he spent the next few years in disillusioned exile, wondering where Clinton's core convictions lay." (137) Mary Jo Bane, coauthor with Ellwood of the book *Poor Supports*, also resigned.

When the Republicans gained control of Congress in 1994, they latched on to Clinton's time limit rhetoric and proposed an absolute time limit of five years, and an end to entitlement to assistance. They proposed to send a fixed amount of money in block grants to the states, without a federal guarantee of assistance to families.

Clinton won the argument about orphanages and school lunches, but remained silent on the rest of the bill and left Democratic Congressmen with no support for an alternative to the Republican plan. He vetoed two bills submitted by the Republicans, one of which contained cuts to Medicaid. Although Medicaid provides healthcare to the poor, it also pays for nursing care for the middle class, and hospitals, doctors, and pharmacists benefit from it as well as middle class families. Clinton was not willing to go against those powerful lobbies.

The Republican strategy was to expose Clinton as a hypocrite who wouldn't deliver on welfare reform despite his rhetoric. When Clinton refused to sign a bill that would block grant Medicaid, the Republicans separated welfare and Medicaid and sent the bill containing five-year time limits and block grants for AFDC. Vice President Al Gore urged him to sign it. Most of his cabinet urged him to veto it. Just before he signed it, Donna Shalala, the secretary of Health and Human Services, rushed an Urban Institute study to him that predicted the bill would move 2.6 million people into poverty, including 1.1 million children. It did not sway Clinton. He had seen polls that made him believe that if he did not sign the bill he would lose the election to Bob Dole, and he signed the bill anyway.

Most of the Democrats voted for the bill, including John Kerry (Kerry even bragged about his vote during his presidential campaign). DeParle chastises them for their timidity and says that even Ted Kennedy approved of workfare. Yet he does not mention that Kennedy voted against the bill. He also does not mention Paul Wellstone and Patsy Mink and their fierce opposition to the bill. With the assistance of her daughter Gwendolyn Mink, Patsy Mink crafted a humane welfare bill and submitted it to Congress, where it was ignored. Both Wellstone and Mink have since died — Wellstone in a plane crash, and Mink from pneumonia, and welfare activists still mourn their deaths.

Although he chronicles Clinton's crass opportunism, DeParle still calls him a liberal. Peter Edelman, who resigned his post as assistant secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services after Clinton signed the bill, said, "Now no one could ever say again with any credibility that this President is an old liberal." Howard Zinn, when asked if the left was too easy on Clinton, said, "The moderate left (liberals) had high hopes for Clinton and were not prepared to battle against his policies. As a result, Clinton got away with a lot, from the passage of so-called welfare reform to his foreign policy — he was the first to raise the specter of weapons of mass destruction as an excuse to bomb Iraq."[6]

> DeParle wonders whether the stories of three welfare families can be representative of nine million people. The answer is obvious — they can't.

Lest anyone have any illusions that Hillary disagreed with her husband, DeParle quotes her as saying, "We have to do what we have to do. I hope our friends understand." She believed that if Clinton vetoed the bill a third time, he would be handing the Republicans a windfall to win the election. When she spoke of friends, she probably had in mind Peter Edelman and his wife Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund whose slogan "No Child Left Behind" was kidnapped by the Bush Administration as the title for their education act. The Children's Defense Fund fought valiantly against the act but they couldn't call out troops to fight as the Christian Right did.

The Politics of Opposition

DEPARLE SAYS THE left was quiescent in this fight, but that is not accurate. The pro-reform forces got most of the media attention, but there was protest. In their effort to prevent passage of the bill, the leadership of the National Organization for Women (NOW) went on a hunger strike and their legal defense fund continued to organize against welfare reform, but NOW was not able to summon large numbers of their membership to the fight. Many feminists were so committed to getting into the work force that they saw nothing wrong with forcing welfare mothers to do the same. Public service unions opposed the bill because they saw it, rightly, as a potential threat to their jobs. But they did not mount a large or sustained fight against it. Like most of the American public and many people in the left, they did not like AFDC and did not define caretaking as work that should be supported by taxes. DeParle tells of a conversation with a man he describes as a "lefty labor organizer," John Gardner, a school board member in Milwaukee who had long called for abolishing welfare and replacing it with public jobs. Despite some criticisms of Wisconsin's welfare reform, he "reveled at the sight of so many poor women groping their way into jobs." (326)

There were many welfare rights groups fighting against welfare reform. I helped to found one of them, Survivors, Inc., along with some welfare recipients who were students at the University of Massachusetts. The Welfare Law Center in New York City helped these groups to coordinate their activities through an e-mail listserv.

Legal services advocates fought against welfare reform. The Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches opposed it. The American Friends Service Committee, the Unitarian/Universalist church, and the United Church of Christ opposed it. Many academics fought against it, including Gwendolyn Mink, Frances Fox Piven, Richard Cloward, Barbara Ehrenreich, Linda Gordon, and Nancy Fraser, among others. But all of these people were powerless to turn back the tidal wave of reaction because there was no large voting constituency demanding to keep a safety net for low-income parents and their children.

DeParle chose Milwaukee to study welfare reform because Governor Tommy Thompson had showcased his Wisconsin Works (W-2) plan as a model for the nation. Thompson's opponent in the Republican primary described him as a "two-bit hack," and the head of the state Democratic Party "declared her bra size larger than Thompson's IQ." (62) However, Thompson had presidential ambitions and he aimed to get there through his promise to cut the welfare rolls. Although Wisconsin had lost nearly half of its manufacturing jobs in just 20 years, "welfare, compared to deindustrialization, was an issue politicians could more readily address, and voters were screaming for change." (62)

The W-2 program, crafted by Jason Turner, (who later went on to head New York City's workfare program) was based on a work first philosophy. It converted a voluntary plan that emphasized education to a mandatory program that emphasized work. Everyone would be forced to work in order to get a check. For those who couldn't find private employment, the state would create thousands of community service jobs. And it would offer subsidized childcare and healthcare, not only for welfare recipients but also for other low-income parents. Jason Turner was a right-wing idealist who believed that work had the power to save the soul. "It's work that sets you free!" he said, "not realizing that he was quoting the motto on the gate to Auschwitz." (162)

Before the W-2 program was fully implemented, Turner created a "Pay for Performance" program that enlisted county government and nonprofit groups for community service positions, where recipients were sent to sweep floors, answer phones, or sort the mail. And he reduced their checks for every hour they missed. The program cut the rolls dramatically, 66 percent in the two years until the transition to W-2 was completed. Outside Milwaukee, the rolls fell even faster, 93 percent over the two-year run-up to W-2. Turner and others were amazed and pleased at the precipitous decline in the rolls.

DeParle asks why "so many ostensibly destitute people" declined to work for welfare. One reason was that they were already working without reporting it. Although only 12 percent of the recipients had said they were working, 31 percent appeared on the quarterly wage earners list. "Over the course of a year, more than half of the people on welfare worked." (168) One of the women DeParle studied, Jewell, was included in that statistic.

Many of the jobs that Turner set up were "transparently dull or dumb. In the most notorious case, women were sent to sort coin-sized toys called 'pogs' into piles of different colors. When they finished, a supervisor dumped them, and the next crew started again." Faced with tedious or demeaning tasks, thousand of Milwaukee women had the same thought as Jewell: 'I ain't *gonna* be doing that! I'll work and get my *own* money!'" (168) When Angie received a work notice she looked for a job, but resisted the notion that welfare hassled her into it. "I was looking for a job anyway," she said. (171) But the rules just left her poorer, since she could no longer double-dip. All three women had worked even before welfare reform because they couldn't survive on a welfare grant. Welfare grants were always and everywhere inadequate to support a family and had to be supplemented by wages and/or family and friends.

Another reason for the decline in the rolls was that Turner's system also punished the innocent because of errors in bureaucratic paperwork. A Congressional investigation found that 44 percent of the penalties imposed on people were in error. Not everyone left for a job. "Some turned to relatives, some to boyfriends. Some were too sick, depressed, or addicted to navigate the bureaucratic chaos. Even seeking a medical exemption demands an ability to function that some people didn't possess. One of the saddest sights (DeParle) encountered in Milwaukee was that of Amber Peck, a fiftyish woman who lost her check, her apartment, and after a drug binge, her spot in a homeless shelter. "She said that while she had understood the work rules, she couldn't bring herself to comply. 'I stay depressed all the time.' Then gripping two shopping bags filled with old clothes, she picked her way across an icy church lawn to lie on the hard, lonely floor." (169)

DeParle shows us that working was not atypical behavior for recipients, but it would have been helpful for him to cite the studies that show how typical it was before welfare reform. Some welfare scholars believe that there were as many former recipients employed before welfare reform as there were afterwards. Official records of reported work before welfare reform showed that about 70 percent of recipients left the rolls within 2 years but, because their jobs didn't pay enough to support a family and pay for health insurance and childcare, many returned to welfare. A study that tracked recipients for 10 years found that 60 percent left welfare within the first year of receiving AFDC. Half of them without a high school diploma who left welfare for a job returned within a year, while half of the women with high school diplomas who left welfare for work returned within 2 years.[7]

Welfare recipients have always been in and out of the work force, often because of their childcare responsibilities. They have traditionally used AFDC as a substitute for unemployment insurance, for which they are usually ineligible because much of their work is temporary or part-time. Some people believe that if unemployment insurance were expanded to include those low-wage workers who are not now eligible for it, it could provide a more dignified income supplement to women who would otherwise have to go on welfare. This is not likely to happen under the current administration, but at least nineteen states have already put programs on the agenda to extend either temporary disability insurance or unemployment benefits to workers with care-giving needs.

The Labor Market

When asked what it means to not be "dependent" on welfare and working, Angie replied, "I never think about shit like that! I always work, anyway. It means I be a broke motherfucker for the rest of my life!" (171) This pretty much sums up DeParle's findings about work for unskilled black women without a high school diploma. By 2001, 58 percent of employed former recipients had incomes below the poverty line. About one-third of former welfare recipients around the country had neither jobs nor welfare.

Angie, who worked as an aide at a nursing home and sometimes worked two jobs, was the only one of the three women who found emotional satisfaction in her work. The others worked only because they had to in order to support their family. Advocates of welfare reform waxed eloquent about the value of a work ethic but Angie, the only one of the three women who could be described as having a "work ethic," earned $7.50 an hour at back-breaking work in a nursing home industry where more than one-in-six nursing aides get injured each year, and where work is more dangerous than in coal mines or steel mills. By the end of 1996, the year she left welfare, Angie had worked nine months and earned $8,200. Her income was supplemented by $4,700 from a combined state-federal bonus of Earned Income Tax Credit.

The Earned Income Tax Credit, which had expanded at the start of the Clinton years, raised more children out of poverty in 1996 than all other government programs combined, although it provides less money to the very poor and nothing to those without money. Employers like the program because it subsidizes wages and may reduce the incentive of workers to fight for higher wages. It has functioned more to offset the decline in wages than to better workers' conditions. In 2003, the government began an attempt to cut back the EITC through stricter eligibility requirements and investigation of claimants.

DeParle was impressed by a study of the welfare-to-work program called Gain in California. This study compared six California counties, five of which had favored education and training, hoping to prepare recipients for higher-paying jobs. The sixth, Riverside County, had stressed basic job-search classes and encouraged most people to take the first jobs they could find. "After two years, Riverside had raised its participants' earnings by more than 50 percent, making the program about three times as effective as its rivals." (112) The Riverside philosophy quickly became the philosophy nationwide: work first. DeParle comments, "The idea of forsaking education in favor of "dead-end" jobs may sound cruel, and the thought can be taken too far . . . But it's often what recipients want, at least initially." (112) Angie and Jewell had failed repeatedly in classroom settings. Yet when DeParle discusses Angie's inability to get raises or work her way up in the job, he says that she would have been helped by on-the-job training.

The economist Robert Solow analyzes the Riverside experiment more closely than did DeParle. While the Riverside experiment achieved slightly better results than the other five counties, "even the Riverside results suggest that the job prospects for former welfare recipients are pretty grim."[8] Two-thirds of the people selected for the Riverside experiment held a job at some time during the first three years of their exposure to GAIN, 10 percentage points more than the average for all six counties. "But the Riverside advantage diminished year by year and, besides, although it is big enough to be noticed it is not big enough to solve the problem."[9]

Solow also examined a study in Michigan, where the state ended a program called General Assistance in 1991. The program paid $160 a month cash benefits to non-elderly poor adults without dependent children. A follow-up study of 426 ex-recipients found that about 65 percent of them had worked at a regular job or at casual labor at some time during the period.

Their total average earnings in the month before the survey averaged $596 for the better educated and $377 for the less well educated. A third of the sample never worked at all during the two years, and very few of those who worked were able to work steadily.

Solow concludes from these two studies that "the transformation of welfare into work is likely to be the transformation of welfare into unemployment and casual earnings so low as once to have been thought unacceptable for fellow citizens." He says that a decent welfare-to-work transition would require creating jobs and other supports. DeParle points out that the reason the Republican governors were willing to take on the welfare program was that Congress did not require the creation of jobs, an expense they were not willing to incur.

Solow predicted that putting large numbers of welfare recipients into low-paid jobs would depress wages on the lower end of the labor market and displace some currently employed workers by workers who will accept a lower wage. The Urban Institute estimated that the bottom one-third of the labor market would experience depressed wages. While this was never publicly discussed by the people who passed the welfare bill, it was probably one of their motivations, as well as their desire to break public service unions and to privatize welfare.

Although the law prohibits the direct substitution of welfare recipients for currently paid workers, some localities have circumvented this requirement by not renewing expired employment contracts with paid workers. In Baltimore, a thousand workers had lost jobs to welfare trainees by mid-1997, despite the fact that city workers had only two years before won a city ordinance guaranteeing a living wage to anyone employed under contracts with the city.[10] In New York City, thousands of workfare participants now do the work once done by higher-paid city workers.[11]

> The Republicans wanted to avoid the expense of creating jobs, so they allowed states to count people as "working" whenever they left the rolls, whether they really were working or not.

Solow concludes that time limits are incompatible with the substitution of work for welfare. He believes that we should go back to the notion of "packaging," "i.e., the recognition and acceptance of the fact that many welfare recipients will simply have to combine earnings and public assistance if they are to lead tolerable lives."

The Old Safety Net

No one liked the old AFDC program, including recipients. It was stingy and demeaning, but it guaranteed low-income parents a safety net and it gave many women a safe haven from violent and undependable men. DeParle tells of Hattie Mae Reed, Jewell's mother, who had done domestic work on the Eastland plantation. She went on welfare in 1960 and "the check gave new powers. Rather than promote 'dependency,' which was later seen as a major failing, its effect was the opposite: it gave her a degree of independence she had never known. To begin with, it reduced her reliance on men, so it decreased the predatory violence in her life. It also bolstered her leverage in a rigged labor market designed for exploitation. Now she had options besides chopping cotton and washing white people's clothes." (35-36). But she couldn't live on welfare alone. "From the start, she juggled three sources of cash — welfare, boyfriends, and jobs — just as Jewell, Angie, and Opal would do." (36)

The welfare check also helped many women get an education that made it possible to get a well-paid job. Whoopie Goldberg was helped by welfare. J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter stories, was also helped by welfare, as were thousands of other professionals. I personally know three professors who had once received welfare. An advocacy campaign called Welfare Made a Difference collected stories of people who have been helped by welfare to establish careers. Here are two of the 27 stories that they published in their booklet:

> Carmen Arroyo, Assemblywoman, Bronx, New York: My daughter developed very bad asthma. I had to be day and night in the hospital and I could not work. I spent my savings and I had to go on welfare against my desires. They (welfare) helped me buy winter clothes for the children and protect them because they were all developing asthma.

> Vivyan Adair, Professor, Clinton, New York: Today, I have a Ph.D. and am productively employed as a professor at a beautiful, private, liberal arts college. My happy and healthy 14-year-old daughter and I are contributing and conscientious full citizens and members of the central New York community and of the nation.
>
> But my life has not always been this happy. I grew up in a poor family and as an adult found myself in an abusive and unhealthy relationship with the father of my infant daughter. Welfare provided me with the means to escape the abuse, depression, and hopelessness of our life together. I would go so far as to say that pre-reform welfare saved my life. Because of the safety net that welfare provided for me when I had no one to turn to, no resources, and almost no hope, I was able to feed, clothe and house my daughter without being forced to go back to the man who had torn our lives apart so destructively. I was able to go to school so that eventually I could enter the professional workforce and lift my family out of poverty on a permanent and fulfilling basis.[12]

The PRWOA does not allow higher education to count as work. It allows only twelve months of vocational training. States can count more, but by 1998, 35 states did not count education and training as a work activity. Maine is the most generous with its "Parents as Partners" program that subsidizes parents to attend four-year colleges. Denying college education to parents does not bode well for their future ability to climb out of poverty. One study of six states found that 87 percent of recipients who graduated from two- or four-year college were still off welfare six years later. A study by the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee found that as of 1998, only one out of six former welfare recipients in Wisconsin had a job that lifted her out of poverty. Meanwhile, the average salary of someone with a one- or two-year degree from Milwaukee Area Technical College ranged between $20,000 and $24,000.[13]

Since the PRWOA was passed, there has been a precipitous drop in college enrollment among welfare recipients. Enrollment of welfare recipients at City College of New York plummeted from 27,000 in 1994 to 14,000 in 1998; at Milwaukee Area Technical College in Wisconsin, the number dropped in four years from 6,455 to 274. The numbers of low-income students who attend college will drop even more now that the federal Pell grant has been cut. Nearly a quarter of low- and moderate-income college students who currently qualify for federal Pell grants will see their awards reduced or eliminated under a change in federal rules that Congress allowed in its recent spending bill.[14] Pell grants for prisoners were cut off by Congress in 1994.

The Republicans wanted to avoid the expense of creating jobs so they retained the rhetoric of work while avoiding the substance of work programs by allowing states to count people as "working" whenever they left the rolls, whether they really were working or not. They gave "caseload reduction credit" for cutting people off the rolls. "When fully phased in, the law required states to meet a work rate of 50 percent, a standard no state had ever met. But if they cut their rolls in half (as twenty states subsequently did), they wouldn't have to run a work program at all." (128) Nothing in the bill required states to provide services to anyone. "Putting people to work was a discretionary activity. The core curriculum was getting them off the rolls." (129)

But across the nation, people who stayed on the rolls had to work or attend a job search class. DeParle described job search classes as ranging between mediocre and terrible. States used their block grants in different ways, sometimes even diverting money for programs other than welfare such as building highways or balancing the budget. Although there was a lifetime federal time limit of 5 years, some states had a shorter limit. Texas set some time limits as short as a year. Michigan and Maine set no time limits at all, using state funds for families who exhausted their federal aid. Oregon invested in casework. Most states invested in childcare, although not nearly enough to fill the need and much of it was of poor quality. Vermont helped rural recipients to buy cars to get to work, but in some states there was no way for inner-city women to get to suburban jobs, a problem Angie faced when she wanted to work at a suburban nursing home for higher wages. Massachusetts exempted recipients from work requirements until their youngest child was six, although it later lowered this age to two; Wisconsin required mothers to work when their child was three months old. (The federal bill allowed exemption from the work requirement only for mothers of children under three months.)

"Mississippi placed its faith in the Lord, with Governor Kirk Fordice asking churches to pick up the charity load. 'God, not government, will be the savior of welfare recipients,' he said." (208) DeParle visited a catfish processing plant in the Mississippi Delta where recipients "left town at dawn on a company bus and spent their days severing fish heads in a jungle of conveyor belts and saws. The job paid the minimum wage and annual turnover ran 300 percent." The manager observed pleasantly, "You work in the cold, you work in the wet — and of course you're around guts." (217) He praised the state for barring aid to anyone who quit.

"Many families got lost in the chaos — dropped from the rolls whether God proved their savior or not." (209) Some states used harsh tactics to discourage people from applying. New York City, under Jason Turner, forced people to attend a four-week job search program before coming on the rolls, and front-line workers made aggressive attempts to verbally dissuade people from applying.

Much of Wisconsin's W-2 program was privatized, with profit-seeking corporations invited to join nonprofits in submitting bids. State officials said this would make the program more efficient, but in fact it was an excellent case example for what's wrong with privatization. Both the private corporation, Maximus, and the nonprofit organization, Goodwill, were rife with corruption. Auditors found reckless extravagance at Maximus. The director of Goodwill was using his welfare dollars as a marketing fund, spending money earmarked for client services to seek contracts in other states. These two leading players in privatization, who handled half the state's cases, "became the two leading emblems of waste and abuse." (308) Before Maximus was audited, they had received a prestigious Innovations in American Government Award, which is cosponsored by the Ford Foundation and Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Award administrators called W-2 "one of the nation's best examples of government performance." (248)

Maximus and Goodwill lost their contracts in Wisconsin. The YWCA withdrew from the W-2 program, "bleeding red ink," and another (UMOS) ran up multiple fines for casework failures. The largest remaining organization was Opportunities Industrialization Center, whose president was indicted for his alleged role in a kickback scheme. The state appointed a full-time monitor to oversee the program. "Like a gang-ridden school, Wisconsin's largest welfare agency was being run with a cop in the hall." (332)

The following year, Maximus won a $100 million contract to run the New York City welfare program, where Jason Turner became the welfare commissioner. The city comptroller challenged the Maximus contract in court on the grounds of "corruption, favoritism, and cronyism," but an appeals court upheld the contract. Turner is now a consultant, "with clients as far away as Slovakia and Israel; the latter country is setting up a version of W-2 called 'Israel Works.'" (333)

Although the W-2 program promised individualized casework, it didn't deliver. DeParle said the worse scandal was "the scandalous absence of casework. With the rolls down 90 percent, the state was collecting more than $40,000 in federal payments for every family left on the rolls. Yet Opal had bounced between seven caseworkers at three agencies, at least two of whom had been on drugs themselves. And none of them had made the slightest difference in her life." (308) Opal quit her job and sold her furniture to buy cocaine. She moved to a crack house and continued to get welfare until the state took her baby from her and placed it in foster care. Three of her other children were cared for by her mother, and Angie cared for one of them. With no children in her care, Opal lost her welfare check and did not follow up on DeParle's efforts to get her into treatment. When W-2 first began, DeParle made Opal the poster girl of welfare reform in *The New York Times Magazine* by writing about her leaving welfare and getting a job. By the time the article hit the stands, Opal had lost her job.

The New World

SHORTLY AFTER THE welfare bill was passed, Barbara Ehrenreich attended a conference on "welfare privatization" held in Washington, D.C. A brochure advertised the conference as an ideal setting for companies seeking to: "capitalize on the massive growth potential of the new world of welfare reform/Gain a leading edge in the market while it is in its early state/ Profit from the opportunities available."[15] The welcoming address was delivered by William Eggers of the Los Angeles-based Reason Foundation, a libertarian think tank that exists to promote the privatization of government services. He announced that welfare privatization is now "probably the hottest area of privatization in the country." Lockheed Martin, Electronic Data Systems (EDS), Andersen Consulting, Unisys, and a host of smaller companies were proposing to take over welfare programs. Lockheed and EDS had lobbied for the bill to contain more funds for "information technology," a specialty of high-tech, defense-oriented firms. Enforcement of the five-year time limit of the bill "will require a vast investment in technology to track individuals, through name changes and geographical moves, for decades on end — creating a veritable Foucaultian panopticon of surveillance and a growth industry for the finger-imagists and information technologists."

Ehrenreich said that Electronic Benefit Transfer cards were one of the privatizers' favorite innovations — and the theme of a World Research Group conference in April 1996. Food stamps are now distributed nationwide through these cards. DeParle mentions the computer program used in Wisconsin called Care, which workers had enormous difficulty mastering. Massachusetts uses a computer program called Beacon that has had endless bugs in it, stymieing workers, penalizing clients, and giving legal advocates a lot of work by its mistakes. It is run by a private corporation. It actually makes it harder for workers to do good casework because they are glued to the computer program as they interview clients, and they often have to call in supervisors for help in navigating the program.

Some public employees at the conference asked how these companies plan to make a profit on welfare programs. Answers were vague, but the W-2 experience gives clues, which square with Ehrenreich's speculations. "One possibility is that the firms will take their profits out of the services and allotments intended for the poor; this will be especially tempting if . . . the companies are paid solely for 'caseload reduction,' as opposed to being paid for finding long-term, decent-paying jobs for welfare recipients. It is no great trick to achieve effective levels of 'application dissuasion' — by, for example, locating a welfare office several bus rides out of town and opening it at odd and erratic hours." Another source of profit will be to displace the present unionized workers by non-union, corporate employees, or even by machines.

By the end of DeParle's study in 1999, Angie was off welfare and still working at the nursing home but struggling to make ends meet. She said she was just "treading water." The more she worked, the more her work expenses increased. "There was bus fare, babysitting, work uniforms, and snacks from the vending machine." (283) Angie also lost her health insurance when she left welfare, although the kids remained on Medicaid. DeParle says that "absent a dramatic increase in skills, it's hard to see how she can work her way up to a significantly better standard of living." (336)

Angie was almost always depressed. One study showed that 42 percent of families on welfare met the criteria for clinical depression, more than three times the national average.[16] What some people call "laziness" in welfare recipients is actually a sign of depression. An Urban Institute study showed that almost half of parents receiving welfare either said they were in poor general health or scored low on a standard mental health scale. One-third said that their health limits their ability to work.[17]

Jewell was off welfare and working as a nurse's aide. She lost most of her food stamps after she failed to file the monthly earnings reports required of people who work. She also lost her health insurance for two years. She was hospitalized with bleeding ulcers and her wages were garnisheed to pay the bill, which she did not consider unusual. She said, "Anybody that works is gonna get their check garnisheed. Everybody in Milwaukee owes a hospital bill." She would like to become a nurse or have her own beauty salon, but chances of that seem slim. Her lover Ken got out of prison and they are living together. Ken kicked his drug habit and had a steady job delivering pizzas. DeParle wrote Ken's story up in the *New York Times Magazine* as a success story.

Michael Steinborn, a dedicated caseworker at Maximus, knocked himself out trying to help desperate clients in a dysfunctional system. But dealing with clients' crises burned him out and he moved into a job trying to line up prospective employers. He and his girlfriend, the child's mother, had split up. His second child was born with severe medical problems and needed months of hospitalization. The mother felt no longer able to work with a disabled child and went on W-2. Michael felt ashamed to have his own children on welfare, but he said the checks, with his child-support payments, helped nurture their daughter to health. He said, "The irony kills me: I'm telling people this isn't the way, and my own family ends up on the system." (333)

Proponents of welfare reform argued that it would be good for the children as well as the mothers because a working mother is a good role model. DeParle saw no evidence of this in the families he studied. When he told his middle class friends about Angie working, they often asked, "Were the kids proud that she works? — taking it as an article of faith that the answer had to be yes." Angie's answer to that question was "I don't think the kids think about that. They'd like it if I'd just sit around with them all day." They ask, "Why you always at work?" (321)

Angie didn't expect any of her four children to graduate from high school. After she got off welfare her children's absenteeism increased. Kesha, Redd, and Von were absent from school 26 percent of the time. Her children's childhoods "passed on a sea of boredom, dotted by landfalls of chaos." Her son Redd dropped out of school at the age of 15. He was unemployed at the age of 17 and thinking of selling drugs, saying, "I'm tired of not having no money." (186) Thompson had put in place a Learnfare program that tried to keep kids in school by reducing the checks of families with school truants. When researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee found that it failed to boost school attendance, Thompson attacked them as liberal ideologues and canceled their contract. (76) The right-wing ideologues who put welfare reform in place didn't want to hear any bad news. Most new initiatives that Congress passes contain provisions to study the effect of the bill, but there was no provision to study the effects of the welfare bill. It is possible that school absenteeism increased after mothers left welfare because they were not able to supervise the children.

Angie's daughter Kesha got pregnant at the age of 17 and dropped out of school. The baby's father was 14. She moved in with a 24-year-old boyfriend, and took a job as a check -ut clerk at a grocery store. At the age of 19 she had another baby. Kesha had to care for the younger children while Angie worked, which made it hard for her to do school work.

Teen Pregnancy

ONE OF THE GOALS of welfare reform was to cut down on teen pregnancy. The arch-conservative Charles Murray, author of *Losing Ground*, believed that teen pregnancy was at the root of society's problems. When talking about overpopulation in Third World countries, President Clinton extolled the value of educating women, as women are less likely to have children when they are educated and have a future to look forward to. But he did not apply this excellent insight to women on welfare when he signed the welfare bill. While the bill requires teens to finish high school or get a GED while on welfare, it does not enable them to go on to higher education. Research has shown that the most powerful factor in the decision to delay pregnancy until later in life is an adolescent's commitment to education and a future career apart from motherhood. Teens who have high educational expectations and school success are more likely to use contraception effectively.

The welfare bill contained a provision called the "family cap" which denied assistance to a child born after a family was on welfare. When Rutgers University researchers studied its effects, they found that it did not decrease pregnancies but it did slightly increase the abortion rate. The state of New Jersey squelched the study, fearing the wrath of the Catholic Church.

Tommy Thompson left as governor of Wisconsin to become national secretary of Health and Human Services. (He recently resigned that post after President Bush's reelection.) "Having shown so little oversight of his own program, he gained oversight of the welfare system nationwide." (331) And he had not improved the lives of Wisconsin welfare recipients. A study by the University of Wisconsin found that people who entered W-2 fared no better in earnings or employment than a similar group who did not. W-2 had served as a deterrent, "but for the average client, its services made no difference." (332)

Officials triumphantly proclaimed that welfare reform was a success when the rolls dropped dramatically. Between August 1996 and September 2003 the welfare rolls shrunk 54 percent. In September 2003 there were 4,880,037 individuals receiving assistance.[18] Three million families — more than 9 million people — had left the rolls nationwide since 1996. A boom economy before the recession of 2001 accounted for some of the decline and tough sanctions and restricted eligibility accounted for a large portion, but DeParle believes that much of the decline was due to "message effects. From the TV news to waiting-room posters came the same strident message: 'Get off the rolls!'" "Scared, angry, or simply confused, all kinds of families stopped thinking of the welfare office as a place to get help." (210)

Whites left faster than blacks, and blacks left faster than Hispanics. By the end of the decade, blacks and Hispanics outnumbered whites by a ratio of two-to-one nationwide. (The rolls were 39 percent black, 25 percent Hispanic, and 31 percent white.) The racial composition had become what the public had always thought it was. Discrimination in the work place and by landlords accounted for part of this, but blacks were more disadvantaged in education and health, and Hispanics faced both discrimination and language difficulties. The overall poverty rate in the nation was 12.1 percent, but the poverty rate for African Americans in 2002 was 24.2 percent; for Hispanics 21.8 percent; for children 16.7 percent; for female-headed families 26.5 percent.[19] The national unemployment rate in 2002 was 5.8 percent. Among people age 16 to 19 the total rate of joblessness was 16.5 percent. The rate for African Americans in that age group was 29.8 percent, and the rate for Hispanics was 20.1 percent.[20] These figures understate the actual picture since people who have stopped looking for work are not counted in the unemployment figures.

Eligible families stopped applying for other programs, such as Medicaid and food stamps. Nationwide, about two-thirds of the adults who left welfare lost Medicaid even as the number of uninsured grew. By 2004, the government said that 45 million people had no health insurance, and Families USA said 81.8 million were without health insurance for all or part of 2002 and 2003.[21]

The 2003 report of the U.S. Conference of Mayors said that soup kitchens and food pantries are swamped. Requests for emergency assistance increased 88 percent. Forty percent of cities were unable to provide an adequate quantity of food and predicted an increase in requests in 2004. More than 12 million American families either did not have enough food or worried about someone in the family going hungry in 2003. [22]

There was a steady increase in the number of abused and neglected children referred to foster care between 1995 and 2001. Children whose mothers had higher income returned home more quickly than children of mothers with low incomes.[23]

DeParle doesn't discuss discrimination against women, which keeps women's wages at 75 percent of men's wages. Forty percent of female-headed families lived in poverty in 2002, compared to a national poverty rate of 12.1 percent.[24] Employed former recipients of welfare and recipients combining work and welfare earned, on average, between $8,000 and $10,800 a year in 2000.[25] As many as one in seven families who left welfare from 2000 through 2002 had no work, no spousal support, and no other government benefits. That is up from one in 10 in a 1999 study.[26]

In twenty-five major cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in 2003, the average demand for emergency shelter increased by 13 percent in a year and requests for shelter by homeless families increased by 15 percent. An average of 30 percent of the requests for emergency shelter by homeless families were unmet during the past year. People remain homeless an average of 5 months. The length of time people are homeless increased during the past year.[27]

In the face of facts like this, it might be more accurate to call DeParle's book *American Nightmare*. But DeParle doesn't go where his study leads him. As Frances Fox Piven says, his dislike of welfare and his fixation with the idea that work is the solution, overrides what he actually learns from his study. With the poverty rate growing every year, it takes a leap of faith for DeParle to say, "The country knows now what it didn't know a decade ago: that antipoverty policy can enjoy a measure of success." (326) He does, however, recognize that inequality is growing and the economy has given the common worker proportionally less and less. "Trading welfare checks for pay stubs, (Angie and Jewell) staked a moral claim to a greater share of the nation's prosperity." He calls for "the rudiments of a package of workers' aid" — health care, childcare, wage supplements, transportation aid. (327)

But he doesn't call for support for caretaking. DeParle doesn't think that caretaking is work. He refers to mothers who are not in the paid work force as "doing nothing" or as "idle." In fact, they are caring for children and that is work. DeParle quotes Daniel Patrick Moynihan as having some doubts about whether single mothers should be forced to work, but DeParle expresses no such doubts himself.

Ending Welfare Differently

GWENDOLYN MINK SAYS we do indeed need to end welfare — "but as poor mothers experience it, not as middle class moralizers imagine it."[28] The Committee of 100, a group of academics that includes Gwendolyn Mink, has proposed a caretaker's allowance that would support parents in caring for children. The Wages for Housework movement, centered in Los Angeles and London, advocates the same thing.

There has been a recent spate of media coverage of middle class mothers agonizing over whether to leave their jobs and stay home with their children, including the popular sitcom "Desperate Housewives." Poor mothers don't have that choice. The double standard for middle-class mothers was revealed when Congress passed a law in 1998, two years after passing the welfare reform bill, giving tax deductions to middle class mothers who choose to stay home to care for their children. Theresa Funiciello, author of *Tyranny of Kindness*, has proposed a refundable caretaker's tax credit that would provide a tax refund for caretakers of children, the aged, and the disabled. This would be a universal program that would benefit the middle class as well as the poor, and so would have more political support that the current welfare program with its high administrative costs and its abusive treatment of clients.

DeParle says that the next step in reform has to deal with the fathers. None of the children in his study had a functioning father. DeParle notes that the "marriage initiative" proposed by the Bush administration to spend $300 million a year of welfare money into marriage promotion efforts was met with derision by the left. Yet he says, "rather than dismiss it, why not see it and raise it one — with an equally large 'fatherhood initiative' to help inner-city men find jobs and reconnect with their kids." (p. 330) DeParle is certainly right to call for more jobs for black men, but it is not likely that any marriage initiative will increase their likelihood of getting married. Men are not likely to marry unless they have some chance of helping to support their families. William Julius Wilson points out the correlation between black men's high unemployment rate and their low marriage rate. He proposes a program similar to the WPA to create government jobs. The best marriage program is a jobs program.

Most of the men connected with Angie, Jewell, and Opal had been in prison, sometimes on drug-related charges, but DeParle does not discuss the racist criminal justice system. Human Rights Watch reports that in 11 states, black men are twelve to twenty-six times more likely to be incarcerated than white men; in Washington, D.C., those rates are 49 times greater than for whites, and many if not most of these imprisonments are drug-related.[29] Fifty-two percent of black male high school dropouts have prison records by the time they reach their early thirties.[30]

Jacob Hacker, reviewing *American Dream* for the *New Republic*, says that DeParle fails to ask if the welfare bill was what the American people wanted. By not discussing this, DeParle reinforces the general assumption that "Americans are, by and large, hostile to government attempts to address social problems and simply don't care about poverty, inequality, or hardship."[31] Hacker says that surveys showed that while Americans wanted welfare recipients in the workforce, they were willing to spend more to help them do this. While people didn't like the much-maligned welfare system, large majorities of the American public say that government should help people who have bad luck or who cannot help themselves.

Reauthorization of the PRWOA has been debated in Congress and will soon come up for a vote. Republicans want tougher work requirements and more limitations on education and training. Democrats, along with some moderate Republicans, want increased federal money for childcare, arguing that mothers cannot be expected to work if they don't have childcare. President Bush has proposed to cut $1 billion from TANF in his 2005 budget.

The Bush administration and a Republican Congress promise tougher times ahead for domestic programs. Even Social Security, the third rail of politics, is under attack. That will be easier to defend than any public assistance program for the poor, but the outcome is by no means certain. There are sometimes openings on the state and local levels for progressive change. Massachusetts legislators, for example, are now debating how to get health insurance for all state citizens and are proposing to create public statewide early childhood education. Welfare activists are lobbying the state legislature to preserve some of the benefits in the state welfare program that federal legislation doesn't allow.

DeParle admired Angie and Jewell for their strength and resilience. They struggled through stressful and dangerous low-wage jobs, garnisheed wages, overcrowded housing, evictions, lights shut off, children's illnesses, broken down and stolen cars, depression and bleeding ulcers, to provide for their children and to care for each other. Fannie Lou Hamer, a black welfare mother and civil rights leader, told the Democratic National Convention in 1968, "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired." Angie and Jewell are sick and tired, but they keep on keeping on. We must do the same, for their sake, for the sake of millions of other people living in poverty, and for our own sake because we want to live in a more humane society. It may seem like the task of Sisyphus to roll the rock up the hill only to have it roll down again, but Albert Camus tells us that Sisyphus, a happy man, liked his job.

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BACK OF THE BOOK

With The Best of Intentions

REVIEW BY KATHLEEN ODELL KORGEN

Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness
MELANIE E. L. BUSH
Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004 303 pp. $26.95

MELANIE BUSH'S *Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness* takes on a very important task: exposing the everyday mechanisms that uphold racial and economic inequality in the United States. Bush should be commended for her own good intentions. This book is clearly an earnest attempt to expose the support system behind the dominant ideology in the United States that rationalizes and perpetuates racial injustice. Bush would like to convince all Americans to acknowledge white privilege, address racial inequities, and institute policy changes in higher education. Unfortunately, *Breaking the Code of Good Intentions* will do little to persuade anyone not already committed to such endeavors. While promotional blurbs from esteemed social scientists fill the back cover of the book, what is inside reads more like an emotional appeal for racial justice than a piece of convincing social science research.

Bush grounds her work in the tradition of whiteness studies and the first chapter includes a good, brief overview of that field. She attempts to build on past research by showing how "the everyday thinking of ordinary people integrally relates to the perpetuation of patterns of systemic racial inequality." (33) An "educator and administrator" at Brooklyn College CUNY since 1990, Bush uses that campus as her primary source of data.

Unfortunately, while Bush describes her work as ethnographic, she does not create a representative, in-depth picture of the Brooklyn College community. Particularly frustrating is the fact that this book has, on the surface, all the components of an excellent ethnography. Bush collected data from a wide variety of sources. She conducted two surveys of students (one was part of a pilot study), led eighteen focus groups of students and faculty, interviewed seven faculty members, and participated in many campus events. Unfortunately, she never fully explains her methodology. For instance, it is not always clear whether or not the results that Bush discusses come from her larger survey or the pilot survey (which had a much lower return rate).

The description of the data collection Bush does include in the book indicates a lack of rigor in the research design. The survey instruments are weak. For example, one question asks students to indicate how much they agree with the statement "I consider myself colorblind when it comes to race," but the survey provides no

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definition of "colorblind," nor other questions that could more accurately measure the respondents' degree of colorblindness. The focus groups are never fully explained. Why focus groups instead of individual interviews? Why were some groups interracial while others contained participants all of the same race? Why did some consist of staff members instead of students? Why did the number of participants in each focus group vary from 3 to 14? How did the participants' responses vary in relation to these differences between the groups?

Bush is less than rigorous in her discussion of the results from the surveys and focus groups. For instance, she repeatedly describes differences among groups as "significant," yet she never mentions doing any type of statistical analysis of the data. When discussing quotes from focus group members, Bush does not indicate the degree to which the statements she quotes represent the thoughts of other focus group participants. Sometimes she says "many" students voiced similar opinions. At other times, she goes on at length about a quote without ever indicating if it represents more than the thoughts of one individual. The reader is left with the impression that she simply used the quote to make a point that interested her, rather than to illustrate a pattern in the data. Finally, she never explains why she conducted individual interviews with seven faculty members and how and why she selected the particular seven (other than that they had each been at the college for over thirty years).

Even more troubling are Bush's attempts to persuade her readers through the use of quotes from other writers, rather than data. For instance, on page 96, she attempts to refute the belief of "many" whites that black Americans "receive special privileges" by employing a long quote from an opinion piece by a writer for the *Nashville City Paper*. While it is an eloquent quote, it simply states that blacks face discrimination in our criminal justice system and are denied home loans more often than are whites. Bush provides no statistics (which are easy to find) to back up these statements. Moreover, she completely sidesteps the reverse-discrimination argument made by "many" whites, thereby neglecting an opportunity to refute it.

Bush's weak methodology and her use of opinions sprinkled with quotations from her focus groups and survey data is frustrating because 1) she has an important point to make and 2) she no doubt *could* have collected data that would have effectively supported her ideas. Most Americans *are* very ignorant about political, economic, and historical factors that affect them and their fellow citizens. As Bush points out, this ignorance prevents them from knowing enough to challenge or even question policymakers.

Most white Americans live in predominantly white communities and rarely, if ever, discuss racial issues. My research on close black-white friendships indicates that even the few white Americans who have crossed the racial divide and become close friends with a black person tend to come from families who followed this trend of avoiding (consciously or unconsciously) racial issues. The parents of the vast majority of the white friends I interviewed either completely ignored race or brought the topic up only fleetingly, when making derogatory remarks about members of a racial minority group. More startling is the fact that 75 percent of the white friends (consciously or unconsciously) avoided discussing racial issues with their *close* black friend.

If even white Americans who have established close relationships with black Americans tend to steer away from the topic of race, why should we be surprised that 40 to 60 percent of whites believe black Americans are economically just as well off as whites? How many are aware that black and Hispanic Americans have less than one-tenth the wealth of white Americans[1] or that the unemployment rate for black Americans is slightly more than double that of white Americans?[2] While it is never clear that the quotes Bush relays from focus group members are truly representative of Brooklyn College students' thoughts on *particular* topics, the students' overall ignorance about the social, political, and historical background of contemporary race relations comes through very clearly.

After sifting through the disjointed, weakly unsupported, and hazy points Bush makes throughout the book, her main premise still makes much sense. Namely, most white Americans do *not* know that 1) racial discrimination is still pervasive throughout our society, 2) the racial inequality that continues to exist is grounded in the country's social, political, and economic institutions, 3) this racial inequality benefits only a small, elite group of Americans, and 4) it is in the self-interest of most white Americans to become knowledgeable, active, and effective "deconstructers" of these systems of injustice. It is in this ignorance that Bush sees "cracks" in the system that can be exploited through education. She believes that we must teach uninformed white Americans that racism is an ideology that deflects attention away from the inequities rooted in the social structure of our society. According to Bush, if we do that, "ordinary people" will gain the capacity to recognize and alleviate the injustices that perpetuate racism and inequality across races. This is a very worthy endeavor in need of a book that supports pleas for racial justice with more coherently assembled facts.

NOTES

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Hard Work Indeed

KRISTIN LAWLER

Hard Work: Remaking the Labor Movement
RICK FANTASIA AND KIM VOSS
Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004
224 pp. $19.95

WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND when you think "union?" If you are anything like me, you see something vibrant and powerful — Joe Hill, the Flint sit-downs, the folks who brought you the weekend, Norma Rae . . . Sure, things have been kind of lame lately. But the essence is solidarity, power, inspiration, expanding the horizons of the possible — goosebump material. For most Americans, however, this image of labor doesn't exist. Say the word "union" and it lands like a thud: dull, heavy.

In Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement, Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss take American labor's image problem seriously. The authors begin by contrasting mass media cheerleading about the "new" American economy with the increasingly grim reality faced by U.S. workers, a reality brought into stark relief through comparison with that of workers in northern Europe. The extent of the European welfare state makes it such that an unemployed European is in many ways better off than a low-wage American. And yet, Americans are encouraged to equate economic well-being with the Dow Jones average, and the language of class and class struggle is not just repressed — nobody even knows what it means anymore. Why, the authors ask, have employers been able to "so dominate the means of symbolic representation?" Their answer "has largely to do with a labor movement that has not only failed to offer an oppositional voice within American society, in an ideological sense, but for most of the past half century has been unwilling to represent itself as a labor movement at all."

What is an oppositional movement? For the authors, "analyses of the labor movement tend to focus on its corporeal dimensions (its size, its organizational structure, its institutional leverage, its membership characteristics, and so on) while disregarding or minimizing its evocative dimensions." Fantasia and Voss are searching for the soul of a movement that's ossified into pure form, and form is nothing without the energy that animates it: "The very strength and efficacy of the labor movement's embodied forms depends, to a considerable degree, on its capacity to invoke something larger than itself." This something larger, this soul of the movement is, for the authors, solidarity. Solidarity "represents a potent mythic theme that carries remarkably transcendent qualities . . . demonstrations of solidarity can summon powerful spiritual forces in the social world . . . that are capable of producing extraordinary degrees of . . . collective identification."

In other words, the foundational myth of the labor movement, solidarity, contains in its practice the power to inspire transformative activity — "demonstrated expressions of solidarity are capable of "charming" the social world by a process of symbolic levitation." The ordinary becomes extraordinary, the impossible becomes possible, "the singular voice turns into a collective chant." At a fundamental level, that's why people join movements. The labor movement grows when it inspires people. For this reason, the authors "look for change . . . partly

KRISTEN LAWLER's *review of The New Left Revisited appeared in New Politics 36 (Winter 2004).*

through a reconfiguration of the place of the labor movement in the symbolic vocabulary of the society."

In Fantasia and Voss's narrative, American labor was once a social movement that embodied the solidarity of workers, inspiring and empowering ordinary people. The organizing successes of the CIO in the 1930s is the main referent here: "Perhaps more significant even than the numbers was the fact that the CIO changed the symbolic place of unions in the public imagination from organizations providing narrow protections for the market skills of privileged artisans, to a social movement embodying and pursuing social justice." When labor was a social movement, unions won benefits that emanated to the whole of the working class, just as the European labor movement did. This kind of win grows the movement, and is much harder to take back. As we all know, much of the American labor movement shriveled into the bland business unionism of contracts, grievances, business agents, the "servicing" model of the organization — and issues of solidarity, power, leverage, possibility — not to mention class — disappeared from the public imagination.

So what happened? Theories of the exceptionalism of the American working class are explicitly rejected by the authors as explanations for the current sad state of affairs. What's exceptional about the United States in this story, is not the inherent conservatism or racism of American workers but the "exceptionally hostile terrain" on which class struggle played out in this country. Capital had motives and abilities to beat down the movement in the United States that European capital never had. Open state repression, McCarthyism, and especially the power-suffocating vise that is American labor law — from all fronts, the movement was assaulted.

In addition, many union leaders were complicit: "Taft-Hartley served the corporate interests well by accomplishing the near-total domestication of industrial unionism. However, this was also supported by certain forces within the trade union movement itself. In return for their complicity and their willingness to relinquish their most potent weapons, unions were granted a measure of stability and even modest growth in the postwar structure of American society. A new "push-button" unionism characterized by an array of bureaucratic practices, from formal labor board elections, routinized grievance procedures, and automatic dues deductions, was enabled by Taft-Hartley . . . " What the unions became "only makes sense in relation to a style of unionism that consciously eschewed those characteristics that labor movements everywhere (including the United States) once adopted by reflex, namely, the languages and practices of class warfare, of solidarity, and of internationalism." The "defanging" of the movement "clearly appealed to those business unionists . . . who never had much stomach for the class struggle in any case. . ."

IN THEIR ZEAL to absolve the rank and file from blame, however, the authors craft a narrative in which the workers themselves are mostly dependent variables — capital acts, union leaders react, and the American worker gets sold down the river. There is truth to this perspective, but it is incomplete. There is some discussion of wildcat strikes, of the workers' continued attempt to use real leverage on the shop floor, especially in explaining exactly what it was that business unionists were charged with continually disciplining on capital's behalf. But, in one important instance, the frontal assault on unions that began in the 70s is described as due almost entirely to the action of capital, newly mean and nasty in the face of global competition.

However, as George Caffentzis, Stanley Aronowitz, and others have shown, it was workers themselves who threw into crisis the postwar social compact through which business unionism was able to deliver the goods to large segments of the working class. The militant struggles of the 30s forced capital into the Keynesian productivity deal whereby rising wages would be tolerated in exchange for rising productivity, ending for a time the zero-sum game in which every gain for labor came at the expense of capital. The Keynesian deal aimed to grow the pie, in effect, and for a time it did. For Fantasia and Voss, "shredding the postwar social contract" was capital's move only. The truth, though, is that the wage for productivity deal was broken by the rank and file.

Unwaged segments of the working class demanded income transfer payments and thereby raised the floor under all wages while emboldening workers by making the loss of a job less daunting. Women refused domestic labor, contributing to the growth of the service sector, where productivity is lower than in the manufacturing sector. Most important, the discipline of work was breaking down all over beginning in the second half of the 60s, especially on the shop floor that was central to the deal. The "breakdown of the work ethic" was widely discussed as a serious social problem. Overall wages continued to grow, outpacing the growth of productivity. Significantly, this breakdown of working-class discipline was indeed inspired by powerful movements — it's just that these movements were feminism, black power, and the counterculture, not what had become of the labor movement.

If you did not look for the working class beyond the postwar union structure, this mass resistance would be hard to see. To their credit, the authors never leave the self-activity of the working class out of the analysis entirely. It's clearly in effect in the early days. A few paragraphs are devoted to more recent wildcat strikes, including the legendary Lordstown rebellion. There is a short but important discussion of dissident movements like Miners for Democracy and Teamsters for a Democratic Union. Still, workers themselves are for the most part seen as junior opponents in the class struggle, at least since mid-century. The idea that historical change is not driven by the activity of workers absolves the rank and file from blame for what came to be seen as their own exceptionalism. It is also, unfortunately, an historical analysis that absolves workers of much of their own agency at all. For Voss and Fantasia, it seems, the ability of the working class to generate movement power from within itself is old history. These days, it's purely a dependent variable.

Given this analysis, it is not at all surprising where Fantasia and Voss look for current possibilities of hope. Not to the rank and file. Instead, they share the good news of unions like SEIU, HERE, and UNITE, who have gotten aggressive about organizing new members and pressuring bosses with militant, creative tactics meant to circumvent the institutional advantages held by employers. Some of this new energy has even made its way, via the success of SEIU, to the top of the labor federation. Sweeney won't say the word class or get out of bed with the Democrats, or even spearhead a no-brainer like single payer health care. And he's soft on neoliberalism and hard on union democracy — he wasn't afraid, as head of SEIU, to put locals that opposed him into trusteeship, "to advance a much more aggressive organizing agenda." What's important, though, is that he's committed to using the resources of the labor movement to organize in the growing sectors of the economy, and for the first time in a long time the AFL-CIO has a positive program. For the authors of *Hard Work*, that's reason to hope.

SEIU's Justice for Janitors campaigns and HERE's victories in Las Vegas are represented as the new "social movement unionism" that constitutes a possible overcoming of now-irrelevant business unionism. We hear the stories of these militant struggles primarily from the perspective of the union staff. It's truly astounding — there are no workers' voices in the accounts provided here. That's because, essentially, Fantasia and Voss objectify the workers as a mass to be "mobilized" by the visionary leadership and especially, the heroic staff. The "radical" staff organizers, recruited from outside the groups of workers themselves, do brilliant, important research and then "educate" the members. They decide on the tactics to be deployed and then tell the workers where to show up. And luckily, since they're not beholden to any membership constituency, they can follow the vision they know is right. "The air of arrogance and exclusivity that they sometimes give off is compounded by the fact that the political will for many of the dramatic changes that have occurred in the labor movement have come from the top, not the rank and file who are usually believed to be the only source of democratic change." This "usual" belief is no longer relevant given the harsh reality of U.S. labor relations, the authors seem to say.

It is telling that when Fantasia and Voss list the characteristics of "social movement unionism," the level of power that workers have within "their" own organizations is barely mentioned. In the end, the authors don't take their own analysis of the tragic transformation from labor movement to bureaucratic organization seriously enough. They are clear that mass solidarity and the use of immediate leverage to extract concessions from employers was crippled by organizational forms and leaders that were increasingly disconnected from the workers themselves. The no-strike clause in contracts not only evacuated the strike threat of the crucial element of surprise; it turned the union itself into a cop, insuring industrial peace and uninterrupted production by keeping the workers in line. And the grievance procedure, in which "each step becomes more depersonalized than the previous one . . . seeks literally to displace conflict, by channeling it away from those with an immediate and tangible stake in its resolution, to the desks of ever-higher grades of bureaucrats."

Voss and Fantasia know very well that a system of representation gets weaker the further away it gets from the immediacy of the workers themselves. Gramsci once counseled "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will." The authors of *Hard Work* show that, no matter how desperately many labor intellectuals want something in the union movement to get excited about, optimism of the intellect can be a dangerous thing.

IT IS TRUE THAT campaigns like J for J in some ways do what the early movement once did — "capture the public imagination, while revealing precisely the ways in which employers were vulnerable to the tactical leverage of workers." Labor's image is slowly changing, from that of a "narrow interest group" to a movement fighting for social justice, especially for the most marginalized, immigrant, low-wage sector of the American working class. And the victories that these campaigns have won "for" workers are significant. In addition, these unions are growing. But how the authors can mistake an increasingly staff-heavy, centralized organization with the future of a social movement capable of inspiring ever-larger numbers of people to feel their own power and make their own goals a reality is quite mystifying.

For what is a social movement? Is it born of centralized structures and paid organizers? Or is it a new reality fired by an inspiring, grass roots vision and the solidarity that holds the potential power to make that vision real? The examples that the authors give of contemporary solidarity frequently look like something else — guilting churches, shaming employers, playing on the white guilt of elite students. Moral responsibility to "help" the poor is an old story, even if it's cloaked in the garb of "radical organizers," "progressive leaders," and "immigrant workers." It's not the same as solidarity, and it's not what has ever inspired people to step outside the oppression of their everyday lives and act out the possibilities of their dreams. Centralized organizations don't make that happen, and it is unlikely that the dream of "union density" has the capacity to inspire anyone. What vision does fire the imagination of the contemporary American worker? Maybe it's morality and social justice, as the authors assert. I'm not so sure. But the truth is that without organizational forms that are structurally open to pressure from below, the union movement can't be the expression of the real hopes and dreams, the indigenous vision, of working people.

In his new book on the shorter hours movement in the UAW, Jonathan Cutler shows that when union leaders were pressured to respond to the desires of workers, they were forced to give voice to the workers' own vision — of freedom from work and power vis-à-vis the boss. As Cutler points out in *Labor's Time: Shorter Hours, the UAW, and the Struggle for American Unionism*, the fight for the shorter workweek is, in addition to being a vision of less work, also a solidaristic strategy for working-class leverage in the labor market. Collectively restricting the supply of labor to the market shifts the balance of power toward workers, potentially taming the traditional "whip" of unemployment. In the forties and fifties, "the autoworkers supported those factions willing to speak out and defend militant rank-and-file demands" in UAW Local 600's highly contested elections at Ford's giant River Rouge plant. Those who would be elected officers couldn't win without embracing the shorter hours demand.

Interestingly, it was the great "social unionist," Walter Reuther, who utterly opposed the syndicalist shorter hours demand of the workers in favor of his own corporatist, less "narrow" vision. And significantly, it was only when structural factors within the UAW made Reuther vulnerable to internal pressure that he was forced to pledge his support to the demand. When the great "progressive" made the deals that finally cemented his control of the UAW, the worker-generated demand for a 30-hour week at 40 hours' pay was squashed.

The lesson here is that when union leaders are protected from vulnerability to the rank and file, visions that do animate solidarity — because they're generated out of the shared desires of workers — may get further removed from the union's program. This insight is particularly important given Andy Stern's recent New Unity Partnership proposals to overhaul the AFL-CIO in favor of increased centralization. The rift between the Sweeney and Stern camps hadn't emerged publicly when *Hard Work* was written. Still, the position of the authors on this fundamental debate is easy to infer — for them, the AFL-CIO's biggest problem is that the house of labor is too decentralized for reformers to be able to force member unions to get with the program. And union density is the goal of the new program — although Fantasia and Voss do mention that the strength of the French labor movement, for instance, comes not from union density, which is quite low, but from the cultivation of solidarity. One could imagine that the demand for six-week vacations and a 35-hour workweek could cultivate quite a bit of solidarity in the American case as well.

MORE CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP, insulated from the rank and file, may help organize workers into unions, numbers-wise. But without fostering a vibrant, democratic culture, unions will never help to generate a movement that embodies the desires of American workers. The authors are correct, more right-on than they know, when they say that soul is more important than form — structure, resources, numbers — any day. What is the soul of a labor movement? Solidarity, yes. And vision. If the vision doesn't emerge out of workers' own experiences, their immediate struggles and especially their dreams, it will never have the capacity to inspire the solidaristic practices that can expand the horizons of the possible — and Rebuilding the Labor Movement will be Hard Work, indeed.

Everything You Never Wanted to Know

REVIEW BY LAURIE CALHOUN

IN AN UNPRECEDENTED PERIOD of international terrorism, corporate globalization, and correlative anti-Americanism, *Masters of War: Militarism and Blowback in the Era of American Empire* (2003) provides a compendium of everything you never wanted to know about the U.S. government, its policies and their consequences. This collection covers a wide range of issues being studied by intellectuals far from the punditry spotlight, up to and including the nature of the mainstream media itself. The essays range in style and content from academic to poetic and together conspire to condemn the status quo, exhorting thoughtful and intelligent readers to delve behind the sunny rhetoric of public policy pronouncements accepted at face value and propagated by the media. Only an informed citizenry can hold its leaders accountable for the catastrophes that they engineer in the name of the people and pay for using the people's money.

Masters of War: Militarism and Blowback in the Era of American Empire
EDITED BY CARL BOGGS
New York: Routledge, 2003
384 pp. $24.95

Hegemony

WITH THE LARGEST and wealthiest military institution in history, surpassing the next fifteen nations' military resources combined, the United States of America has reached the point where it can be seriously threatened by no nation in existence. Having rejected the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty (among others), and having waged an offensive war against Iraq in violation of the 1945 *Charter of the United Nations*, the United States has truly earned the dread and detestation of the world community from which it has effectively withdrawn. As the Bush administration pushes forward with its neoconservative agenda, "liberating" people through their annihilation, the inhabitants of countries such as Iran, Syria, and North Korea can only hover in fear as they await their fate — what precisely the future will bring in a world dominated both economically and militarily by the United States, a nation ruled through 2008 by a man who, apparently unaware of the democratic advances made by the post-medieval separation of church and state, claims that his policy directives are handed down to him by God.

The first part of *Masters of War*, "The Expanding U.S. Imperial Domain," includes essays by Michael Parenti regarding U.S. military intervention, Irene Gendzier on global oil politics, Loring Wirbel on the colonization of outer space, and James Petras and Morris Morley on the "war on drugs" being conducted by the United States in Colombia. Each of these essays is extraordinarily critical of U.S. foreign policy, but also carefully argued, providing a wealth of detailed information regarding U.S. policies and actions abroad. The presentation by these authors of specific and verifiable facts is essential, for they are challenging a widely shared belief among U.S. citizens in the benignity, or even laudability, of their government's policies. According to this

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group of authors, the received view is a web of lies promulgated by the administration and promoted by the mainstream media, which has in recent years degenerated to a propaganda arm of the U.S. government.

By exposing the inconsistencies in the U.S. administration's decisions regarding where and when to meddle in the affairs of other nations, Michael Parenti expresses doubts about the professed rationales behind such actions. While claiming to promote democracy, the United States has consistently opposed regimes that genuinely favor the empowerment of people, while supporting regimes that have contributed to "third worldization," an economically-driven process which is mirrored by the progressive diminution of the middle class on the domestic scene. That decisions of whether to intervene are finally economically determined is well-illustrated by the case of China, the human rights violations of which are tolerated by the United States for no other apparent reason than that country's prodigious market potential.

In her contribution, Irene Gendzier provides further evidence of the ultimately mercenary motives of the United States' military activities, particularly glaring in the Middle East. For example, the United States has consistently applied double standards to nations such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the oil resources of which captured policymakers' attention long before the March 19, 2003 invasion and occupation of that land. Gendzier argues that the takeover of Iraq was only one part of a longstanding plan to establish control over the oil resources of the region, a point which may seem obvious to those aware of the direct involvement of many major public policy players in the oil industry, but which has yet to be appreciated by much of the U.S. electorate. Because it has been less widely discussed, Gendzier's detailed history of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan is especially illuminating.

Loring Wirbel broaches the vexed question of the ongoing plans for U.S. domination of outerspace in her essay, "Star Wars." While many have noted that the specific threats represented by factional terrorism can in no way be addressed through the construction of enormously expensive space centers and antiballistic systems designed to meet missiles in transit, the Bush administration has withdrawn from treaties precluding the expansion of the arms race to outerspace, and is in the process of constructing just such an ABM system, which will obviously have dual capabilities for both defensive and offensive action. In Wirbel's view, the construction of an ABM system is intended not, as the official rhetoric would have it, to *defend* the United States from the missiles of rogue states, but as a part of a much grander preemptive and offensive program. Although "Star Wars" is usually associated with Ronald Reagan and the Republican camp, Wirbel points out that Democrats have been complicit all along, and that the most radical steps taken by the administration of George W. Bush, not only to abolish treaties, but to proceed with the construction of an ABM system even without performing what should be rigorous scientific testing, were made possible by the tenet embraced throughout the Clinton era, that "the U.S. must establish global supremacy, both militarily and economically."

The so-called "war on drugs," though seldom considered newsworthy by the mainstream media, marches on, leaving death and destruction in its wake, as Petras and Morley explain in their essay, "The Geopolitics of Plan Colombia." While ostensibly about curbing drug production and exportation, in fact, in the authors' view, "Plan Columbia," too, is a part of the much larger U.S. hegemonic project. The story is complex, but Petras and Morley persuasively make the case that U.S. involvement in Columbia serves to support a general quest for control over Latin America, which is further evidenced by the U.S.-backed attempts to overthrow Hugo Chavez in neighboring Venezuela, the oil resources of which present a direct impediment to total global domination by the United States.

Chavez boldly refused to join the Bush administration's antiterrorism campaign, opposing the war on Afghanistan supported by the leaders of most other nations, on the grounds that "you cannot fight terrorism with terrorism." The existence of a revolutionary front in neighboring Columbia presents an obstacle to U.S. domination of South America, and the fact that the primary beneficiaries of drugtrafficking in Columbia are bankers and business elite, strategic allies in the U.S.-funded counterrevolutionary war, impugns the justification officially put forth for the injection of U.S. military resources into the region. To the detriment of the civilian population, Plan Columbia has become, as a result of the massive diversion of funds to military expenditures, a permanent war, wreaking havoc upon and impoverishing not only the people, but also the land, through the widespread use of toxic chemical defoliants, among other measures.

Terrorism

"On September 11, 2001, the world forever changed," or so supporters of offensive war, who dismiss the United Nations as "irrelevant" and due process as an unnecessary "complication," maintain. In fact, upon examination, the murderous activities of factional terrorists and military states have more in common than not, since both presume that noncombatant civilians may be killed in the name of justice and morality. Factional terrorists consider these victims complicit in the crimes of their government and therefore fair game for attack, while military institutions write civilian casualties off as mere "collateral damage." Either way, the primary victims of political decisions to fight militarism by terrorism or to fight terrorism by militarism are civilians who pose no physical threat to anyone. Tragically, violence invariably begets more violence, thus producing a viciously homicidal spiral with no end in sight.

The second part of *Masters of War*, "Empire, Militarism, and Terrorism," includes essays by Chalmers Johnson regarding the "blowback" caused directly by U.S. militarism, Noam Chomsky on war as a form of terrorism, and Peter McLaren on the purely interpretive differences between violence perpetrated by state and non-state actors. Rounding out the section, Carl Boggs provides a long and extremely disturbing documentation of U.S. war crimes spanning the entire period from the country's first colonizers up to the present day. These authors raise not only philosophical but also practical questions about the aggressive military policy of the United States, maintaining that its initiatives are both immoral from the perspective of human rights, and wrongheaded from the perspective of rational self-interest.

In his essay, "American Militarism and Blowback," Johnson explains the origins of the metaphor of "blowback," first used in March 1954 by the Central Intelligence Agency to characterize "the unintended consequences of covert operations against foreign nations and governments," (113) a concept which is taken up by several other contributors throughout the volume, and indeed thematically unifies *Masters of War*. Even setting moral considerations to one side, U.S. military aggression has directly engendered problems as flagrant as Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, the most notorious examples of blowback, in addition to many less obvious and rarely discussed cases. Johnson provides a brief history of the amoeba-like expansion of the U.S. military, outlining the stages through which the United States transmogrified into a *bona fide* military state, the crucial turning point of which was the establishment of a permanent professional military class, only some members of which actually wear uniforms. The intimate connection between the military and corporations contracted by the military represents a profound conflict of interest deeply embedded within the Pentagon itself, for numbering among the primary administrators of the U.S. Department of

Defense are executives of the very companies contracted to provide products and services to the military. These companies produce not only weapons, but also structures and supplies needed to rebuild lands devastated by U.S. military action, and the case of Dick Cheney and Halliburton is but the tip of the iceberg.

In "Wars of Terror," Noam Chomsky underscores the irony of the world's united reaction in condemnation of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, in view of the fact that the rest of the world has been consistently subjected to variations on the same sort of action, fully funded and promoted by the United States in its many intrusions into the affairs of nations all over the planet. The difference, of course, has been that the terrorist activities of the United States government and its protégés are *never* covered by the mainstream media, which gives the illusion that the events of 9/11 were completely gratuitous and unprovoked attacks upon the citizens of an entirely beneficent government. Chomsky sees two alternatives in facing the "new" era: either we can apply the same standards of judgment both to non-U.S. actors and to those acting ostensibly on our behalf, which implies that we must condemn the U.S. crimes of the past and prevent more of the same, or we can move forward in complete oblivion of history, with blind faith that, "We are good, and they are evil," and, in the words of George W. Bush, "You're either with us, or you're with them."

In "The Dialectics of Terrorism," Peter McLaren combines poetic sensibility with philosophical argumentation in identifying war and terrorism as two sides of the same coin, and examining the pervasive sociological effects of corporate globalization. This essay is extremely well-written, and its unorthodox structure operates in the Socratic gadfly tradition, by holding a mirror up to its readers, forcing them to confront the reality of the economic and military behemoth that the United States has become, a creature whose nefarious effects upon human beings are evident both at home and abroad.

For those seeking a more staid answer to the question, "why do they hate us?" Carl Boggs provides it in his essay, "Outlaw Nation: The Legacy of U.S. War Crimes," which lists concrete examples of the government's complicity in undeniably despicable acts performed by groups supported by the United States in full cognizance of the methods that they deploy in achieving their aims. In most of these cases, the crimes have been not merely condoned, but positively promoted by the U.S. government through its apportionment of foreign aid, the vast majority of which is provided in the form of homicidal weapons. This unsettling chronology cannot but dispel any remaining illusions regarding the allegedly benevolent motives of the United States government, ironically touted as a beacon of freedom, democracy, and human rights.

The Military State

WITH THE FALL OF THE Berlin wall and the collapse of the U.S.S.R., many progressives had hoped that massive military expenditures might be at least to some extent diverted to non-military programs for improving the quality of human life both at home and abroad. Unfortunately, this has proven not to be the case, and, given the intimate economic connections forged by the military-industrial-congressional complex prophesied so well by Dwight Eisenhower more than forty years ago, it is unclear how what has metastasized into a truly pathological predilection for military initiatives might ever be cured.

The third part of *Masters of War*, "The Militarized Society," includes essays by Douglas Kellner on the emergence of a "permanent war," Norman Solomon on the media's complicity in the ongoing and progressive militarization of society, R. Claire Snyder on the patriarchal quality of this militarism, Darrell Hamamoto on the domestic blowback of militarism in the form of increased civic violence, Rhonda Hammer on the use of deadly force by the military and its trickle down effect upon families, and Tom Pollard regarding the interplay and mutual fertilization of the military and the Hollywood film industry.

In "Postmodern Military and Permanent War," Douglas Kellner discusses the emergence of cyberwarfare and the dangers of high-tech weapons, which increase in exponential proportion to their destructive capacity, given the invariable factor of human fallibility. United States legislators and most of the people whom they represent have long assumed that defense expenditures are, by definition, warranted. But today the world faces an ever bloodier future, given the Bush administration's claim to be fighting a "war on terrorism," the objectives and parameters of which are so vague as to justify any and every form of military aggression any and everywhere, for an indefinite, perhaps infinite, period of time.

Norman Solomon suggests in his essay, "Mass Media: Aiding and Abetting Militarism," that the prospects for a demilitarization of society have become rather bleak because of the recent amalgamation of the corporate-controlled media with the military-industrial-congressional complex. The mainstream media serve today not as a source of information upon which the citizenry might base reasoned judgments about the activities of their government, but as an organ of propaganda, making effective dissent from the received view, with its deeply engrained assumption of the system's indispensability as a structure of justice, ever more difficult. As a case in point, Solomon analyzes the use of the word "terrorism" by the media to refer specifically to those acts defined by U.S. government officials as "terrorism." Solomon also explains how the media were instrumental in securing domestic support for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, in part through the use of polls that, through the tendentious wording of questions, actually help form rather than report public opinion.

Some of the essays in this third section will be controversial even to progressive readers, for they posit causal connections that are not always as clear as, say, the funding and arming of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, which obviously led directly to their later ability to use that power against their former allies. To give the most extreme example of what some will regard as questionable connections, in his essay, "Empire of Death and the Plague of Civic Violence," Darrell Hamamoto adduces Jeffrey Dahmer as an example of the increased civic violence engendered by U.S. militarization. This strikes me as a strategically dubious hypothesis, for while it is plausible that men such as Timothy McVeigh and John Muhammad Allen (both Gulf War Veterans) came to think of military violence as a legitimate means for expressing dissent, it is not at all obvious that the case of Jeffrey Dahmer, who notoriously raped, killed, dissected, and ate his young male victims, is explicable by anything beyond his own regrettably miswired nervous system.

Not all human pathology is caused by the military, for throughout history there have been cases of severely demented people who derived pleasure from doing horrifically destructive things, and many of these people long predated the contemporary military-industrial complex. It seems to me a matter of sheer historical fortuity that Jeffrey Dahmer should have been born in the United States, as opposed to, say, Costa Rica, a country which abolished the military in 1948 and capital punishment in 1877. This is an admittedly minor point, but it is related to a more general issue about strategy in progressive works, which presumably aim to persuade, not to alienate, their readers, only some of whom will already agree. When progressives begin attacking all problems simultaneously, without discriminating between different specific cases of moral responsibility, they risk undermining their projects by making it possible for an important part of their intended audience, those who are not already members of the choir, to summarily dismiss what are otherwise valid arguments. Precisely because most of what might seem to be hyperbolic denunciation of the U.S. regime is in fact well-apportioned to and reflective of the facts, progressives need to exercise some caution and attempt to avoid making what will be rejected out of hand as wild speculations by those predisposed to accept the stories with which they have been thoroughly infused. Progressives are much more likely to succeed in changing people's views when they point out what the people themselves can easily recognize to be true.

There seems little doubt, for example, that the ongoing militarization of society does indeed have patriarchal implications, as R. Claire Snyder argues in her contribution, "Patriarchal Militarism." One symptom of creeping (or recidivistic) patriarchy was the refusal of President George W. Bush to renew the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services six months after 9/11. In making her case, Snyder offers a brief history of the citizen-soldier tradition, according to which popular sovereignty and rule of law are fundamental, and decisions of when to wage war should be made by those who actually fight, thus providing the best defense against both war and tyranny. But the relatively recent establishment of a permanent standing army has irrevocably transformed the structure of the military, and today *never* do the people who fight and die have any say whatsoever in where and when they are deployed. In fact, the Bush administration's brash "might makes right" approach to international affairs undermines the fundamental concern of the citizen-soldier tradition with rational deliberation, supplanting it by an authoritarian power structure altogether inimical to democracy.

In "Militarism and Family Terrorism," Rhonda Hammer extends the neopatriarchal argument, showing how militarism seeps into the private lives of citizens, whose families may come to embody the authoritarian power structure imposed upon them and others by the government. In Hammer's view, "family terrorism" is an important phenomenon masked by the use of euphemisms such as "domestic violence" and "partner abuse," which ignore the sociological etiology of such violence, often directly reflective of the patriarchal military paradigm of domination, possession, and conquest. By using colonization theory to analyze terror relations in global and familial contexts, the connection between the two becomes difficult to deny.

Tom Pollard's essay, "The Hollywood War Machine," illuminates the cross-fertilization of the modern military society and the Hollywood movie industry. Pollard argues, in effect, that movies imitate life, and life imitates movies. Because militarism has throughout history been generally regarded in a positive light, Hollywood has primarily produced films celebrating stereotypical military heroes, who often embody the macho-man qualities associated with courageous soldiers on the battlefield. One notable exception was the Vietnam War, widely criticized and protested at the time by thinking people everywhere, including filmmakers, many of whom produced trenchant critiques of what has been deemed in retrospect by even some of its executors (most notably, former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara) as a misguided offensive and unilateral military action. On the whole, films tend to reflect not only the prevailing cultural consciousness of a time, but also the particular experience of the filmmaker. So, for example, the valuationally disparate depictions of war by directors Stephen Spielberg and Oliver Stone are explained in part by the fact that, while Stone served in Vietnam, Spielberg did not. Extrapolating from Pollard's historical argument, we should expect future Hollywood productions to more or less mirror the views held by the populace regarding the wars of their government's waging. If the so-called "war on terrorism" continues to be viewed as a standoff of Good versus Evil, then the films produced by Hollywood, largely forged and constrained by market factors, will reflect this picture, and thus simultaneously propagate it as well.

Conclusion

BECAUSE THESE ESSAYS are so critical of the standard "We are Good" banner, *Masters of War* should perhaps carry as a reader's advisory, "Caution: may induce strong urges to expatriate." However, in his concluding essay, "The Real Axis of Evil," George Katsiaficas places the current situation in historical perspective and insists upon the importance of understanding the economic forces that have given rise to and sustain the contemporary climate of militarism. Through reflecting upon the historical patterns of violence that have characterized the colonization mentality of the administrations of a number of nations over time, Katsiaficas suggests that what we are experiencing today is a variation on a very old theme. The radical increase in militarization throughout the world in recent decades is a direct result of both the desire and perceived need to control what, in keeping with the grand imperial tradition, have effectively become colonized territories in a modern world irrevocably transformed by globalization and technology. In Katsiaficas' view, "the real axis of evil" comprises the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, for, far from promoting freedom and rights, the policies of these organizations have tended to expand prosperity in "the core," while increasing misery in "the periphery," that is, the third world.

Rather than succumbing to despair, Katsiaficas exhorts us to establish and promote a viable peace movement in order to counter the prevailing ethos, which he aptly deems "military madness." Democratic governments belong to their people, or so they should, and so we cannot simply capitulate to the agendas of leaders who blithely ignore the ugly realities to which their policies give rise for our fellow human beings. One place where a significant peace movement has taken root is in South Korea, where the people await their fate at the hands of an administration that they never appointed as their own. Katsiaficas suggests that the people of South Korea should work to regain control of their country's own military forces, and re-engage in dialogue with North Korea, to thwart another devastating U.S.-instigated war which would once again destroy countless innocent lives. More generally, we must connect with like-minded people all over the planet, affirming their equal moral worth to our own, and working in solidarity to mobilize a new global peace movement based upon our shared humanitarian values.

This collection is an important contribution to leftist critique. The breadth and depth of this work is to be lauded, for it treats an impressive range of issues about which most people have heard nothing but sound bites emitted by so-called "pundits" who define as good and necessary virtually everything the U.S. government undertakes. Few people have been exposed to any significant amount of information upon which they might make sound judgments regarding U.S. policy abroad, but this book can help to remedy that situation, for it provides a wealth of documented detail, along with plenty of leads for further investigation. *Masters of War* would make an excellent textbook for history and political science courses, especially when read alongside less critical works, to show what "the received view" omits. The book would also be a good choice for courses in critical thinking and applied ethics.

The Rise and Fall of the October Revolution

JOHN ERIC MAROT

Revolution and Counterrevolution: Class Struggle in a Moscow Metal Factory
KEVIN MURPHY
New York: Berghahn Books, 2005
288 pp. $75 hb

KEVIN MURPHY'S STUDY TRACKS the fortunes of the Russian workers' movement from the mid-1890s to the early 1930s through the prism of one strategically important plant, the Guzhon or Moscow Metalworks Factory. It is a signal and intriguing contribution to better understanding the rise and fall of the October Revolution. The author is a self-avowed Marxist, strongly influenced by the Trotskyist interpretive tradition, though, as we shall see, he raises doubts about certain key tenets of that tradition. At the same time, unlike most Marxists who write about the Russian labor movement, Murphy has mastered the Russian language, done a prodigious amount of research in recently opened archives, and is therefore in a position to hold his own with academic specialists in the field.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union the demonological interpretation of the Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution as a *coup d'état* carried out by fanatics determined to establish their dictatorship over the people has gained a fresh lease on life in the West, and is perhaps the dominant paradigm among quite a few littérateurs and would-be historians in the former USSR. Alexander Rabinowitch demolished this interpretation once and for all in his classic work, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power* (1976), which has recently been reprinted. Murphy powerfully accomplishes this task once again, from a unique angle.

Murphy draws on abundant, varied, and multilayered documentary evidence — workers' memoirs, police reports, newspaper accounts, factory records — to show how, in the long years leading up to the Revolution, Lenin's partisans, along with their competitors, especially the Socialist Revolutionaries, organized, agitated, and politicized among Guzhon workers, in the factory, the neighborhood, and the broader polity. He chronicles afresh how "Russian workers forged an unprecedented sense of class solidarity and power" in the struggle and through the struggle for a better life, better wages, hours, and working conditions, overcoming divisions variously based on skill, age, craft, nationality, religion, and gender, though sometimes overcome by them. He demonstrates above all how socialist militants' exemplary spirit of self-sacrifice, their willingness to court prison, exile, and worse, to champion the cause of the working class, paved the way for workers accepting their political leadership, particularly in 1917.

At this point, the Bolsheviks finally ousted the SRs — hitherto little distinguished from the Bolsheviks on bread and butter issues — for leadership of the rank and file in the factory by winning the argument in favor of Soviet power and international working-class solidarity, central planks of the Bolshevik platform, paving the way for the October Revolution.

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Murphy's "history from below" shows therefore how the Bolsheviks actually played the role to which revolutionary socialists before and since have always aspired, but rarely managed to assume — of midwifing, from the vantage point of the shop floor, the seizure of social power by the working class.

With the victory of the October Revolution, the Bolshevik-led factory committee at the now renamed Hammer and Sickle Factory became the primary organ of workers' control on the shop floor, the main institution for advancing workers' interests at the point of production. Elected by general meetings and instantly recallable, the factory committee "hired, fired and disciplined employees for various offenses," "received various appeals from workers, made donations to various revolutionary causes, organized Red Guards to defend the factory, and took responsibility for workers' provisions." Factory committee resolutions were subordinate to, and expressive of the ultimate source of workers power at the plant: the factory-wide meetings, regularly attended by five to eight hundred workers in a total workforce of two thousand. Finally, the factory's board of management was drawn from segments of the working class representing different components and articulating different functions of the workers' state: two from the shop floor, one from the trade union, and three from the Supreme Council of the National Economy to act as production planning coordinators. Such were the basic features of full workers' power at the point of production, an historic exemplar of democracy at its most advanced.

But there was little planning of production at the plant or throughout the economy during the Civil War. Incredibly, from the summer of 1919 to June 1920, not a single blast furnace operated at Hammer and Sickle owing to fuel and materials shortages. The chronic lack of heat, food, and unsanitary water supply affected workers' health. By the end of 1920 a quarter of all employees were on sick leave, suffering from influenza, typhoid, and cholera. The number of workers at the plant crashed as well, from a prewar high of over 3000 to a Civil War low of under 800, as many workers left the factory to serve in the Red Army, to forage for food in the countryside — or to die of starvation at home. Murphy elaborates these fearful trends with many heart-rending details.

To slow — but not halt — the collapse of production, the factory committee, operating under the auspices of the Bolshevik-led metal workers union, sought to resolve workers' economic grievances through mediation, not strike action. Most workers understood that striking against their own state meant striking against their own interests: workers' control also meant responsible self-control. In these desperate times, when the workers' state was fighting for its very existence, the Bolsheviks' "high standard of political conviction" attracted many Hammer and Sickle workers to its ranks.

With peace came the New Economic Policy in 1921, and as Murphy shows, plant workers who had survived the disasters of Civil War looked to shop floor Bolsheviks to promote their interests. Because these Bolsheviks did promote their interests, party membership in the plant rose from 60 in 1921 to 240 in 1924, leveling off at 690 in 1926. Yet, the fact remains that by the end of the decade, Stalin and his collaborators were able to consolidate their power in the state as well as the factory, put an end to NEP, unleash the policies of forced collectivization and forced industrialization, and thereby constitute a new set of social and property relations in the society as a whole. The questions that therefore impose themselves are how this could happen — and whether it could have been forestalled? Murphy does not pose this problem sufficiently clearly; though he does lay bare the ingredients of an adequate answer.

Murphy posits class conflict between exploiters and exploited over the surplus value produced by labor as the key to understanding this period, as well as the pre-1917 period. Class conflict, he argues, manifested the "long term trend and interest of the state bureaucracy to develop into an exploitive class in opposition to the proletariat." But this begs the question. Murphy is quite right to call Stalinism a counterrevolutionary system of repression and exploitation that was the "opposite" of the freedom, democracy, and egalitarianism of the October Revolution. But the rule of the statocracy/ bureaucracy founded on the exploitation of the working class that Stalinism entailed could not have been established, nor its program of forced industrialization and collectivization implemented, unless and until the state was able to extend its power down to the point of production. Yet, as Murphy demonstrates in detail, in a manner never before accomplished, the institutions and practices through which workers exerted power and defended their interests on the shop floor retained their vitality throughout NEP. Murphy himself emphasizes that the consolidation of bureaucratic rule, bringing in its wake the destruction of the workers' state, took place only during the Five-Year Plan, beginning in 1929. The social and political significance of conflict on the shop floor and in the wider society in the intervening period, between 1917 and 1929, cannot be assumed but needs to be problematized and analyzed

Murphy believes that just because workers' strikes shifted from "offensive" demands for wage hikes in early NEP, particularly in the fall of 1923, when a militant strike wave spread throughout industry, to "defensive" demands against proposed wage cuts in later NEP, and because strikes became much rarer, shorter, and localized as NEP progressed, this meant that the "state" had managed to "tame the most unruly proletariat of the 20 century" and "transform it into a relatively docile social force" ripe for exploitation. But such a transformation in such a short period of time seems hard to credit, especially in the absence of any overt assault on workers at the level of the factory, and Murphy offers little evidence for it. The trend of strikes can better be explained by the fact that workers saw little need to press their grievances through large-scale collective action precisely because the factory committees and trade unions continued to effectively represent their interests, something that would be hard to understand had workers' power at the point of production already been superceded.

Murphy views the series of "productivity drives" launched under NEP as the leading edge of Stalinism. But, as he shows, these were rejected by workers, indeed, ignored by them, and never got off the ground. This is reflected in the astonishing fact that by 1929 production at the factory had risen to a paltry 8 percent above 1914 levels, whereas the number of plant workers had shot up by an astounding 60 percent, from 3,000 to 5,000. Even though management had whittled away at workers' wages in the plant — 6 percent decline in 1926, "slight decrease" in 1927 and a further drop of 4 percent in 1928 — management was still stuck with a huge wage bill. Between May 1926 and May 1927, among 252 issues raised in 40 factory meetings, production was broached only six times, only once in delegates meetings, and once in factory conferences. "Even in late NEP" Murphy concludes, "production remained a relatively minor issue in union meetings, especially when compared to its single-minded pursuit during the first Five-Year Plan."

In sum, under NEP, certainly through 1928, the government sought to whittle away at working class prerogatives and living standards. But it accomplished strikingly little because it had yet to bring enterprise managers under its discipline and because workers on the shopfloor, with their factory committees, as well as their unions, however bureaucratized, had sufficient resources to resist. Indeed, working class losses in wages seem less the result of the ability of the state to gouge its employees than the sudden grain crisis of 1927-1928.

The fact is that much of NEP factory management had little stomach for forcefully imposing sacrifices. Indeed, they had little reason to do so, given the absence of the requirement to maximize profits in the face of external competitive market pressures — capitalism does not exist — and the lack as yet of political pressures emanating from within the party-state sector of the bureaucracy. The pressure to change course only arose during the grain crises of 1927-1928. Only then, in the summer of 1928, did workers' living standards begin to drop dramatically, and this occurred not because trade unions and factory committees turned against workers, but simply because peasants, owing to harvest failure, began keeping more of their grain for their own consumption, causing grain prices to rise and real wages to fall.

That the Soviet state did remain pro-working class in nature during the 1920s is indicated by the fact that none of the politically significant working class opposition trends that developed inside the Bolshevik organization under NEP called for its overthrow. Even the few Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries in the plant recognized the utopianism of pushing for the establishment of a bourgeois democratic state — their original goal — to replace the existing one. Murphy argues that "organized opposition activity" under NEP was "very similar to the catalytic role of revolutionaries during the Tsarist period" because in both periods "individuals" gained support from workers "by articulating tangible, and sometimes quite parochial, economic demands, rather than on advancing more generally ideological policies." But this ignores the radical discontinuity in the nature of class conflict under the two regimes, indicated by the fact that *all* political organizations with significant links to the workers' movement called for the *overthrow* of the Tsarist state before 1917, whereas *none* of them called for overthrow of the Bolshevik state after 1917 and during NEP.

Murphy's "evolving Stalinism" at Hammer and Sickle and other points of production simply did not evolve under NEP because workers squelched it. What this meant was that the bureaucracy had yet to link the factory floor to the state sufficiently tightly so as to take a surplus on a regular basis. This is not surprising because it had so far failed to destroy the factory committees and the trade unions, which remained largely effective instruments of workers' defense up until 1929. The workers' state, though "bureaucratically deformed" (Lenin), remained, all the same, a workers' state because the latter largely abided by the working class's refusal to sacrifice its present-day, actually existing material interests to an as yet nonexistent state-imposed program of top-down economic development. This was to change beginning in 1929.

Murphy highlights the chief freatures of the Stalinist counterrevolution, which marked the end of the NEP: "The changes introduced in factory life under the First Five-Yar Plan were easily as transformative as those that had been brought about during the upheaval of 1917 . . . Between 1929 and 1932, factory leaders succeeded in dramatically lowering workers' wages to pay for industrial expansion, forced political dissent underground, and compelled employees to work longer and more often . . . the state's inability to build institutional structures for its program at the factory level compelled regime loyalists to adopt more coercive measures as substitutes for voluntary political conviction."

In the penultimate year of NEP, 1928, the Right Opposition emerged within the Communist Party, led by Bukharin, Rykov and trade-union chief Tomsky. Its goal was two-fold: to defend the worker-peasant *smychka* or alliance against Stalin's plan for squeezing the peasantry and collectivizing agriculture and to oppose the Stalinist drive to transform unions into "houses of detention," as Tomsky put it. The Right Opposition found its major base of support within the bureaucratized trade union leadership in the towns and cities, as well as among those very thinly populated sections of the Bolshevik organization closest to the peasantry. But already by April 1929, Stalin had dispersed the Right Opposition, removing its entire top leadership from their positions of power in the state.

Murphy provides the general key to understanding how Stalin was able to move against the Right Opposition with so little difficulty. The Right Opposition was largely an "apparatus affair," doing little to mobilize its own rank-and-file and, through them, the broader working class, which, alone, had the potential power to stem the Stalinist juggernaut. The question Murphy does not fully answer is why the Right failed to mobilize workers.

Had the rank and file been mobilized for combat by the Right Opposition against Stalin's agricultural and trade union policies, it could not have been counted upon to stop there, but might easily have gone on to enforce — or at least attempt to enforce — democratic norms on the Bolshevik Party's bureaucratized leadership, endangering "from below" its relatively materially privileged position. This was a risk the Tomsky leadership was not prepared to take. At the same time, had the Right systematically, openly, and in good time, sought support among party and non-party trade union rank and file for its go slow approach to accumulation it could not but have, in so doing, called into question the state's ban on *political* opposition to policies set by its Stalinist leadership. Yet, the Right Opposition was clearly not prepared, openly or covertly, to violate party discipline — and take a first step toward restoring multiparty Soviet democracy.

The ultimate problem was that the Right Opposition, and particularly its base in the trade union leadership, was itself part of the emerging bureaucratic apparatus. The inexorable outcome was that, when the managerial and party segment of the bureaucracy began relentlessly to attack the trade unions as part of their concerted offensive against the direct producers in town and country, the trade union leadership and rank and file were caught largely unawares and unready, confined to fighting rearguard, guerilla actions before finally being routed.

And what about the Left Opposition? Why were they not more effectual in stopping the rise of Stalinism? In an important contribution, Murphy puts paid to the traditional Trotskyist understanding, by demolishing two of its critical premises.

First, Murphy demonstrates, as has no historian before him, Trotskyist assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, that broad active working class resistance to Stalinism at the point of production was a palpable reality, beginning late in 1929, the first year of the Five Year Plan, and beyond. Working class passivity is a myth. Despite the decapitation of the Right Opposition, the Stalinists still faced opposition from below, from the factory committees. By the spring of 1930, however, the Stalinists had managed to replace 80 percent of the factory committee leaderships nationwide with "shock workers" prepared to do management's bidding.

But, as Murphy shows, even these shock workers, drawn from the rank and file and showered with material privileges, often felt moral qualms about turning on their fellows. Quite a few quickly became unfit to play the role of taskmasters and slave drivers — which required them to be disciplined in turn. More generally, absenteeism, damaging equipment, refusing work assignments, stealing factory materials, showing up late, or leaving early constituted so many forms of noncooperation by workers. As Murphy concludes, the panoply of harsh measures to discipline workers — fines, shaming, arrest even — "did *not* transform workers into docile productive units" (emphasis added).

Second, and equally important, Murphy uncovers little evidence that the Left Opposition actually backed workers' resistance in 1929 and later, let alone that they sought to lead "overwhelmingly resentful" workers onto the path of "open revolt" and militant political struggle. Indeed, the Left Opposition is little in evidence at all.

Murphy explains the failure of the Left Opposition to support workers' resistance in terms of their repression by the Stalinists. But this is beside the point. Once Stalin turned against the Bukharin and the Right and launched his program of forced economic development the Left Opposition *rallied to Stalin,* rendering themselves incapable of serving as leaders of workers' opposition. The crucial fact is that the "Left" showed no inclination to back workers' resistance, so even if it had not been repressed it would not have made a difference. Trotsky was unambiguous: "With Bukharin against Stalin, never. With Stalin against Bukharin, yes." Workers could not respond favorably to the Left Opposition's endorsement of a policy that Murphy makes clear was "directly antithetical to workers' interest." On the contrary, the Opposition's support of Stalin could only sow confusion and demoralization among workers.

MURPHY RECOUNTS A TELLING incident. One Trotskyist rank-and-filer at the Hammer and Sickle Factory heeded the Left Opposition's new line. Having earlier denounced the Stalinist campaign to exchange a month's wage for a bond note issued by the state to finance the industrialization drive, this worker, Murphy reports, later contributed five hundred rubles to the campaign, and was pictured on the front page of the factory newspaper, at once becoming a poster boy for Stalinism — and losing all credibility among the worker rank and file.

How and why during NEP Stalin was able to construct a political apparatus *outside the plant* sufficiently powerful to destroy workers' power *inside the plant*, from 1929 on, is largely beyond the scope of Murphy's study. Murphy's demonstration of Stalinism's inability to grasp control at the level of the enterprise is a tremendous contribution because it clarifies the huge problem the emerging bureaucracy had to overcome. The strength of the working class at the point of production extended throughout the 1920s. By having shown working class resistance to Stalinism at the point of production, from 1929 on, Murphy also shows that the possibility of defeating Stalinism in the broader polity was greater than previously thought. For this, we all stand in his debt.

Classical Fascism

REVIEW BY HORST BRAND

The Anatomy of Fascism
ROBERT O. PAXTON
New York: Knopf, 2004
321 pp. $24.95

SOME SIXTY YEARS AGO, fascism was defeated on the battlefields of Europe. Yet, historians' concern with fascism has not abated (judging by the 30-page bibliographical essay appended to the book reviewed here). The question that perhaps in large part motivated the writing of this book is whether a recurrence of fascism, if in some new ways adapted to contemporary social and political tensions, is likely. "The end of fascism was open to doubt in the 1990s," Paxton writes, as ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, exclusionary nationalism in Eastern Europe, skinhead violence in various European countries emerged. He notes the electoral strength achieved by Jean-Marie LePen in France, Jorg Heider in Austria, rightwing politicians and groups in Italy and the Netherlands. Is it possible, he asks, that "some kind of neofascism" will become a sufficiently powerful factor influencing in some political system? "There is no more insistent or haunting question posed to a world that still aches from wounds that fascism inflicted on it during 1922-45." (He includes National Socialism in the term.)

It is a perspective that cannot be easily dismissed — less so as the political repercussions in Europe of Islamic insurgency cannot as yet be assayed. But the political and social aftermath of World War II must also be weighed; and it tells against his perspective.

He writes that the enormity of Hitler's crimes, in which hundreds of thousands of Germans and non-Germans collaborated, inspired a repugnance that perhaps has been the "greatest obstacle to the revival of classical fascism after 1945." Civil society was rapidly restored in West Germany although large numbers of former Nazis were almost as rapidly integrated in it. Perhaps more important, the Nazis' sociopolitical supports — the agrarian landowners of the East Elbian regions, the higher echelons of the military, the upper strata of the civil service — had been destroyed by defeat and utterly discredited. As Paxton repeatedly emphasizes, fascism could not have attained power or, for that matter maintained itself in it, but for the collaboration of these conservative elites. Their disrepute makes it highly improbable that a recrudescence of fascism could occur with the support of the elites that have formed since World War II.

The wounds fascism inflicted in its time remain a continuing topic in public discussion and historical investigation in Europe, especially in Germany. They are inscribed in the collective memory. The land of Israel stands and lives as their starkest reminder. The trauma of World War II furthermore has been a powerful force in solidifying the economic and political alliances formed by European countries; in virtually eliminating military rivalries; and in undergirding democratic institutions. It is, finally, Paxton's own study of the conditions that gave rise to fascism, and of the opportunities which its protagonists seized, which present an effective counterargument to his apprehension

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of a future replication of its past success.

II

Paxton builds his work on the "processes" or stages by which fascism in Germany and Italy attained power; and he likewise discusses why these processes were stymied, as in Hungry or Rumania or (under Vichy) in France, as authoritarian governments aborted them. He inquires into the "creation" of fascism; into how it took "root"; how it got power; how it exercised it; and why in the end it faced a quasi-choice between "radicalization or entropy." He discusses at some length the preconditions that, while not deterministic — he reminds the reader of the contingency of events — contributed to the eventual victory of fascism in Germany and Italy. The most important, decisive precondition was World War I. The industrialized killing of the war, its long duration, the futility and cruelty of trench warfare, destroyed the previously widespread belief in civilized progress. In Germany, victory had been expected only weeks before the German general staff sued for armistice, later blaming left-wing politicians for the "stab in the back" that had brought defeat. In Italy, disappointed veterans blamed politicians for not gaining territories that victories (on the side of the allies) had promised.

But in what sense was World War I decisive in bringing about fascism in Germany? It could as readily be argued that the political charges that war and defeat forced gave rise to parliamentary government to which the chancellor, albeit not the president of the Reich, was answerable. Two-thirds of the German electorate supported the 1919 Weimar coalition and constitution, although that magnitude of support waned in the next few years. Hitler's national socialists did not receive a significant share of votes for the Reichstag until 1928, and a significant plurality of votes only in 1932, a year of deep economic crisis and unemployment.

The adversaries of the Weimar republic were not only the Nazis, who did not play an important political role in Germany until the late 1920s. Charles Maier, who in his magisterial *Recasting Bourgeois Europe*, to be sure, proceeds along lines of historical and social analysis drastically different from Paxton's, discusses the adversarial role of elites in the Weimar republic. "Most German liberals could not accept even a simple democratic commitment," he writes. The traditional German elites — the East Elbian agrarians, the military, the judiciary, many industrialists — had renounced power (in 1918) "only in the embarrassment of military bankruptcy;" they were unlikely to surrender public control permanently. "From 1918 until about 1924 the chief *political* objective of most bourgeois forces, parties or interest groups, amounted to exclusion of the socialists from any decisive influence on the state . . . the working-class parties represented a threat to what was seen as good order just by their new prominence and potential power. Later in the 1920s coalitions with social democrats did become acceptable, but only when social democracy acquiesced in the economic conceptions of its bourgeois partners." Whenever the socialist left presented economic objectives of its own, conservatives fought back, using their veto power over public finance when necessary. "In the face of such opposition, social democratic forces could not maintain positions of leadership or even party at the national level."

World War I did not give rise to fascism. But it intensified nationalist ideas and passions right-wing groups and parties. Hitler founded the National Socialist party in 1920; at the time it was one of several such groups that preached an exclusive, racialist nationalism. He (and they) shared the "pathology anti-Semitism" that (according to Maier) characterized conservative politics. Moreover, the political fascism that evolved over the following 20 years in Germany drew on a continuum of ideas or ideologies that originated during the second half of the 19th century.

Populist nationalism has been considered an antecedent of Nazism and (Italian) fascism by historians. It cannot be judged "deterministic": it may be regarded as part of a larger whole that was formed for cognate ideologies as political fascism germinated. Populist nationalism was characterized by anti-Semitism, its characteristic exclusionary feature.

Karl Lueger, an outspoken anti-Semite, for example, was elected mayor of Vienna in 1897 over the opposition of the emperor and liberals; governed a quasi-socialist welfare community there for 13 years. Adolf Stoecker, a protestant court preacher in Berlin, attempted to draw lower-class voters to the Christian Social party by appealing to anti-Semitism. Heinrich V. Teritschke, a widely known historian and a liberal during the failed 1848 revolution, became a fervent German nationalist as Bismarck's goal of unifying Germany came to fruition in 1871. Ten years later, Teritschke denounced the Jews as unwilling to assimilate and being a "misfortune" for Germany. Populist nationalism appears likewise to have been an element in the Deryfus affairs that agitated france from 1894 to 1906. Alfred Dreyfus, a captain in the French army, was accused of espionage for Germany condemned to loss of rank and incarceration at Devil's Island. The document upon which the accusation based was shown to be a forgery; Dreyfus was fully rehabilitated. The process against him was accompanied by widespread anti-Semitic riots.

Notions of social Darwinism and racial hierarchy or superiority were widely accepted. "In an age of empire," writes Mark Mazower in his *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*, "... few Europeans on Left or Right did not believe in ideas of racial superiority . . . or accept their relevance to colonial policy . . . German anthropologists who shaped SS racial policy in eastern Europe during the Second World War had begun their careers with scholarly articles on 'race mixing' in pre-1914 colonial Africa and Asia, where their concerns were shared by British and French colleagues."

Be it noted, however, that the application of racialist notions to European populations stirred considerable misgivings, and antiracist publications began to appear in France and Great Britain. Furthermore, the anti-Semitism of Treitschke and other academics was countered in 1880 by a vigorous declaration *against* anti-Semitism signed by 75 Berlin notables, among them the lord mayor of the city, the eldest of the merchants association, the historian Th. Mommsen, Max Weber (sociologist's father), and a number of high officials. Fifty years later it proved impossible to gather the signatures of prominent persons for a similar declarations against the Nazis' anti-Semitic threats.

Populist nationalism was possibly a "mobilizing" passion of fascism. It has its use in the latter part of the nineteenth century to overreach class and other social conflicts or mitigate them. It was propagated by the fascists quite deliberately to that end. Yet it drew on deeper sources of alienation and malaise, implicit to an extent in an array of mobilizing passions that Paxton presents at the end of his book. Among them are: "a sense of overwhelming crisis beyond the reach of any traditional solutions; the primacy of the group to one owes unconditional duties; dread of the group's decline under the corrosive effects of individualistic liberalism, class conflict, and alien influences; the need for authority exercised by a natural chief; the beauty of violence and the efficacy of will when devoted to the group's success." (Some quotations here are shortened.)

It will be noted that these definitions of the appeal of fascism abstract from specific political and historical conditions that gave rise to it. They also imply that voters for fascist parties lacked rationality in their political choice —which begs the question why voters for these parties greatly fluctuated as long as elections were relatively free. Moreover, the Catholic Center, the Social Democrats, the Communists, all encompassed a "milieu," a social environment, which strengthened, reinforced the points of view of their respective voters. The fascists of course left no stone unturned to destroy these environments by propaganda; offers of professional opportunities conditioned on membership in a fascist organization; rigorous repression of all publication not in line with the fascist one; or "protective custody" and concentration camp. Exile, death at the hands of fascist thugs of opponents to the fascist regime — or brutalities inflicted during periods of arrest — silenced the opposition, and atomized the associational bonds that had sustained it.

The Nazis, unlike Mussolini's fascists, established a duality of authority, one based on the Nazi party — termed by some analysts as the "prerogative" state — the other on the existing structure of, the "normative" state. While most of those members of Hitler's early cabinet who represented conservative industrial or agrarian interests were removed, the economy remained firmly in the hands of its owners (although subject to the war planning by the state). The "overwhelmingly conservative nationalist civil service, staffed in the main by the same men as before" (Hans Mommsen) continued as the firm basis of the "normative" state, with its various administrative and judicial bureaucracies.

The agencies and leadership of the "prerogative" state generally lacked all basis in law. This could, within their delegated competence, take action arbitrarily in the name of the "Volk" or the Fuehrer. Examples are the Gestapo, the SS concentration camp staff. After the beginning of World War II, "the Nazi prerogative state achieved something like total dominance." As Paxton states (I think rightly), this development undoubtedly facilitated the Nazis' genocidal crimes in Eastern Europe, in particular the Holocaust. It may indeed be viewed as the ultimate "radicalization" (Paxton's term) of their racist ideology, of which the ultimate irrationality, however, remains beyond comprehension, language to comprehend it having yet to be invented.

Paxton contrasts the "radicalization" of Nazi rule with regimes like Franco's in Spain, which reverted to an authoritarian conservative in which he incorporated the Falange (the Spanish fascist party, founded in 1933 by Primo de Valera, later executed by the Spanish republicans). Yet, the war begun by Hitler in 1939 cannot be regarded as "radicalization" of the regime (the alternative to which would have been "entropy"). It was predestined. In June 1933, Leon Trotsky, in an essay titled, "What Is National Socialism?" wrote: "The compulsory concentration of all forces and resources of the people in the interest of imperialism — the true historic mission of the fascist dictatorship — means preparation for war . . . " And further on: "The date of the new European catastrophe will be determined by the time necessary for the arming of Germany. It is not a question of months, but neither is it a question of decades. It will be but a few years before Europe is again plunged into war . . . " (*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, 406-7.) In this prophetic view of Trotsky's, the war that would engulf Europe was *continuous* with the rise to power of German fascism.

"Radicalization" of Mussolini's fascist Italy is harder to argue. Mussolini successfully resisted the fascist squads' goal to "revolutionize" the state. He did not create a "prerogative" state, although political opponents were persecuted, exiled, also murdered. He conceded the autonomy of the Catholic Church and its youth organizations — in sharp contrast to the Hitler regime's encroachments upon these institutions, in violation to the concordat it had signed with the Vatican in 1933. The royal house of Italy retained its status, although it was subservient to the dictator. Mussolini appears personally to have been free of animus against the Jews, some of whom had been his collaborators. He introduced racialist laws in 1938, 16 years after he had taken power. These laws may in part have been concessions to his

Nazi allies. If we accept Paxton's reading, then the Italian dictator faced tensions or challenges from the coalition of forces that made up its unstable bases, as did the German. "The stakes grow as policy differences play out into tangible gains and losses." While traditional elites try to hold on to strategic positions, "fascists pull forward toward dynamic, leveling, populist dictatorship, prepared to subordinate every private interest to the imperatives of national aggrandizement and purification . . . These struggles waxed and waned in Italy and Germany." But while Germany "radicalized toward unbridled party license," Mussolini's regime "decayed toward conservative authoritarian rule."

Mussolini's war against Ethiopia in 1935-6 may indeed have resulted from pressures by his squadrista and the Italian military. He also kept uttering "revolutionary" phrases. The Italians slaughtered an untold number of Ethiopians during the war, and used poison gas. At its end, they proclaimed the king of Italy emperor; the representative of Italy at the League of Nations, Ciano, defended the war as "a sacred mission of civilization." (Mazover.) True, the war was not characterized by the genocidal racism of the Nazis' war in Eastern Europe 4-5 years later, but Ethiopia was declared Italian East Africa, and recognized as such not only by Germany, Austria, and Hungary, and in 1938, by France and Great Britain as well. Mazover writes that "fascist empire building marked the culmination of the process of European imperial expansion that began in the 1870s. Mussolini and Hitler accepted the basic political tenets of nineteenth century imperialism." Mussolini's war of conquest in East Africa enhanced his prestige; it reduced rather than aggravated whatever radicalizing pressures existed within his fascist movement.

Early in his book Paxton writes: "Fascism is inconceivable in the absence of a mature and expanding socialist Left." Unfortunately, Paxton does not develop this idea; perhaps his work lacks the breadth of design to do so.

The socialist movement expanded throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, and until World War I. In Germany, its parliamentary representation kept increasing. Theodor Fontane, the novelist, wrote in 1896: "Everything that is interesting is to be found in the fourth estate. The bourgeoisie is frightful . . . The new, the better world begins with the fourth estate . . . What the workers think, speak, and write ahs in fact overtaken the thinking, speaking, and writing of the old ruling classes; it is all more genuine, more truthful, more full of life. The workers have attacked everything in a new way; they not only have new goals but new methods of attaining them." (Quoted in Gordon A. Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945*, 269-270.)

They also set the terms of the social conflict, demanding change in property relations, abolition, or at least mitigation of exploitation, desistance from colonial adventures. Such positions were bitterly resented by the conservative elites. Emblematic is what Gordon Craig writes of Prince Hohehlohe, one of the chancellors under William II: "As a *grand seigneur*, he found it incomprehensible that the lower classes should be demanding a share in the governance of the state . . ." This incomprehensibility bred the resistance of the elites to the democratic aspirations of the social democratic electorate during the Weimar years that we have noted.

THE CAESURA OF THE socialist left is likely to have begun with the dispersal of the constituent assembly of the new Soviet Union in January 1918 by Red troops. The party dictatorship established by Lenin, furthermore, violated all the tenets of democratic socialism.

That caesura might not have become so fateful to the socialists' ability to withstand fascism, had Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht not been murdered (in January

1919) — murders that were part of the repression of radical forces in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany, and had been condoned, or seemed to have been condoned, by at least part of the social democratic leadership. "The memory of Liebknecht and Luxemburg was to be one of the most potent factors in preventing a true reunion of the left even when Adolf Hitler was standing at the gates," writes Gordon Craig.

The German social democrats proved impotent in confronting the deflationary policies adopted by the Bruening government in 1930; and in preventing the emasculation of the parliament by the adoption of (constitutionally permissible) emergency decrees. The intention of the conservatives, in alliance with the Nazis, to destroy the Weimar republic was perhaps too strong to be overcome by the left. A reunion with the Communists — fervently advocated in some form by Trotsky — might have checked that intention. It might have meant civil war and perhaps defeat. It would have spared the left the ignominy of failure.

The Neoliberal University

REVIEW BY PAUL BURKETT

Steal This University: The Rise of the Corporate University and the Academic Labor Movement

BENJAMIN JOHNSON, PATRICK KAVANAGH, AND KEVIN MATTSON, EDS.

New York: Routledge, 2003
288 pp. $18.95.

AS WITH OTHER ASPECTS of life under neoliberal capitalism, the last several decades have seen the marketization of higher education. *Steal This University* considers the changes involved, their costs for both the academic labor force and the quality of the education process, and how academic workers have begun to fight back to defend and improve their work conditions and to develop a new democratic vision of education itself. Among the chapter authors are professional union organizers, faculty and graduate student unionists, independent contingent faculty militants, and left educational jounalists.

The book is divided into three parts, each containing four or five chapters preceded by a useful introductory overview by the editors. Section one surveys the marketization of universities, emphasizing "the growing prominence of online education, the rise of for-profit universities like the University of Phoenix, the use of corporate management techniques such as merit pay, and the growing use of casual teaching labor" (81). What emerges very clearly is the synergy between the use of information technology, the transformation of education into a standardized product, and the flexibilization and deprofessionalization of faculty labor.

Ana Marie Cox's chapter considers an extreme case of these trends, the University of Phoenix, while David Noble's chapter summarizes his well known critique of "digital diploma mills," i.e., the use of computers, websites, and the internet to standardize courses and promote so called distance education. Denise Tanguay then analyzes the growth of merit pay schemes and some of the tensions and struggles they have generated. Finally, Benjamin Johnson documents the growing share of courses and students taught by graduate assistants, adjuncts, and postdocs, showing how this share is often systematically underestimated. In fact, if graduate assistants are included, only about one-third of all instructors are now on tenure track in the United States, and the percentage of student credit hours taught by tenure-track faculty may be even lower.

Overall, section one demonstrates that the corporate-style "transformation of the academic workplace" has "produced a transformation of the academic worker whose rights and voice — as both academic and employee — were sacrificed in the name of profit, efficiency, and quality assurance" (139). That it has done so in a way that undermines real efficiency and quality is clear from the continued bloating of university administrations, growth of average class sizes, the ongoing shift of university budgets from the education function to the research function (together with the conversion of research itself into vendible commodities), the increased waste of faculty time on merit pay and other evaluation procedures, and the growing pressure of committee work on the shrinking share of faculty who are tenure-track.

Section two considers the effects of these

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structural changes and pressures more at the human level, in terms of the lived experiences of graduate students, adjuncts, and tenure-track faculty. Autobiographical chapters by Kevin Mattson and Alexis Moore open up the world of the overworked adjunct. We see how graduate school dreams of a life of scholarship and rich interaction with inquisitive students are displaced by the reality of juggling teaching schedules at several institutions, constantly writing and rewriting lectures, preparing and grading exams, and driving between several campuses (each offering little if anything by way of office facilities) in order to make a bare subsistence wage. Adding insult to injury are the ignorant and selfish attitudes not only of administrators but of many tenure-track professors toward contingent faculty, especially when the latter begin to make demands and/or attempt to organize. Even some faculty unions exhibit hostility toward contingent organizing efforts.

These attitudes, and their class basis in the faculty hierarchy, are on full display in Corey Robin's account of the conflict created between Yale graduate teaching assistants and their faculty advisors when the former undertook a grading strike in an attempt to force the administration to negotiate. Here, a number of "senior faculty," including some with impeccable leftwing credentials, "turned on their own students, writing negative letters of recommendation, blacklisting them, and supporting kangaroo court trials" (82). A similar response, this time from administrators, was received by New York University assistant professor Joel Westheimer when he openly supported graduate student unionization at that institution. Westheimer's chapter documents how he "found previously supportive administrators suddenly cold and critical after he testified on behalf of the graduate students to the National Labor Relations Board" (83). Fortunately, the decision to deny Westheimer tenure was later reversed just before a federal government lawsuit against NYU was to go to trial (see the report by Westheimer's law firm at www.eisner associates.com/westheimer/05.06.press.htm).

Having established the proletarianization of increasing numbers of faculty both practically and in terms of their consciousness as workers, and the growing divisions between this rank-and-file faculty majority and the tenure-track labor-aristocracy, the book's third section turns to the strategies employed by graduate students and faculty to resist the commodification of university education and their academic labor. A wide range of questions and challenges are posed, from the choice of union affiliation, to campaign tactics, to the relations among graduate students, contingent faculty, and tenure-track faculty, to the building of student and off-campus community support, to the use of computers and other media, and, finally, to the difficulties posed by semesterly turnover when organizing graduate students or non-tenure-track faculty.

Section three begins with a contrast between the successful graduate student employee unionization campaign at NYU (Lisa Jessup) and the failed effort to organize graduate assistants at the University of Minnesota (Michael Brown, Ronda Copher, and Kate Gray Brown). The background here is the nationwide unionization struggle currently raging among graduate student employees. Already, "graduate students on more than twenty-six campuses have recognized unions and are organizing at fourteen other campuses" (145). Indeed, graduate students "are more likely to be represented by unions than is the average American worker" (145). In trying to learn from and advance this crucial front in the class war, the two case studies (written by direct participants) emphasize the importance of "situating the struggle . . . within a broader debate about the state of higher education and the rights of all workers to organize" (141). The relevant stakeholders, both on and off campus, must "be given manageable and meaningful ways to express support and, more important, to pressure the . . . administration" (141). In this connection, the Minnesota campaign may have suffered from an overemphasis on "the short-term achievements of signing cards and assessing support over the long-term goals of membership development and building" (141-142).

Section three also covers various forms of struggle other than union certification battles. Cary Nelson's chapter considers the possibilities of activism within professional academic associations, based on the author's efforts to advocate for graduate students and nontenure-track faculty within the Modern Language Association. Here again, the hypocrisy and resistance to change that one often finds among tenured professors emerges as a barrier. This hurdle may be surmounted partly by drawing links between the erosion of professional standards and the super-exploitation of nontenure-track faculty. One can also appeal to the long-term self-interest of tenure-track faculty by pointing to the downward impact on their bargaining power resulting from the growing "reserve army" of nontenure-track faculty.

Barbara Gottfried and Gary Zabel's chapter recounts the "multi-campus approach to organizing" employed by the Boston area Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) (207). COCAL's regional structure enabled it to "go beyond collective bargaining issues to address broad questions of equity and democratic power," similar to recent living wage and student anti-sweatshop campaigns (207). Another advantage of this structure is its ability to make contact with and link together a wide range of non-union groups such as AAUP advocacy chapters, faculty and student governance institutions, and off-campus people's organizations with a stake in education. Such inclusiveness can enhance the education of open-minded administrators and (more importantly) the broader public about the costs of the commodification of education and the democratic benefits of education as citizenship training broadly defined. Moreover, by reducing the isolation of individual nontenure-track faculty, a COCAL-type multi-campus structure can give them a stronger basis for defending their interests within extant union locals and other campus bodies.

The democracy and inclusiveness themes are reinforced by the book's final chapter, by Susan Meisenhelder (with Kevin Mattson), which considers the statewide efforts of activists within the California Faculty Association (CFA) to build "one big union" of faculty *and students* within the California State University (CSU) system — a union that can "articulate a new vision for higher education based upon the democratic role that professors must play in assuring the highest quality of education for all of America's citizens" (221-222). The CFA waged a successful public campaign against the CSU administration's insidious merit pay system and secured the cancellation of an administrative "technological initiative" that would have given a monopoly over info-tech aspects of curriculum to a corporate consortium in "a blatant step toward privatizing the university" (224). These victories were based in large part on CFA activists' ability to reinvigorate the union by advocating for nontenure-track faculty, which involved pursuit of "a twofold strategy: In the short term, we needed to improve the quality of life for our part-time instructors; in the long term, we needed to push back against the administration's overuse of part-timers, that is, we needed to push for more full-time appointments" (226). At the same time, an effort was made to educate the public on the conditions faced by nontenure-track faculty. Combined with the development of a democratic and community-based vision of education to counter the administration's "attempt to make the university into a corporation," this inclusive approach helped undercut the usual administrative strategy of depicting faculty as a privileged, underworked, and purely self-interested elite opposed to the taxpayer (224).

Steal This University is extremely useful not only as an overview of the corporate models being applied to universities but also as an organizing handbook for those who want to "prevent the academy from being remade entirely in the image of the corporation" (236).

Subversive of What?

REVIEW BY ROGER SABIN

Attitude: The New Subversive Political Cartoonists (2002)
Attitude 2: The New Subversive Alternative Cartoonists (2004)
EDITED BY TED RALL
New York, NBM
128 pp. $13.95 (each)

THESE CHEERFULLY IN-YOUR-FACE anthologies consist of strips and cartoons from the weekly alternative papers, plus helpful biographies of the cartoonists — some well known, most not. The blurbs tell us that the books are not to be considered "best-ofs," but rather the personal choice of editor Ted Rall, himself an established indie name. As such, they're part of a bigger agenda, summed up thus: "To hell with hackneyed mainstream political cartoons. . . . Daily newspaper cartoons make lame jokes about the news while sucking up to the corporations that own them. Here's the NEXT generation of artists out to save the world."

Such bluster immediately opens up for question the books' subtitles. For example, how "new" are these cartoonists? Some are, but some have been toiling away for at least a decade, and a few for much longer (Tom Tomorrow's *This Modern World* began in the 1980s). How "subversive" are they? Well, subversive of what, exactly: all their work appears in liberal/left-leaning publications, and it is difficult to determine how many of them are prepared to subvert that consensus and "say the wrong thing." Finally, what does "alternative" mean? Aaron McGruder (*Boondocks*), for example, is one of the most widely syndicated cartoonists in the country.

Ted Rall is undoubtedly aware of these contradictions. He evidently hates the mainstream with a passion — despite having appeared in the *New York Times* himself — and has gotten into trouble in the past for his outspoken opinions of other cartoonists. One such was Art (*Maus*) Spiegelman, for many years staff artist on the *New Yorker*, whose influence over the cartooning community caused Rall to accuse him of power-crazed favoritism. This upset many involved in that community, who have since not forgiven Rall. It seems fair to speculate, therefore, that the *Attitude* books could have looked very different if this spat hadn't occurred. It is telling that in his introduction to the second volume, Rall chooses to name-check the *New Yorker* as exactly the kind of "wimpy" magazine he's kicking against.

That said, he has gathered together an impressive roster of contributors, encompassing gender politics (Marian Henley), sexuality (Eric Orner, Alison Bechdel), broad social commentary (Eric Bezdek, Joe Sharpnack) and those who prefer to define politics in its old-fashioned sense of "pertaining to the state" (Ward Sutton). These categories are by no means fixed, and collectively the strips' most striking feature is their ratio of words over images, indicating how hard it is to get across a political viewpoint in a limited number of panels (three to six being the norm). In terms of the art itself, the overwhelming impression is one of speedy execution, resulting in an often amateurish vibe — scratchy or sub-Robert Crumb linework, with a smat-

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tering of clipart. Only occasionally are your eyeballs invited to linger: Peter Kuper's beautiful mix of a stencil graffiti style mixed with graphic design-influenced composition is the exception that proves the rule.

This rough-and-ready sensibility has several inter-linked sources. There's the obvious need for the cartoonists to work quickly in order to be topical; the most talented commentators are not necessarily the most talented artists, and vice versa. Then there's punk. Time and again in the interviews, the cartoonists point to punk as a changing point in their lives. In the main, we're talking about 1980s hardcore (Black Flag, Husker Du, etc.), when punk had moved on from its 1970s "howl of outrage" origins to the point where social and political agendas were much more to the fore. Thus, if the alternative papers are analogous to "indie" record labels, then these cartoonists can be seen as purveyors of the socially aware three-chord/panel thrash. Their angry, fanzine-influenced art style is all part of the package.

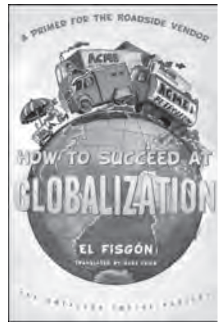
My personal favorite of those featured is Ted Rall himself ("In high school, the music I liked [was] punk, new wave . . . the energy permeates my work"). His angular drawing style perfectly complements his angular take on world events, and his strips are all the more powerful for the amount of information he can pack into the narrative text: "Even if Afghanistan — Osama Bin Laden, and the other 16,000,000 people living there — were nuked, it wouldn't matter: most of the Jihad camps aren't there anyway." This is passionate stuff, and occasionally very moving. Rall has overstepped the mark in the past — his strip about 9/11 widows grasping for compensation money is an infamous example — but when he gets it right, he rocks with the best of them.

The books do have their depressing moments. For how much longer must we see George Bush portrayed as a simian idiot? Here he is, stumbling over his sentences, unable to communicate without cue cards, and acting "as smart as a head of lettuce." We get little sense that this is the man who has helped lead the neoconservative revolution and changed the cultural environment in which we all have to operate. Similarly, there isn't much questioning of the left's response. You would not guess from these cartoons that the rise of militant Islam was too much of a problem, for example. The "givens" of the frame of reference in which the cartoonists are working are "too given," in a sense, and this (essentially Chomskian) demarcation is a weakness.

Perhaps this indicates the fundamental difference between this generation of politically committed cartoonists and that of the 1960s-1970s counterculture. The underground comix of that era were full of satires of the counterculture itself. But despite the obvious debt of some of the new wave to Robert Crumb et al., what is missing is the same level of self-examination. It's a relief to see Ward Sutton's strip about a punk band rehearsing their "revolutionary" stuff oblivious to the riot raging outside their window; but in general the impression given by the *Attitude* books is that a punk attitude equates with a kind of bludgeoning moral rectitude. So much for "subversion" in its more nuanced sense.

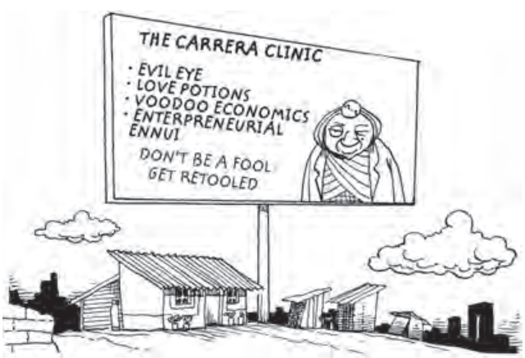
Quibbles aside, these books are fun and thought-provoking. The interviews are unfailingly entertaining, and the strips provide a window onto a much-ignored corner of the cartooning world (if comic books "fly below critical radar," then this work is virtually invisible). As the mainstream press continues to cut back the space allowed for strips, so the weekly alternative press perseveres in doing the opposite. This can only be a good thing. Perhaps the neocons don't get the last laugh after all.

El Fisgón



HOW TO SUCCEED AT GLOBALIZATION, El Fisgón's newly translated cartoon history of western capitalism, leads the reader on a broad, sweeping tour through the history of modern economics with stops in (among other places) feudal Europe, nineteenth century North America, and present day Latin America. Already published in Spanish, this new addition to the American Empire Project (www.americanempireproject.com), provides a humorous and accessible introduction to globalization and "neoliberalism," which seems to actually be old conservativism.

El Fisgón — the pen name of Rafael Barajas, one of Mexico's leading newspaper cartoonists — sets the story within the narrative framework of a struggling Mexican businessman who wants to become the next Bill Gates. He is lead through history by a woman named Cassandra Carrera, described as a "faith healer, financial sorceress, and career consultant." A perfect tour guide through the story of business — part guru, part mountebank — Cassandra keeps providing our hero with gadgets that will ease his journey into wealth and success.



Cassandra takes our hero from feudal Europe through to the present day. El Fisgón presents us with a display of our greedy past and attributes most of the world's ills to the unregulated gluttonous leaders of the business world. While some of his tableau ring true, others seem a bit heavy handed. I occasionally found myself lost amid statistics and numbers. But he is illuminating on the impact of debt on Latin America and elsewhere, where he makes it clear that the control of an elite few over the resources of the many keeps the rich rich and the poor poor, and is responsible for much of the international mess in which we find ourselves.

How to Succeed uses both historical artwork and various "classic" cartoon styles to add subtle layers of meaning to the tale. Albrecht Durer etchings, Gustave Dore, and Goya prints bring authenticity to the section on feudal Europe. A big fan of irony, El Fisgón continually juxtaposes images and text to get the most out of his subject matter. Vultures prey on an open safe, while an oversized policeman holds the Statue of Liberty as a cudgel. These are just two of the many wonderful images included in the book.

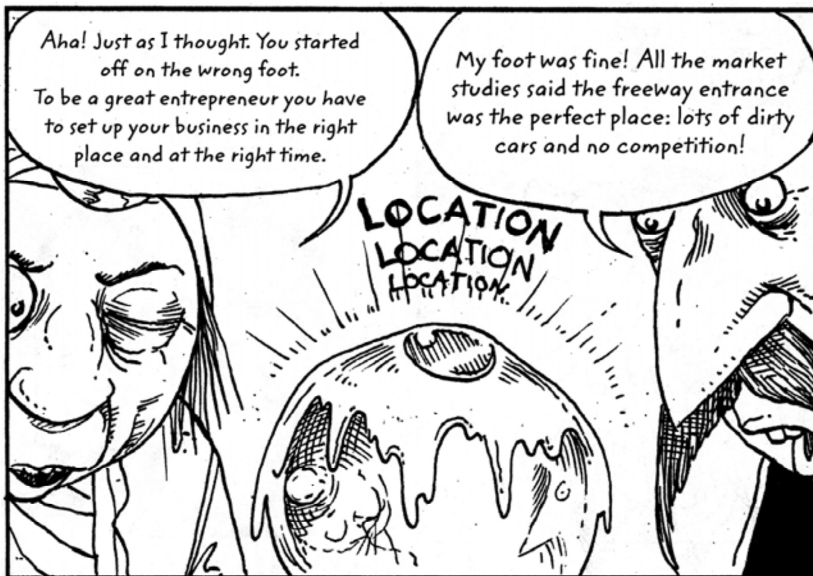
At times the narrative sweeps through history a bit quickly. The author exhibits a tendency to oversimplify complex events and flatten everything with an anti-globalization hammer. Both the Russian Revolution and European fascism are almost treated like footnotes in the grand march of global greed that El Fisgón tracks. Overall though, *How to Succeed* offers an insightful and intelligent history of capitalism from its origins to its present neoliberal incarnation.

GARY MARTIN

El Fisgón, *How to Succeed at Globalization: A Primer for the Roadside Vendor*. Translated by Mark Fried. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004.


So tell me, Señor Machorro, what brings you here?
Things aren't good, Dr. Carrera. Ever since I lost my job as a mariachi, I've been laid off half a dozen times. I think it must be the Evil Eye.
I've tried a few start-ups: tacos, shoe shine, and this full-service car wash, but I can't seem to keep up with the competition.
No matter what I do I just can't get my company listed on the exchange.
BUSINESS
I've tried it all— workshops, seven habits . . .
BETTER LOOPHOLES
HOW TO SUCCEED
BY DALE
. . . focus groups, direct mail, market research . . . and none of it helped.
CHARRO KLEEN KAR


You've come to the right place, Señor Machorro. I'll help you move off the street and into the Fortune 500!
But first I'm going to give you a course in the history of business, so pay attention!
What's that?
This is the latest in high-tech, state-of-the-art economic forecasting . . .
Looks like an egg to me.
It allows me to tap directly into Alan Greenspan's mind—and also check on the kids in LA.


Aha! Just as I thought. You started off on the wrong foot. To be a great entrepreneur you have to set up your business in the right place and at the right time.
My foot was fine! All the market studies said the freeway entrance was the perfect place: lots of dirty cars and no competition!
LOCATION
LOCATION
LOCATION


Well, according to this you would have been better off starting up in 18th-century Europe, or even the United States in the early 1900s.
How's that?


You see, hard work and ambition aren't enough. The market conditions need to be just right . . .


Your business model would have been a huge hit in the Middle Ages.
But I *am* middle-aged—I'm already forty-three years—
No, let me explain!