FRONT COVER

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SEPARATE FILE

new POLITICS

a journal of socialist thought

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WORDS AND PICTURES

From the Editors

In 1936 at a public confrontation with the philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, the Fascist commander of the Spanish Legion, José Millán-Astray reportedly responded: "*¡Muera la inteligencia! ¡Viva la Muerte!* ("Death to intelligence! Long live death!") provoking applause from the Falangists.

Surely these words took on an ominous relevance when we heard howling at the Republican primary debates — people howling their approval of Texas's high number of executions and of the notion that the uninsured should be left to die. Dark, ugly times.

In face of all this fear and hatred, our authors — and we think our readers — continue, like Sisyphus, to struggle, to push the enormous rock uphill. Writing his *Myth of Sisyphus* during France's darkest hour, when it had collapsed in 1940, Camus believed Sisyphus was cheerful. "Being aware of one's life, one's revolt, one's freedom, and to the maximum, is living, and to the maximum" (tr. Justin O'Brien, Vintage, 1955). For Helen Keller, to struggle against injustice was "to escape a misery worse than any physical deprivation."

Sisyphus was doomed. But recent events — the Arab spring, the Wisconsin uprising, and the Occupy movement, to name three — suggest that our struggle, unlike Sisyphus', is not hopeless. If our authors in this issue have one common theme it is that of struggle. From New Zealand to Russia to Ireland to Mexico and to the United States, they have articulated this struggle with clarity and power. We are deeply indebted to Ravi Malhotra and Dan La Botz for organizing our two special sections, the former on Disability Rights, the latter on Occupy and Labor.

Marvin and Betty

N.B. We have just learned that the New England War Tax Resistance has again awarded us a grant. We are honored to be recognized by these courageous men and women.

* * *

New Politics welcomes three new members to the editorial board
Erin Chun
Bhaskar Sunkara
Adaner Usmani

LETTERS

Reading the Bible for the Wrong Reasons

Russell Pregeant posits a Davidic covenant in conflict with the Mosaic covenant. If there is such a conflict, it is not between a class divided society and an egalitarian society. The Mosaic covenant enshrines the authority of the priesthood. How is that any more egalitarian than a monarchy?

Further, the prophets were no quasi-socialist heroes. They were fanatics who railed against religious pluralism while claiming to speak for God. They brooked no dissent. Their pronouncements on social injustice were dwarfed by their hostility toward other belief systems. Even in their social commentary, there is no evidence that they organized any form of social protest. If you value ranting and raving, the prophets were the champs.

Bennett Muraskin
Parsippany, NJ

Bennett Muraskin raises valid and important questions about my article on biblical economics (Winter, 2012, #52). Before considering specifics, let me state two general principles that inform my approach to the issues. First, our evaluations of persons and movements separated from us by temporal and/or cultural distance should take such distance into account. That is, we should make our judgments in light of the times in which these persons acted and in which these movements took place and be wary of too easily applying criteria derived from our own situations to them. Second, because both persons and movements are complex phenomena, we should also be wary of allowing elements that we find disturbing to obscure competing aspects that could have positive value.

Regarding the prophets, Muraskin is correct that they "railed against religious pluralism" and "brooked no dissent." I have no intention of defending these aspects of their messages as models for our contemporary situation. Nor, by the way, would I defend the sexist elements that feminist scholars have exposed or their interpretations of calamitous events as God's literal, interventionary punishments. I would, however, argue that we should understand these elements in light of their historical contexts. There was nothing distinctive in the ancient world about touting one's own gods over those of rival nations or about claiming unambiguous messages from the realm of the divine. What was distinctive was the prophets' relentless emphasis upon economic justice and condemnation of the exploitation of the poor by the ruling classes. To claim that "their pronouncements on social injustice were dwarfed by their hostility toward other belief systems" is a very subjective judgment; one could just as easily assert the opposite.

From a philosophical perspective, moreover, we can understand their monotheistic single-mindedness as an assertion of the objectivity of values. If moral absolutism is inadequate in the face of varying circumstances and life's complexity, unqualified relativism undermines ethics altogether. It would, for example, be a poor philosophical basis for socialism that would make the egalitarian ideal a matter of arbitrary opinion. If we cringe at some of the prophets' bombastic condemnations, I, for one, can appreciate their moral conviction in the face of raw injustice. If we cannot say that economic oppression is objectively wrong, we have nothing important to say.

It is true that the prophets did not organize social protests against the injustices they condemned. However, they left a legacy of social consciousness that has influenced not only Judaism and Christianity but secular movements as well. Activists through the centuries have found a well of useful material in the prophets as well as the gospels. Muraskin writes off such material in his focus on the prophets' "ranting and raving," but many a hero in the struggle for justice has discerned a difference between rant and forceful, conscience-informed testimony. Is

Amos ranting when he tells the people of the northern monarchy that "because [they] trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain" they will build houses but not be able to live in them and plant vineyards but not drink their wine? (Amos 5:11). Is he raving in 4:2, where he warns the rich oppressors that they will be taken away with fishhooks? I would certainly want to temper some of this kind of rhetoric with material such as Hosea's touching declaration of God's compassion: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.... I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love.... How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel?...I will not execute my fierce anger." (Hosea 11:1, 3-4,9). I believe, however, that we need room in our rhetorical vocabulary for language strong enough to find appropriate labels for those on Wall Street and in government who wrecked the world's economy.

Muraskin also disputes the egalitarian nature of the Mosaic covenant on the grounds that it enshrines the authority of the priesthood. Because our sources were edited over many centuries and are filled with contradictions, scholars have proposed conflicting theories about the origin of the priesthood and the nature of its earliest forms. It is clear, however, that the extreme social stratification dating from Solomon's kingship was not characteristic of the tribal period and that the character of the priesthood changed over time. In all probability, priestly functions were originally assigned to family or clan members, and a professional priesthood developed only gradually. (See, for example, Robert Kugler, "Priests and Levites" in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* Vol. 4, especially pp. 600-601) In any case, the mere fact of a priestly office hardly negates the relative egalitarianism of the early period, for which we have significant evidence. There is at least some truth to the theory, first advanced by George Mendenhall and later championed by Norman Gottwald, that the so-called conquest of Canaan was less an invasion by outsiders than a peasants' revolt against an oppressive ruling class. Certainly, the social structure introduced by the Israelites stood in marked contrast to that of the surrounding nations. As Gottwald comments, "[t]he socioeconomic relations of Israelites were egalitarian in the sense that the entire populace was assured of approximately equal access to resources by means of their organization into extended families, protection of associations of families..., and tribes, federated as an intertribal community." (*The Tribes of Yahweh: A Socio-Literary Introduction*, 285-86). Within this structure, leadership roles (e.g., elders and priests) were certainly in evidence, but they emerged in a sense "from below" and existed within the framework of a society designed to promote the common good. Early Israel may not have been a socialist paradise, but it constituted a clear alternative to the severely hierarchical power structures of the immediate environment. I refuse to abandon its legacy to the distortions of the religious right.

RUSSELL PREGEANT
Clayton, GA

Winter 2012 Issue Corrections

In Horst Brand's review of the *Red Orchestra* book (German Resistance to the Nazi State) mention is made of the "group's retaliation to Soviet agents." "Retaliation" makes no sense; what is probably meant is "relation." Then, still on p. 115, a leader of the group is named "Marro Schulze-Bosen" who, on p. 117, becomes "Narro Schulze-Boysen," whereas his actual name was Harro Schulze-Boysen. On p. 116 and following another leader of the group is named "Arvid Marnack." He was called Arvid Harnack.

DAN GALLIN
Geneva, Switzerland

Norman Epstein of Vancouver, British Columbia points out that Michael Wreszin's reference to Pres. Reagan pursuing racist policies in the 1960s should have been 1980s (p. 108). And on the next page, he should have written, "This was preceded by Pres. Nixon's racist "Southern Strategy."

Finally, Epstein points to a typo in Amy Littlefield's review (p. 134): "the fight for gender inequality" should of course be "the fight for gender equality."

We regret these errors and apologize for them.

MARVIN and BETTY MANDELL

Introduction

Ravi Malhotra

All too often, socialists, like others, have regarded disability as a personal tragedy. Left publications rarely discuss it or debate it and activism by people with disabilities has been ignored by the left, notwithstanding the fact that Americans with disabilities are among the most marginalized of citizens in terms of income level and poverty rates. Yet in many ways recognizing the political dimensions of disability oppression — the fact that it is structural barriers that are primarily responsible for the marginalization of people with disabilities in employment, education, and other aspects of public life — is a fundamentally liberating notion that has deep implications for the organization of the workplace, the work day and the structure of the educational system. From a lack of wheelchair access in many communities to inflexible support systems that force people with disabilities to choose either employment or health benefits to barriers in education that have prevented many people with disabilities from reaching their full potential, barriers remain widespread in American society (and other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] countries).

A political theory of disablement, often known as the social model of disability, holds out the promise of a truly emancipatory politics by challenging ableism and incorporating respect for people with disabilities as a foundational praxis. It marks a shift away from the medical model which consigned people with disabilities to institutions, asylums, and worse. A society that truly empowered people with disabilities — a diverse group encompassing people with mobility impairments, blind and Deaf[1] people, people with psychiatric conditions, and more — would be one that radically reconsidered the concept of what it means to contribute to society. It would be one that provided health care benefits, including the funding of specialized medical equipment, to all regardless of employment status, and facilitated individuals, whether they had disabilities or not, to work part time without denial of access to benefits. Veterans with disabilities, both physical and psychiatric, would receive appropriate rehabilitation to retrain them to be able to participate in an economy retooled for a Green future and away from militarism. Effective and comprehensive measures, such as captioning and the dissemination of electronic texts, would be undertaken to ensure that information is produced in a manner accessible to blind and Deaf* people to enjoy on an equal basis with their peers. It would ensure easy access to attendant services to allow people with disabilities to receive assistance with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, and toileting in their own home, while compensating the attendants appropriately.

Regrettably, despite the historic passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, Americans are a long way from achieving these objectives. Many in the business community continue to regard people with disabilities as unemployable and resist fervently any expansion of

Ravi Malhotra, *a sponsor of* New Politics, *organized this symposium and is writing a biography, with Benjamin Isitt, of E.T. Kingsley.*

* I capitalize Deaf to indicate the fact that many Deaf people constitute a community with a common language.

the diminished welfare state. As New Zealand disability rights advocate Chris Ford observes in his piece on disability politics in a time of capitalist crisis, the neoliberal attacks of capitalist states across the West have increasingly targeted disabled people who rely on welfare payments. He shows how these tendencies have markedly expanded in light of the 2008 global economic crisis and show no signs of abating. He reminds us that this devaluation of disabled people's lives has ominous consequences in light of the legacy of the Nazi Holocaust, in which large numbers of people with disabilities were exterminated. Ford usefully posits the emergence of a global disability rights movement as an alternative to any return to the horrors of eugenics.

Switching gears, Anne Finger's contribution dissects Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci's 1926 essay on the enormous disparities between the industrialized North of Italy and the mostly peasant South, "Some Aspects of the Southern Question." As she illustrates, these divisions were often cast in racial terms with the Southern Italians regarded as inferior and dark savages. Focusing on Gramsci's critique of anthropologists of the day, Finger shows how Gramsci's contribution can be re-read through a disability rights lens. And while one rarely thinks about the physical disabilities of socialist political activists, Finger, quoting the historian Douglas Baynton, eloquently reminds us that they are everywhere once one starts looking. Gramsci himself, as Finger notes, had various disabilities, nor is he the sole exception. The literature on the socialism of Helen Keller, both deaf and blind, has increased in recent years. American-Canadian radical Eugene T. Kingsley, a double amputee, while little known, edited the Socialist Party of Canada's newspaper, the *Western Clarion* for many years in the first decade of the twentieth century and had the unique distinction of running as an open socialist numerous times for both the House of Representatives and the Canadian House of Commons between 1896 and 1926.

Returning to a focus on public policy, Canadian disability advocate Jihan Abbas provides an analysis of a rarely considered issue, the exploitation of the labor of people labelled as having intellectual disabilities. She notes how institutionalized people with disabilities often were assigned jobs while incarcerated in these settings. Continuing in the form of "sheltered workshops" where people with disabilities work at segregated, repetitive jobs for wages below the minimum wage, this invisible labor raises important questions about the meaning of work and exploitation.

> A political theory of disablement, often known as the social model of disability, holds out the promise of a truly emancipatory politics by challenging ableism and incorporating respect for people with disabilities as a foundational praxis.

Concluding our symposium, Rachel Garaghty tackles the complex policy issues relating to the provision of quality attendant services for Americans with disabilities, focusing on policy in Minnesota. While the Independent Living movement has seen a shift toward more people with disabilities living in the community, there remain significant barriers to the provision of quality attendant services. Collectively, these four essays provide different perspectives on how to think about disability while bearing in mind that disability rights are ultimately questions about power and politics.

Thanks to Marvin and Betty Reid Mandell for their help and patience in designing this symposium.

Disability Politics in a Time of Capitalist Crisis

Could History Repeat Itself?

Chris J. Ford

A recent article in the *British Observer* by Ian Birrell discussed an ominous development that has historical connotations. "The demonization of the disabled is a sign of the times" outlined how more and more British disabled people are being increasingly subjected to bullying and hate crime.

This rising incidence of disability harassment has followed austerity-driven measures by the British Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government to cut disability benefit payments. In tandem with these moves, the right-wing tabloid press has engaged in a vicious anti-disability campaign targeting so-called disability benefit fraudsters or as they colloquially label them "scroungers." Birrell's article set out to measure the impact that this sustained campaign has had on the life of one man, Peter Greener. Greener lives with multiple sclerosis, in the English city of Hebburn. He was the subject of a recent campaign of torment and abuse by his neighbor involving, among other things, name-calling and object throwing. The neighbor's campaign climaxed in his anonymously calling a benefit fraud hotline in an attempt to discredit Greener but the neighbor's actions backfired when welfare officials found that he was not a fraudster. Subsequently, Greener's torment ended when the neighbor was arrested and jailed for his hate crime.

Birrell though goes into detail as to how Greener's case is not an isolated one, particularly during the current crisis of capitalism that is the European Sovereign Debt crisis. He outlines how the reported level of disability harassment has increased in Britain, the result of an implicit campaign by both the UK right and its media allies to discredit all disabled welfare claimants. I would argue that this represents a renewed campaign to label disabled people as a "burden" to society, a view that is gaining renewed currency as governments throughout Europe and the world seek to slash social expenditure in this time of crisis. I am aware as a New Zealander of the detrimental impact of economic and social reforms, particularly on disabled people, in my own country.

Indeed, eugenic ideas are making a comeback as the New Right and neoliberal forces that have colonized financial and political institutions such as the European Union (EU) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) demanding stringent austerity measures to arrest the global crisis. Eugenics, a pseudo-science first developed by Francis Galton (a half-cousin of the evolutionist Charles Darwin) postulated that disabled people and others deemed to be unproductive such as those living with health conditions, alcoholism, and drug addiction, were not to be permitted to reproduce for fear

Chris J. Ford *is a disability advocate and researcher from Dunedin, New Zealand. He has just completed an MA thesis at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand on the development and implementation of the New Zealand Disability Strategy by successive governments since 2001. He can be contacted at* cj.ford@xtra.co.nz.

that their moral and/or physical failings would be transmitted to any offspring. These eugenic notions soon gained a foothold throughout the Western world as changes to capitalist production modes began to see disabled people, in Marxian terms, deemed surplus labor. The late British disability theorist Vic Finkelstein noted, within this context, how disabled people had been treated as more employable under agrarian systems of production, but when the Industrial Revolution arrived, new mechanized mass production techniques effectively excluded impaired people from the workplace. Consequently, more disabled people were expelled from the mainstream of society to its margins throughout the industrialized world. In order to deal with the increasing number of economically displaced disabled and mentally ill people and to prevent their breeding, mass institutions arose throughout the Western world during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Consignment to these institutions constituted a death sentence for many people who had the misfortune to live in them. Those fortunate enough to still reside in the community had to depend on their families and/or charity dispensed by the bourgeoisie, the churches and other charitable organizations.

This situation lasted until the evolution of the modern Keynesian Welfare State during the period 1935-1973. Many social democratic Western governments (including those in the United States, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom) designed benefit systems as a means of maintaining the economic and social exclusion of disabled people in order to protect the comparatively better paying jobs of able-bodied people during what became known as "Long Boom." Still, the quality of life of disabled people did improve marginally thanks to the availability of income transfers from government. However, the emergence of the Disability Rights Movement (DRM) in the late 1960s and early 1970s challenged the notion that disabled people were unemployable. The DRM's rhetoric around the right to work is being uplifted by an increasing number of governments (especially in Britain, New Zealand and Europe) to justify their renewed attacks on disability welfare rights.

But is there a real dichotomy between the right of disabled people to receive welfare and the right to employment?

> Both the "trickle down" theory and the neo-classical requirement for governments to arrive at fiscal balance have seen governments mount renewed attacks on welfare systems.

American disability activist and academic Marta Russell outlines how governments (beginning with the U.S. Clinton Administration), began to expound a "you can't have it both ways" mentality during the 1990s in terms of demanding both the right to receive benefits and employment. This was at a time when both Third Way Clintonian Democrats and neo-liberal Congressional Republicans in the United States worked together to further restrict eligibility to social security payments, including for disabled people. Similarly in Britain, the Blair Labour Government began its attack on disability welfare payments soon after coming to office in 1997 when it severely tightened eligibility for the Incapacity Benefit. In 1998, the National-New Zealand First Coalition Government in New Zealand abolished the sickness benefit and merged it with the unemployment benefit. This consequently led to some disabled people and those with long term health conditions being subjected to work testing requirements. This policy was reversed by the Labour-Alliance Coalition Government upon its election in 1999. These New Right/neo-liberal moves were all made possible by the overturning of the Keynesian Social Democratic/Welfare State consensus following the global Oil Shock and associated economic crises of the mid-1970s.

Ultimately though, these moves to stem the rising number of disability (and other benefit) claimants had failed by the mid-2000s. In New Zealand the proportion of working-age people claiming the three main disability-related benefits — namely, Invalids, Sickness, and Accident Compensation — increased from 1 percent in the early 1970s to reach 5 percent by 2002. This same trend was mirrored throughout the Western world. This was due to factors that the mainly non-disabled policymaking elite consisting of New Right-influenced politicians, bureaucrats, and academics failed to (or more precisely did not want to) understand. In this sense, policymakers either did not or would not take account of the complex needs that disabled people have: the fact that for some people their health conditions fluctuate; that the rising number of disabled and mentally ill people being released from institutions into community living required an independent income; and above all, the historic discrimination practiced against disabled people within labor markets.

And it is this continuing rise in the number of disabled people on welfare (despite all the restrictive measures already taken) that is driving many Western governments, especially those in Britain and New Zealand, to consider taking even more drastic measures against them. New Right governments are using the pretext of the economic crisis that began with the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 and has now extended into the Eurozone Sovereign Debt Crisis of 2011/12 to initiate a new war of attrition against disabled people and other disadvantaged communities. This is the result of the ruling elites of Europe and the West having been panicked into yet again seeking to reduce the role and size of the state. These moves have been driven by corporate lobbyists who, in the wake of the financial crisis, have successfully sought to make ordinary people pay for their excesses by persuading governments to bail them out through governments introducing regressive tax increases and service cuts. In New Zealand, for example, the right wing National-led government bailed out major finance company South Canterbury Finance in 2010 to the tune of $NZ 1 billion. In Britain, Conservative Chancellor George Osborne has stated that his government aims to cut income tax, and to achieve this aim he increased the regressive Value Added Tax (VAT-consumption tax) in late 2010.

Ominously then, both the “trickle down” theory and the neo-classical requirement for governments to arrive at fiscal balance have seen governments mount renewed attacks on welfare systems. These attacks have focused on all benefit classes. For disabled people, the consequences of the changes that are either being proposed or are in the process of being implemented by various governments are dire. In the UK, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Government has proposed changes to further restrict eligibility for Disability Living Allowance and other related benefits. Disturbingly, the Coalition Government (as did the previous Labour Government) has contracted out the process of determining disability benefit eligibility to a French multinational company, Atos. The anecdotal stories emerging from the British testing process have been harrowing with many disabled people being subjected to the most grossly medicalized tests possible and consequently denied benefits. This has led to many disabled people becoming impoverished at a time when jobs are scarce in the UK. In some cases, the outcomes have been tragic with some disabled and mentally ill people committing suicide as a consequence of these dehumanizing policies. However, British ministers continue to downplay the nature of the changes by stressing that most disabled people have nothing to fear when the reality is that they do.

These moves stand to be imitated by New Zealand's right-wing National Government. During 2009/10, a Welfare Working Group recommended replacing the existing disability related benefits (excluding Accident Compensation) with one single Jobseeker Support payment which would cover most non-retirement based benefit recipients. During the November 2011 election campaign, the National Government announced its response that outlined the creation of three new benefits — Jobseeker Support, Sole Parent Support, and Supported Living Payment. Jobseeker Support will include current sickness benefit recipients, and this is where many disabled people are expected to be placed due to strict work testing requirements. This could well be the case as the author has informally spoken to disability advocates who expect the Government to introduce UK-style "Fit Note" assessment tests which will see thousands of disabled people "exited" from the higher paying Invalids Benefit. This would be done in line with the Government's aim of shifting 46 000 people off benefits overall. This will come at a time when, as in the UK, many disabled New Zealanders will have little hope of finding suitable, well paid work, given the ongoing recession. Therefore, the New Zealand disability community stands to suffer in much the same way as Britain's has.

And this is where we come back to the case of Peter Greener. Given the New Right's campaign of hostility towards already marginalized communities, such as disabled people, there could be grave consequences for our survival as a community. The austerity driven political climate has induced a radical shift to the right in many industrialized countries during the last two years. This has come through in recent election results, for example, in Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal where center-right governments were elected or re-elected. In Britain, the Labour Party continues to hold a plurality in most opinion surveys but still the coalition parties (Conservatives and Liberal Democrats) when combined continue to perform well, taking over 50 percent of the vote. Upon closer analysis, it seems that a fearful and insecure majority has increasingly sought to scapegoat minority groups as the cause of the crisis rather than those who actually produced it in the first instance — capitalist bankers and financiers. This has been aided and abetted by populist media campaigns that have sought to divide and rule populations, such as those waged by the tabloid media against so-called benefit cheats and work-shy people, as is the case in Britain as noted earlier.

In my native New Zealand, I also fear the increased targeting of disabled people as welfare reforms proceed. The corporate New Zealand media have already begun a campaign of demonizing beneficiary groups once again. During 2011, for example, a New Zealand television current affairs program stressed the fact that a single parent of eight children had a subscription television service antenna on her roof. This story generated the usual level of hostility that is reflected towards beneficiaries who are perceived to be living better than many hard working families. This image of the so-called "feckless beneficiary" or "welfare bum" suits the ruling classes and their agenda well as it ignores the fact that in New Zealand benefit rates were severely slashed in 1991. Nonetheless, the New Zealand Government could be preparing to engage in "wolf whistle" politics through the media as the British Government has done in order to further divide working class opinion.

Ultimately, these anti-disability and anti-welfare moves are eugenic in character. While right-wing governments clothe their welfare policies in the language of "compassionate conservatism" and that of the DRM around the right to employment, the reality is different. In fact, one has to have a grasp of Orwellian language to realize that what governments are actually saying to disabled people is unless they work for a living or seek the support of their family, they will die — period. What right-wing governments are seeking to do is to return industrialized societies to the Victorian, neo-classical values of individual choice, responsibility, and self-reliance. This means that disabled people and other excluded groups will have to increasingly (if they are unemployed or underemployed) rely on charity or the family for survival, as the State will no longer provide anything more than temporary support.

Therefore, if Western governments continue on this path, disabled people will begin to experience even shorter life spans. This will be due to unemployed disabled people experiencing more serious health problems. These trends will no doubt be quietly welcomed by right wing governments determined to reduce social security outlays — despite protestations to the contrary on their part. But what is more alarming is that if Europeans become inclined to support far right/neo-fascist parties due to the depressed economic climate, then disabled people (along with other minorities) will be subjected to a second, more ominous threat to their survival — effective mass extermination through so called "passive euthanasia" programs. This is not an in extremis scenario, given that the Nazis established their T4 program for this purpose in the 1930s. And the Nazis softened up public opinion through a mass propaganda campaign claiming that disabled and mentally ill people were a fiscal burden.

However, these campaigns of hate, marginalization, and stigmatization can be halted in their tracks by disabled people themselves. Compared to the Great Depression era of the 1930s, there is one positive in disabled people's favor — the existence of a global Disability Rights Movement. To paraphrase Dylan Thomas, disabled people will not go into that long, good night at all. Disabled people and their supporters/advocates have a role to play in joining the global campaign against austerity and greed. Furthermore, movements, such as the Occupy Movement, have sought to change the nature of the debate from one in which multinational corporations are owed a break to that of ordinary people needing one from austerity. With these factors in mind, the DRM can and should align with other anti-capitalist and progressive forces as well to turn back the tide of anti-welfarism.

But what arguments can be deployed by the DRM to counter the resurgent neo-liberal right?

One powerful counter-argument is offered by Russell who believed that:

> It is discrimination to deny a disabled person who can work an opportunity to do so, but it is not "special" treatment for people who cannot work to be guaranteed a humane standard of living — rather it is a measure of a just civilization that they are decently catered for.

While this statement may not immediately appeal to either politicians or majority public opinion, it is a case that should be made by disability advocates. Another that should be deployed is that any non-disabled person can join the disability community at anytime and require support. Non-disabled people should be encouraged to imagine themselves in this situation with the hope that they visualize the difficulties involved in living with impairment. Above all, the DRM should take up the mantra of the Occupy Movement that it is not ordinary people (such as disabled people) who are responsible for the crisis but rather that corporate capitalism is — and that financial institutions are not being held responsible by governments for it. Subsequently, the DRM should bring the public to realize the consequences of blaming minorities for economic failures as history has already proffered up numerous examples of what this ultimately could lead to — genocide.

In the UK, the mobilization of ordinary disabled people against their government's proposed welfare changes could be about to bear some fruit. As this article is being written, the UK Cabinet is considering softening some of the harshest changes to the proposed disability benefits regime. On the basis of that pledge, government members of the House of Lords defeated proposed amendments that would have softened the changes in January 2012. This means that the struggle against the UK welfare changes still has some way to run. Overall, the success of any campaign against regressive welfare reform (wherever this occurs) will rely on the waging of political struggles by disabled people themselves and their allies. For successful political struggle to occur, disability activists must be armed with information on the neoliberal agenda around disability. If that happens, then history will not repeat itself for disabled people — leading to people like Peter Greener and other disabled people feeling safer and more valued by their communities.

A fully footnoted version will be found on our website newpol.org.

CRUSADERS FOR JUSTICE

"Strike against war, for without you no battles can be fought. Strike against manufacturing shrapnel and gas bombs and all other tools of murder. Strike against preparedness that means death and misery to millions of human beings. Be not dumb, obedient slaves in an army of destruction. Be heroes in an army of construction."

— "Strike Against War," speech in Carnegie Hall, 1916

"If I regarded my life from the point of view of the pessimist, I should be undone. I should seek in vain for the light that does not visit my eyes and the music that does not ring in my ears. I should beg night and day and never be satisfied. I should sit apart in awful solitude, a prey to fear and despair. But since I consider it a duty to myself and to others to be happy, I escape a misery worse than any physical deprivation."

— Optimism: An Essay, 1903

"I believe we should so act that we may draw nearer and more near the age when no man shall live at his ease while another suffers."

— Optimism: An Essay, 1903

Helen Keller, *deafblind political activist, writer, Socialist*

Antonio Gramsci's South, or Some Aspects of the Disability Question

Anne Finger

When Antonio Gramsci gave his maiden speech in Parliament in May of 1925, many of the other deputies left their seats and thronged around him in order to hear the faint voice coming from his compressed chest.

(In the introduction to one of the editions of Gramsci's *Prison Letters* he is described as "having the appearance of being a hunchbacked dwarf." A footnote follows, which alas does not explain the difference between *appearing* to be a hunchbacked dwarf and actually *being* a hunchbacked dwarf.)

The next day, one of the Rome newspapers published a picture of Mussolini, who had also been present that day, leaning forward with his hand cupped behind his ear, a smirk on his face, as if to say: here is the left, embodied in this frail goblin, the crippled left, the left so weak it can barely make itself heard, the pitiable left.

On the evening of November 8, 1926, at 10:30, Antonio Gramsci was arrested in his lodgings on Rome's via Morgagni. Did he hear jack boots on the stairs, fists pounding on the door, those sounds that had not yet become clichés of anti-fascism? Among the papers he left behind was the unfinished essay, "*Alcuni temi della questione meridionale*," "Some Aspects of the Southern Question," found by Camilla Ravera, one of those women who appear throughout his life, gathering up scattered texts and armloads of laundry, being scolded for purchasing the wrong sorts of undershirts, those women to whom the letters from prison are written (*Carissmia mamma, Carissima Tania, Mi carissima Julca, Cara signora*), those women who washed his dishes and put his sons to bed.

This essay — "deformed, unfinish'd, sent before [its] time into this breathing world, scarce half made up" — has long been valued for its granular dissection not only of how the interplay among class, religion, regional, and social differences maintained capitalism's power, but also for offering a sketch of how revolutionary alliances might be formed to contest capitalist hegemony. As Douglas Baynton reminds us, "Disability is everywhere in history, once you begin looking for it. . ." and so we should hardly be surprised that when we look for disability in "The Southern Question," it is there, hiding, like the purloined letter in Poe's eponymous story, in plain sight.

Gramsci, of course, hardly coined the phrase "the Southern question" — the gap between the North and the South had long bedeviled Italy. Italy's North was the land of Dante and Petrarch, the Renaissance, of Titian and Leonardo and Michelangelo, while the South was the land of *dolce far niente*, sweet idleness, of strange religiosity, of pre-modern culture, of endemic illnesses that occasionally flared into wild epidemics, of brigandage, of savagery, of idolatry, and of idiocy. The South was said to begin at Naples, or perhaps at Rome, and to include the islands of Sicily and Sardinia — or

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not. (It is quite in keeping with the nature of the South that the very act of defining its borders should prove impossible.) Sixteenth century Jesuits, assigned to carry their works into the south of Italy, thought of it as laboring into one of the heathen lands, and said they were being sent to *India italiana.* No less a thinker than Walter Benjamin, writing with Asja Lacis about a trip to Naples, took note of a lackadaisical mendicant, too unindustrious to even comport himself like a proper beggar, lying "in the road propped against the sidewalk, waving his empty hat like a leave-taker at a station" and wrote of a visit to the hospital of San Gennaro dei Poveri, where "cripples display their deformities, and the shock given to daydreaming passers-by is their joy...." This was the Naples that was famous for its inhabitants who were thought of as troglodytes, its fetid smells and filthy water which allowed cholera—dubbed "Asiatic," since, like all diseases, it must have come from somewhere else—to spread, a disgusting disease, and a fatal one, although its deathbed scenes could have been painted not by a Victorian sentimentalist but by a Goya. The South was also the land of brigandage, a formless rebellion that appeared in the wake of Italian unification, and, like the South itself, was almost impossible to define — one contemporary official described it thus: "The crime of brigandage...is a continuous crime which has an indeterminate character which includes all those crimes and felonies committed by those who go about ravaging the countryside for this purpose in numbers of three or more." It could not be talked about without resorting to metaphors, many of them suggesting sickness: it was "an infestation, a delirium, a cancer, a sore, a plague." And when all of those images, of debility, disease, ignorance, degredation, contagion, mongrelization, idleness, disability had been invoked, there was one final word that summed it all up: the fearsome trisyllable: "Africa."

When Gramsci was in prison, every page he wrote was reviewed by the prison censor and in order to avoid having his words blacked out, he made use of substitutions and circumlocutions throughout his notebooks: thus, Marx became "the founder of the philosophy of praxis," Lenin was referred to as "Ilich," communism became "the philosophy of praxis."

> Criminal anthropology sought to replace religious notions of crime as caused by sin and evil; it also countered itself to a discourse on crime which approached it from a rights-oriented and legal point of view. In the place of religion and law, Lombroso put science.

Suppose we perform a similar decoding, but instead of replacing the word "Ilyich" with "Lenin," we substitute the body of the man for the body of the nation? Not an abstract body of man, not the body of man drawn by Leonardo, his navel the center of a perfect circle, his fingers and toes touching the circumference, but the specific, granular body of this man. Like Italy, Gramsci had a North and a South, a great intellect and a messy, irrational, barbaric, scorned, body.

The International Congress of Criminal Anthropology of 1885 also linked the body of the Italian nation with the deviant human body. At the end of the published proceedings of that conference a series of maps plot the frequency of various crimes across the Italian nation, the shadings of the maps growing darker— indicating a higher rate of crime — the further south one goes.

A few pages into "The Southern Question," Gramsci turns his attention to criminal anthropology's writing about the south of Italy. It is this passage I want to examine in this essay, one which offers, in "embryonic form" a reading of disability politics, one moreover that offers tantalizing hints about the links between disability and race.

> It is well known what kind of ideology has been disseminated in myriad ways among the masses in the North, by the propagandists of the bourgeoisie: the South is the ball and chain which prevents the social development of Italy from progressing more rapidly; the Southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or total barbarians, by natural destiny; if the South is backward, the fault does not lie with the capitalist system or with any other historical cause, but with Nature, which has made the Southerners lazy, incapable, criminal and barbaric — only tempering this harsh fate with the purely individual explosion of a few great geniuses, like isolated palm-trees in an arid and barren desert. The Socialist Party was to a great extent the vehicle for this bourgeois ideology within the Northern proletariat. The Socialist Party gave its blessing to all the "Southernist" literature of the clique of writers who made up the so-called positive school: the Ferri's, Sergi's, Niceforo's, Orano's and their lesser followers, who in articles, tales, short stories, novels, impressions and memoirs, in a variety of forms, reiterated one single refrain. Once again, "science" was used to crush the wretched and exploited; but this time it was dressed in socialist colours, and claimed to be the science of the proletariat.

The authors of whom Gramsci speaks — Enrico Ferri, Guiseppe Sergi, Alfredo Niceforo, and Paolo Orano — were all of the positivist school of criminal anthropology established by Cesare Lombroso. Criminal anthropology sought to replace religious notions of crime as caused by sin and evil; it also countered itself to a discourse on crime which approached it from a rights-oriented and legal point of view. In the place of religion and law, Lombroso put science.

Lombroso had volunteered as a doctor in the revolutionary forces in Calabria — Italy's southernmost mainland province, the toe of the boot that is the Italian peninsula — during the *risorgimento,* the struggle for Italian unification. There he had been shocked by the population's poverty, malnutrition, and illiteracy. This, along with his exposure to Darwin's ideas about evolution, was a formative intellectual experience for him. In common with many European intellectuals of the 19th century, he espoused a casual mix of evolutionary beliefs and racism, assuming a racial hierarchy "stretching from African blacks at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder to European whites at the top."

While Lombroso and other criminal anthropologists believed that some crime could be explained by social and economic factors, there was much crime that seemed rooted in the irrational. To understand such criminality, they looked to what was inherent in the biology of criminals. Physical malformations were labeled as atavisms — signs of reversion to primitive evolutionary states — and were equated with internal moral and psychological weakness. Lombroso labeled any individual manifesting several atavisms as a "born criminal" (*delinquente nato).* Atavisms and physical differences could be measured; the gathering of such data was clear-cut and scientific. Criminologists such as Lombroso prided themselves on proceeding not from philosophical theories but reasoning inductively, from solid, observable evidence, gathered on the ground. His texts, along with those of his followers, are thick with line drawings and muddy, late-19th century photographs, that show the lantern jaws, downcast eyes, weak-chins, the stigmata of a portwine birthmark splotched across a face, the asymmetric features, the goggle eyes and jug ears that marked the born criminal.

Lombroso is now often regarded as a quaint and amusing figure, an erratic and reactionary pseudoscientist. Much is made of his sloppy methodology, but that rather begs the question: if he had been less slipshod with his charts and tables, more rigorous with his facts, would his work have any more validity? The concept of aberrant physiognomy as destiny formed the core of Nazi racial science, with its need to ferret out the degenerate within society, its cataloguing of the physical signs of the racialized other, its use of anthropomorphic measuring devices in an attempt to determine a subject's racial background. Of course, Lombroso and his followers could not have known the direction in which their work would lead, any more than we can read these texts without awareness of where they *did* lead. It is important to note that Lombroso did not identify himself with the right, but saw himself as a socialist. He believed that his methods could could be applied to the scientific study of social movements, "distinguishing true revolution, always fruitful and useful, from utopia, from rebellion, which is always sterile." "[T]rue revolutionaries," Lombroso wrote, "...the initiators of great scientific and political revolutions... are almost always genuises or saints, and have all a marvelously harmonious physiognomy."

Lombroso documented this assertion with cold, hard statistics. For instance, he studied photographs of 50 Paris communards — those who, he believed, had taken part in an uprising both sterile and utopian — and found that 12 percent were the "criminal type" and 10 percent the "insane type." Karl Marx, on the other hand, had a "very fine physiognomy...with his very full forehead, bushy hair and beard, and soft eyes. . ." While these ideas may seem laughable to us now, they were widely accepted during his era. Indeed, in the same issue of *The Monist* which published Lombroso's "The Physiognomy of the Anarchists," carried a response by Michael Schwab — writing from Joliet Prison — "A Convicted Anarchist's Reply to Professor Lombroso." Schwab did not contest Lombroso's belief that physical appearance could be equated with moral character: ". . . [V]ice, crime, and brutality very often find a characteristic expression of face. . . ." Rather, he argued that one of those Lombroso had noted as having an "unsymmetric face" was that way not because of "the fault of nature, but of an unskilled surgeon." August Spies, whose face Lombroso had condemned as "morbid" with "a senile auricle, voluminous jaw bones and a strongly developed frontal sinus" had, on the contrary, according to Schwab, ". . . a most intelligent appearance; his forehead was well-developed."

Readers from the United States, accustomed to seeing through the prism of our own racial lens, may fail to see how racialized the divisions within Italian society were, with southern Italians, white in the U.S. racial schematic, seen as dark savages and barbarians within Italy. In Lombroso's *Crime: Its Causes and Remedies,* following a chart where the homicide rate is broken down by province, Lombroso writes: "It is...to the African and oriental elements (the Greeks excepted) that Italy owes the frequency of homicide in Calabria, Sicily, and Sardinia..." Sergi's *La Sardegna* devoted itself to examining the physical characteristics of the Sards, their psychology, and their social conditions—all of which were problems. The book is illustrated with photographs showing various Sardinian "types" who are "large-jawed," "narrow-nosed," and have "large and protruding lips." In *Crime in Sardinia* Alfredo Niceforo wrote of criminality as "a vast and acute morbid process, a cancerous erosion that corrupts the moral life of that island." He went on to say that moral traits were inborn, and this "psychological heredity is quite stable and will not disappear...[even] when confronted with other models to imitate or with education; this is the psyche which is transmitted fatally from father to son, with all its accumulation of defects." Earlier, in his *L'Italia barbara contemporanea* (*Contemporary Barbarian Italy*) Niceforo had labeled the people of Sardinia, Sicily, and the southern Italian peninsula as "three peoples who are still primitive, not completely evolved, less civilized and refined than the populations of the North and Center of Italy" and in *Crime in Sardinia* he argued that this was due to Sardinians' clear racial ties with Africa, particularly Somalia and Eritrea.

Southerners weren't just another race; they were, in the eyes of "the clique of writers who made up the so-called positivist school" a disabled race. Disability as metaphor is rife throughout all their writings — Niceforo spoke of the "delinquent zone" around Nuoro as having "atrophied"; Ferri saw revolts in Sicily which were spontaneous and ill-led as "feverish and convulsive excesses"; in *Psicologia della Sardegna* (*Psychology of Sardinia*) Orano wrote of places on the island where "the race grows and teems like rotten, purulent gangrene"; in *La Decadenza delle nazioni Latine* (*The Decline of Latin Nations*) Sergi — the co-founder of the Italian Eugenic Society — said: ". . . I would like to act . . . like the surgeon who amputates a bone affected by necrosis in order to avoid death."

But disability is not just metaphor: according to the positivist school, it is not just that the South of Italy is disabled—"the ball and chain which prevents the social development of Italy," but that the cause of this is the innate disability of Southerners themselves, those whom "Nature . . . has made lazy, incapable, criminal and barbaric." Reading the works of these criminal anthropologists, one finds a dizzying number of examples of the fusion of disability, race, and criminality. A few extracts from a chapter titled "Atavism and Epilepsy in Crime and Punishment," in Lombroso's *Crime, Its Causes and Remedies*: "The born criminal shows in a proportion reaching 33 percent numerous specific characteristics that are almost always atavistic. . . . Many of the characteristics presented by savage races are very often found among born criminals. . . . low cranial capacity; retreating forehead; highly developed frontal sinuses; great frequency of Wormian bones. . . ." After detailing the strange behaviors of "inferior" races — including cannibalism and tattooing — and pointing out their prevalence among criminals, he goes on: "The same phenomena which we observe in the case of born criminals. . . may be studied . . . in epileptics, criminal or not. . . . not one of the atavistic phenomena shown by criminals is lacking in epilepsy." He follows with one of those tables he so loves, listing nearly forty traits (everything from left-handedness to strabismus to prehensile foot to lemurine appendix) which are shared between born criminals and epileptics. "Epilepsy, moreover, is extremely frequent among anarchists, and one might say that it was the basis of action among the bomb-throwing anarchists. In this class of individuals whose minds are in disequilibrium, and inflammable as powder, facile to the discovery of internal social evils, the ideas are easily turned into criminal action."

This science, which based itself in Darwin's thought with its revolutionary implications, and seemed to explain much that seemed irrational and mystifying, must have seemed enlightening to many of those who encountered it. My copy of the English translation of Enrico Ferri's *Socialismo e Scienza Positiva (Socialism and Positive Science) (Darwin-Spencer-Marx)* is a tattered copy from 1909, published by Great Britain's Independent Labour Party, and I sometimes imagine its original owner as a spotty-faced young man with a prominent Adam's apple, who had saved up, tuppence a week for six weeks, in order to pay the shilling this paper edition cost, reading it as he rode the underground from his lodgings in Kentish Town to Southwark's Elephant and Castle, where he boarded an omnibus to take him to the warehouse on Clink Street where he worked as a common laborer. He hadn't learned to read until he was an adult and sometimes still moved his lips, especially when he was engrossed in what he was reading, and when he realized he had been doing so on the tube he'd flush bright red. As he read "Darwinism is not only not in intellectual opposition to socialism, but is its scientific foundation" the world must have seemed elegant in its simplicity, with socialism not just inevitable but its tenets empirically verifiable.

Gramsci's "The Southern Question" hardly offers a fully fleshed-out and well-developed politics of disability. What it does offer is a critique of a strand of thinking within leftist thought that saw those with physical differences as evolutionary throwbacks, and which saw certain ethnic groups as "biologically inferior beings" and a cogent critique of the dangers of such thinking. In his understanding of how science can be used as a force which "crush[es]" the exploited, he prefigured current suspicion of the disinterestedness of science and indeed, of the medical model of disability.

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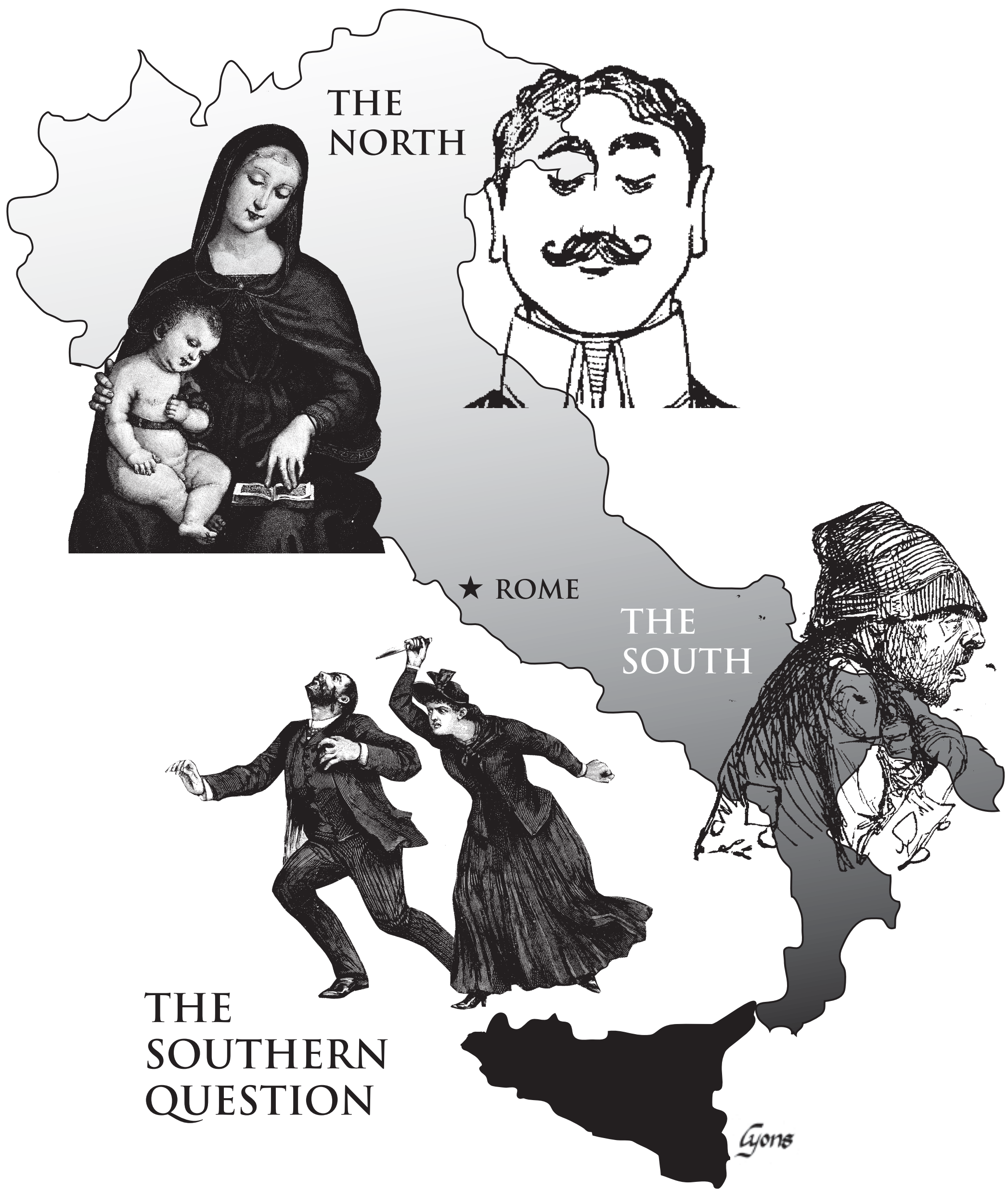

A Legacy of Exploitation

Intellectual Disability, Unpaid Labor, & Disability Services

Jihan Abbas

While employment issues have always been an important aspect of disability policy, a focus on paid and formal employment has meant that the experience of many working-age adults with intellectual disabilities has been overlooked. Many erroneously believe the historic absence of persons with intellectual disabilities in the workplace is evidence that persons with intellectual disabilities cannot or do not work. The changing face of disability supports has at times reinforced this belief through the construction of segregated spaces that house and/or occupy unemployed and working-aged persons with intellectual disabilities. Yet a closer examination of disability services reveals a legacy of invisible labor by persons with intellectual disabilities that challenges notions of idleness and questions the sometimes-exploitive nature of disability services for persons with intellectual disabilities. Although not formally classified as labor, contributions that take place within rehabilitation and training programs offered through many disability service frameworks, illustrate a capacity to work and contribute, as well as the necessity of this labor to the administration of some disability supports and services. What I argue here is that a brief look at the everyday experience of many within rehabilitation and training programs, both inside and outside of the institution's walls, reveals the embedded nature of this labor as a central and necessary function within the delivery of many services and supports for adults with intellectual disabilities. This reality needs to be recognized and addressed in order to achieve more equitable labor relations for persons with intellectual disabilities.

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Behind the Institution Walls

Although deinstitutionalization has largely shifted the delivery of many disability services into the community, historically the institution served as an important site of unpaid labor for persons with intellectual disabilities. Despite the reality that many of those incarcerated within these sites were believed to pose a threat because of their perceived idleness, evidence that has emerged indicates a rhythm of institutional life in which unpaid labor served an important function, both in terms of individual experience and the ability of these institutions to function effectively and efficiently.

By the 1920s most institutions had begun "prevocational" and "vocational" training for kindergarten aged inmates. This training consisted of tools children were encouraged to integrate into their play, and by six years of age "young inmates were learning to how to hammer a nail, punch holes in leather, or wash rags on a miniature washboard." Work assignments were based heavily on sex and ability and work was a central aspect in institutional learning for persons with intellectual disabilities. However, this labor extended beyond the learning environment as patient labor served an important function for the administrators of these sites.

Thomas F. Allan's narrative, as illustrated throughout the book *Deinstitutionalization and People with Intellectual Disabilities* illustrates the importance of unpaid labor in terms of the everyday experiences of patients. Institutionalized before the age of four, Thomas spent 45 years in Rome State School in New York. He would wake every morning at 5:30AM and would then wake the "working boys." The use of "working boys" and "working girls" was common practice within the institution whereby higher functioning inmates would provide unpaid care to inmates with higher needs. In addition to serving as a cost saving measure, this practice enabled institutions to efficiently deal with growing populations. According to Thomas, inmates would assist in feeding other inmates, sometimes being responsible for making sure as many as three to four inmates got enough to eat, and would also help with cleanup after meals and other jobs including bathing inmates, laundry services, cleaning duties, and supervising other inmates. Historians have noted that in the Rome State School, chores like making the beds, mopping, and providing attendant care to other inmates were referred to as "domestic training." In addition to these tasks, agriculture programs, where many inmates labored, provided the produce that fed those within the institution.

This unpaid labor by inmates meant that the line between paid and unpaid work within the institution was often fuzzy as best, with inmates sometimes performing the very same tasks as paid attendants. As James W. Trent's work illustrates, one inmate within an Illinois asylum labored for eight years, only to be hired back as a paid attendant after he left the institution. Another inmate, who had been assigned to the laundry, in fact carried out tasks that were indistinguishable for the non-disabled paid staff; while he lost his arm in 1907 because of a workplace incident, nothing materialized from the subsequent investigation, as lawmakers were aware that this kind of labor kept down institutional costs. As one historian has noted, patient labor had direct impacts on the internal economy of the site as it reduced direct costs associated with paid care and produced outputs needed to maintain daily running of the site. There is also evidence to suggest "good working patients" were transferred between various institutions as they were in fact viewed as valuable resources for site administrators.

Within the framework of this unpaid labor, it seems it was also common practice for site administrators to categorize inmates by perceived ability and IQ and tailor work assignments. For example, at the Rome Asylum, there was even a nursing program for "higher grades" that led to employment for graduates in their own institution and other facilities. More telling is that when Martin Barr published *Mental Defectives* in 1904, he thanked three "boys" for their aid in preparing the book; these "boys," it seems, had taken pictures for the book, provided translation, and typed the entire manuscript.

Businesses that outsource labor to sheltered workshops are able to use these sites to tap into a cheap and captive labor pool that exists beyond labor laws, minimum wage, benefits, or unions.

The often-indistinguishable nature of inmate labor from the labor of paid staff, coupled with the necessity of this labor for the effective and efficient functioning of the institution, speaks to the reality that these labor contributions were seen as more than education and training, even to site administrators, and sheds light on the exploitive nature of inmate labor embedded within early forms of disability services.

Although there were shifts over time with respect to how inmate labor was framed, it seems this labor remained a central function over the life course of the institution. In their brief analysis of the world of work within the institution, Kelley Johnson and Rannveig Traustadottir note that while early on work was necessary and tied to the running of the institution (laundry services, agriculture etc.), later shifts saw the role of work framed as a therapeutic activity to keep inmates occupied. They note that in the final years of institutionalization, the emergence of "workshops," with some even operating outside of the institution, became prevalent as there was the belief that inmates needed to learn an occupation, and that work and home life should be physically separated. These shifts in work assignment and the reframing of this labor speak to evolving policy discourses that sought to justify the unpaid labor of persons with intellectual disabilities so as to present this work as beneficial to the individual rather than a form of unpaid or exploitive work.

Sheltered Workshops: Unpaid Labor Within the Context of Community

While there are important spaces within the community in which persons with intellectual disabilities labor without pay, the sheltered workshop illustrates an important site of this labor and speaks directly to a continuation, within the context of community, of the kinds of exploitive labor that were once central to the functioning of the institution. Even under the guise of inclusion and their physical location within a community setting, sheltered workshops continue to serve as an important reminder of the unpaid, and largely unrecognized, contributions of persons with intellectual disabilities. This labor also reminds us of the ways in which some disability services still rely on the labor and marginal status of persons with intellectual disabilities in order to function efficiently and effectively.

An apparent holdout from the "therapeutic" work activities that were once based within the institution, sheltered workshops continue to ensure that many persons with intellectual disabilities labor within the "community" for little to no pay. In these segregated and non-competitive work sites participants earn significantly less than stipulated minimum wages; their pay is often classified as a "gratuity"; and workers are likely to be classified as beneficiaries, trainees, or clients rather than employees. Justified through arguments around social integration, occupational integration, and rehabilitation, these work sites exist to support and prepare individuals to enter or re-enter the labor force. Sheltered workshops "service" individuals who have been deemed unemployable, with persons with intellectual disabilities remaining heavily represented in sheltered workshops and other segregated employment programs. Within these workshops there is a clear emphasis on tedious and labor-intensive tasks that would be tied to low-wage and low-status positions within the competitive labor process (i.e. collating material, sorting, repetitive and monotonous tasks like stuffing envelopes etc.).

Despite the continued justifications for these sites by those agencies that provide these kinds of "services," a recent report by the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) outlines the many ways these sites continue to fail persons with intellectual disabilities. Included in their critique of sheltered workshops are the following realities: this labor contradicts existing disability policy, including protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); these sites reinforce the segregation of persons with intellectual disabilities in much the same way institutions once did; even while their employers experience the benefits of this labor, participants receive below the minimum wage, which reinforces poverty and excludes workers from the kinds of benefits and protections non-disabled workers receive; because sheltered workshops reinforce skills that are not transferable, this "training" does not lead to better or more equitable job opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities. Furthermore, because of sub-standard wages, sizable subsidies, and their placement outside of the mainstream labor market, agencies that operate sheltered workshops have not been forced to evolve, innovate, or adapt as other businesses have. These realities have meant that rather than help prepare persons with intellectual disabilities for greater and more equitable employment opportunities, many persons with intellectual disabilities instead remain segregated within a framework of service delivery where their labor is continually exploited.

Despite evidence that these sites are not in the best interest of persons with intellectual disabilities, the value of these sites, as a part of the "disability business" is clear. The practice of sheltered workshops enables some of these programs to operate both as a human service agency and as a business. With respect to their business function, sheltered workshops generate their revenue through sales and provide wages to their supervisory (and non-disabled) staff. Thus, the "business" side of sheltered workshops does at times outweigh the employment interests of the clientele, and much in the same way productive inmates were seen as valuable assets to the institution, managers of sheltered workshops often retain workers who are productive rather than helping to facilitate regular employment for these individuals. Indeed, according to Mark Hyde, managers of sheltered workshops are often "reluctant to lose their 'best' workers." This conflict appears since it is integral to their survival that a sheltered workshop gains contracts and raises capital. This reality creates a clear conflict between what is in the best interest of persons with intellectual disabilities who receive disability services through these sites and what is necessary for the successful administration of a site, which relies heavily on securing and successfully delivering business contracts to clients who operate within the competitive labor market.

While these contracts are often framed as a form of corporate goodwill (i.e., private businesses providing meaningful tasks to persons with intellectual disabilities through their "support" of programs for persons with intellectual disabilities), these contractors take advantage of the cheap labor pools provided by sheltered workshops, and thus exploit the social and economic vulnerability of those with intellectual disabilities. In one comparison between sheltered work and open employment, the researchers noted that workshops have evolved to "essentially [provide] a cheap and captive pool of on-call [labor] that enables other businesses to survive and even prosper at the expense of employees with disabilities." While individuals within sheltered workshops may not themselves be counted as part of the competitive labor process, their labor and the goods and services they produce do contribute to the mainstream labor process in very tangible ways. Contractors who use these sites avoid having these tasks carried out in-house by employees who would receive the minimum wage and other related benefits of formal employment. Therefore, sheltered workshops have created a kind of parallel and unrecognized labor process where workers with intellectual disabilities remain the only party involved in the labor process not receiving tangible or equitable benefits from their labor. Disability agencies that operate sheltered workshops are able to subsidize operating and staffing costs through contracts while at the same time promoting a "training" component for their "clients." Businesses that outsource labor to sheltered workshops are able to use these sites to tap into a cheap and captive labor pool that exists beyond labor laws, minimum wage, benefits, or unions. At the same time, these businesses are able to reinforce a positive public perception by maintaining that outsourcing labor to sheltered workshops is evidence that they support employment initiatives for persons with intellectual disabilities.

Towards Real Work and Real Opportunities for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION and the move towards community inclusion have not led to the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities in mainstream employment opportunities. Scanning the history of disability services for persons with intellectual disabilities illustrates that persons with intellectual disabilities have historically made significant contributions through their labor, even though this labor has remained largely invisible within the framework of disability services. Yet, while these bodies may not be counted among the competitive labor processes, it is clear that this labor has often been an integral part of disability services.

Much of the research and advocacy that is critical of sheltered employment, and other therapeutic and rehabilitative programs that deny workers with intellectual disabilities from receiving at least the minimum wage, does provide alternatives to these kinds of exploitive arrangements. For example, many have advocated for supportive employment, which by definition provides individualized support in order to gain and maintain paid, socially integrated, and competitive employment. Supportive employment offers individuals with intellectual disabilities more equitable and inclusive employment opportunities, which research has overwhelmingly illustrated is the clear choice for persons with intellectual disabilities. In one study of the job satisfaction for persons with disabilities in supported employment, done with individuals who had been involved in both sheltered and supported employment, findings indicated that of those previously placed in workshops, 92.8 percent stated they preferred their supported positions to workshops. In yet another study to examine perceived differences in quality of life between individuals with disabilities in workshops and individuals with disabilities in supported employment, it was generally found that there was a positive relationship between supported employment and perceived quality of life as individuals in supported employment scored higher in areas such as self-esteem, number of leisure activities undertaken, use of leisure time, mobility, and job skill perceptions. Not only are individuals more positive about their experiences within supported employment, but research indicates supported employment is a more effective tool in job preparation than sheltered employment, evidenced by results that indicate individuals assigned to supported employment do significantly better in competitive employment than those from sheltered workshops.

Outside of questions around the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities to be protected from exploitive labor practices, these facts call into question the relevance of sheltered workshops with respect to their usefulness in training or rehabilitation. Given the evidence that supported employment is more equitable and beneficial to persons with intellectual disabilities, it is clear that there are alternatives to sheltered work which are more in line with the kinds of inclusive policies disability services should, in theory, actively promote. The task at hand is for individuals and advocates to insist that the primary goal of disability services is to serve the needs of persons with disabilities rather than the needs of outside contractors or program administrators. Indeed, it is unacceptable that disability services exist in which nondisabled parties are profiting at the expense of persons with intellectual disabilities.

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Expendable Necessities?

Cutting Essential Care for People with Disabilities in Minnesota

Rachel Garaghty

On October 26, 2011, legislation that would lower the wages of caregivers who provide personal assistance services to their disabled family members was ruled unconstitutional by a Minnesota judge. The decision was made on the grounds that it disproportionately affected women and people of color, who comprise a majority of paid caregivers, and that it arbitrarily creates two classes of workers who perform identical duties.[1] This legislation, part of a large health and human services omnibus bill riddled with cuts to many programs, was an attempt to reduce Minnesota's $5 billion deficit without raising taxes. It would have reduced the wages of family caregivers by 20 percent, saving the state approximately $24 million over three years, but lowering the earnings of many caregivers significantly. This proposed legislation represents a growing assault on personal assistance services in Minnesota and across the United States as state governments scramble to cut spending at the expense of their most vulnerable citizens.

Personal assistance services (also called "direct support") enable people with disabilities to receive assistance from paid caregivers to complete activities of daily living (ADLs), which they would be unable to do themselves. ADLs are grouped into six categories of functions that are essential to a person's health and wellbeing: personal hygiene (bathing, grooming, brushing teeth, etc.), dressing, feeding, toileting, transfers (on and off bed, to and from chairs, etc.), and mobility. Other recognized ADLs include behavioral support; supervision in performing routine activities; managing bills, appointments, or other activities; and a variety of other supports that enable a person with disabilities to complete basic functions of daily life. Without personal assistance services, people with disabilities would be forced to live in restrictive institutional settings such as nursing homes, to rely on help from unpaid family members or friends, or to lose the ability to care for themselves entirely.

Yet, in spite of the benefits of personal assistance services, they have come under increasing scrutiny in Minnesota. Fueled by a handful of stories about fraud and mismanagement, the public's suspicion has been aroused over a service that enables over 25,000[2] Minnesotans with disabilities to live independently. Elected leaders of all political stripes have also jumped on the bandwagon, proposing increased amounts of regulation, restrictions, and cuts to personal assistance programs. Some changes, such as greater oversight and more training for personal care assistants (also called direct support professionals, or DSPs), are appropriately designed to protect both DSPs and people with disabilities. Others, such as the proposed wage cut, represent attempts to shift the burden of care from the state to individuals with disabilities and the people who care for them.

Personal Assistance Services: A History

The ability to choose when, how, and

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by whom a disabled person receives care is a central tenant of independent living and one that was fought hard for. Historically, people with disabilities have been separated from their homes, families, and communities and placed in institutions where they were cared for en masse by limited staff. Overcrowding and inhuman treatment in these institutions was graphically exposed in the 1970s Willowbrook Hospital investigation, where reporters found people with disabilities living lives of extreme deprivation and abuse. In Minnesota, the legacy of institutionalization is also grim as state hospitals operated well into the 1980s. Evidence of their disregard for basic human dignity still exists in the thousands of unmarked graves of people with disabilities who died while institutionalized.[3] A Minnesota disabled persons' organization, Advocating Change Together (ACT), has led a powerful campaign to restore these institutions' graveyards by identifying the names, birth and death dates, and families of those anonymously laid to rest. In 2010, after much lobbying from ACT, the State of Minnesota finally issued a formal apology to Minnesotans with disabilities who lived, and died, detained in institutions.

> Of the nearly two million direct support professionals in the United States, approximately 40 percent of them receive public assistance because their wages fall below poverty levels, even when they work full-time.

The U.S. Disability Rights Movement sought to end the practice of long-term institutionalization and instead transition to full-fledged independent living. Disability rights activists such as Wade Blank, Judy Heumann, and Ed Roberts led Americans with disabilities in a nationwide fight to receive direct support services on an individual basis in their own communities. Direct support enabled people with disabilities to live and participate in their communities, to seek education and employment, and to live with dignity. Moreover, direct support was a more cost-effective way to ensure that people with disabilities received necessary services and experienced a decent quality of life. Money poured into institutions was expended to feed, clothe, and house hundreds of individuals under the same roof and to pay high administrative costs, yet the level of care people received was shamefully low and neglect was rampant. Direct support services cut administrative overhead by enabling people with disabilities to manage their own care. The ability to choose caregivers was also an important victory for personal rights and dignity: people with disabilities could finally choose caregivers whom they trusted, especially with highly personal care such as bathing and toileting, and who were appropriately qualified to meet their unique needs.

Community-based care in group homes provided an alternative to independent living. Today, group homes located in residential communities — often no different in appearance from the single-family homes around them — enable people with significant disabilities to live and receive care without being institutionalized. Group homes with qualified staff and a commitment to enabling people with disabilities to live lives of dignity have a track record of success. However, verified cases of abuse and neglect comparable to that of bygone institutions have recently come to light. In New York State, widespread abuse of people with disabilities living in group homes, including sexual assault, physical beatings, and psychological torment, was exposed in 2011.[4] Acts of abuse were committed by staff who often received no more than a reprimand or were simply transferred to a different group home. In New York and other states where group home abuse has been uncovered, there are a few common denominators: the homes have little oversight and accountability, staff are often unskilled and poorly paid, and people with disabilities are rendered voiceless for lack of advocacy and reliable reporting mechanisms. People with developmental disabilities and mental illnesses have been among the most victimized in cases of group home abuse, yet, they are also among the least eligible to receive direct support services that would enable them to live independently.

Present Day Inequalities

In Minnesota, direct support professionals are the paid employees of over 700 personal assistance provider agencies. These agencies are reimbursed by the state through Medical Assistance (MA), Minnesota's largest publicly funded health care program. MA is Minnesota's Medicaid program and receives both state and federal funding. The reimbursement rate, which is the amount that provider agencies are funded to pay DSPs, determines wage levels. When agencies seek to raise the wages of DSPs above the reimbursement rate, they absorb those costs themselves. Wages for DSPs rarely exceed $11 or $12 per hour and, as result of overall cuts to the personal assistance program in Minnesota since 2009, their average real median wage is $8.98 per hour.[5] For DSPs who provide daily and complex supports to people with disabilities, low wages force skilled workers out of their jobs and increase financial hardships on the ones who stay. DSPs may have to take multiple jobs outside of the direct support field or work with multiple people with disabilities to make ends meet. However, as a result of legislation passed in 2010, Minnesota's DSPs cannot work more than 275 hours per month regardless of how many people with disabilities they work with, which effectively limits their earning capacity. This limitation on hours has been particularly burdensome for family members who work as DSPs; often, they forgo other full-time employment to provide round-the-clock support for their disabled parents, adult children, or siblings, and only earn wages for roughly nine hours per day.

One of the effects of low earnings is a high turnover rate: nationally, the turnover rate for DSPs ranges from 15 percent to 39 percent.[6] High turnover rates result in higher administrative costs for provider agencies and also put people with disabilities at risk when they have to replace DSPs. In Minnesota, legislation that increased administrative procedures for hiring new DSPs in 2009 increased the time it takes to start working to a month or more. This long wait discourages potential DSPs from entering the profession and also puts people with disabilities in a precarious position of losing their daily, necessary supports as they wait for a new DSP to begin work. The demand for DSPs remains the same and is projected to increase in the near future while demand in other sectors of employment has decreased due to the present economic crisis.[7] However, lower wages, limited hours, and outright red tape is nonetheless creating a shortage of direct care professionals in Minnesota.

These barriers also reinforce broader, nationwide inequalities. Many direct support professionals are women, people of color, and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including immigrants, refugees, and naturalized citizens. Many are also the female head of single-parent households. Of the nearly two million direct support professionals in the United States, approximately 40 percent of them receive public assistance because their wages fall below poverty levels, even when they work full-time.[8] Nationally, fewer than half of DSPs have access to employer-provided health insurance.[9] Moreover, federal law has labeled these workers in an ambiguous category of "companion caregivers" for over thirty years, which prevented them from receiving overtime pay and minimum wage protections.[10] While some states, including Minnesota, have laws that extend overtime coverage and minimum wage protection to DSPs, limited reimbursement rates and restrictions on the amount of hours a DSP can work per month effectively prevent them from earning an adequate income. The combination of poor wages and lack of employment-related protections exacerbate longstanding inequalities for women, people of color, and ethnic minorities in the workforce. In spite of the fact that DSPs provide crucial support for people with disabilities, work long hours, and often perform difficult and complex tasks, they are among the most marginalized workers in America.

Minnesota's cuts to the personal assistance program also reveal another trend in the inequalities of caregiving: the increasing burden placed on families who already subsidize the state with unpaid labor caring for their disabled members. Family caregivers keep people with disabilities out of group and nursing homes, thereby absorbing costs that would otherwise go into their care. A growing body of literature on caregiving shows that families, and most often women, forgo other economic opportunities to stay home and care for disabled or aging family members. These caregivers often give up paid employment working outside the home — or limit their employment prospects — by providing full-time care for their disabled family members. In many cases, family caregivers have little choice when they make this decision. People with disabilities who lose the direct support of their families may be forced to live in nursing homes, group homes, or lose their care altogether. The fact that the personal assistance program allows family members to be employed as direct support professionals essentially reimburses them for the labor subsidies that they already provide to the state, though their wages rarely account for all of the hours actually spent providing care.

Effects on People with Disabilities

CUTS TO THE PERSONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM have left some disabled Minnesotans without adequate care. Recent eligibility restrictions for personal assistance services affected Minnesotans with severe mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, and chronic medical conditions. These Minnesotans are experiencing cuts in the amount of care they receive from DSPs and some are losing that care entirely. Legislation passed in 2009 and implemented July 2011 caused over 3,000 children and adults with chronic health and behavioral needs to lose almost all of their personal assistance.[11] Now, these individuals can only receive a maximum of 30 minutes of direct support per day, regardless of the amount of support they received before the changes took effect. What this restriction means is that people with health and behavioral needs are now more vulnerable to worsening of their conditions, diminishing quality of life, and at greater risk for emergency interventions such as hospitalization. It will also become more difficult for these individuals to find DSPs, who may not consider it economically feasible to spend time and money traveling to a worksite where they are paid minimum wage for only 30 minutes of labor.

In spite of these eligibility cuts for the personal assistance program, it is unlikely that Minnesotans who had their support reduced will be able find care in other settings to account for their loss. Rather, these individuals are simply disappearing from the public's awareness. For many Minnesotans who lost direct support, their DSPs were their primary link to the health system and public participation. Without this link, provider agencies and state officials have virtually no connection to these disabled Minnesotans. Some may return to the homes of family members, placing an unexpected burden of care on them, while others who lack family connections may find themselves alone, uncared for, and even facing homelessness. While a multitude of factors went into Minnesota policymakers' decision to cut direct support services for people with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, and chronic health conditions, stigmatization of these groups undoubtedly played a role. The public's opinion of people with less visible disabilities, especially mental illnesses, remains skeptical and policymakers have shown little sympathy for disabled individuals who appear "normal." Yet, invisible disabilities such as mental illnesses, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual impairments, and learning disabilities account for the largest (and growing) disability category in Minnesota and nationally.[12]

Moreover, 50 percent of Minnesotans who experienced severe cuts to their direct support eligibility are people of color.[13] People of color who are disabled experience "double jeopardy" — discrimination based on both race and disability — and have higher poverty levels among Americans with disabilities. The issues of race, disability, and discrimination came to a head in the lawsuit against Minnesota's proposed 20 percent wage cut for family caregivers. A group of direct support professionals, provider agencies, and people with disabilities, the majority of whom were people of color, brought this lawsuit against Minnesota's governor and the director of the Department of Human Services. These groups, which are already highly marginalized, faced even greater hardship from the 20 percent wage cut. For some of the claimants, the link between family caregiving and racial identity was particularly strong: a high level of cultural competency, including fluency in a language other than English, was necessary for the care of disabled Minnesotans who were Native American, Hmong, and other ethnicities, which family members were well-equipped to provide. The loss of income for these family direct support providers meant deepening financial hardship for themselves, but also the loss of quality care for their disabled family members.

Conclusion

At worst, cuts and restrictions to the personal assistance program directly endanger the lives of people with disabilities. As some Minnesotans with complex physical and mental health needs are "cut off," the risks to their personal safety and well-being will increase. These changes also exacerbate inequalities for direct support professionals, and place undue burden on families of people with disabilities who already experience economic and personal hardship. Since Minnesota's personal assistance program is financed at both state and federal levels, these cuts are expected to result in the loss of $46 million in federal funding in order to save roughly $24 million in state funding.[14]

Historically, Minnesota's policies for people with disabilities have received broad bi-partisan support and been among the most progressive in the U.S. Yet, legislative changes and cuts over the past three years have reversed important victories and crippled effective programs. Minnesotans with disabilities are finding themselves increasingly in crisis, with little to fall back on when they lose essential services.

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Introduction

Dan La Botz

Labor unions have traditionally claimed to speak for the American working class. Occupy claims to speak for the 99%, for the working class and then some. The claim by both the unions and Occupy to speak for working people simultaneously lays the basis for cooperation and sets the stage for conflict. The two forces could not be more different. The labor unions are powerful institutions highly integrated into the economy, involved in relationships with private employers and government, constrained by the law and the courts, and linked to political parties and the state. Occupy is a social movement fighting the economic system, rejecting involvement in politics, challenging the law, and repudiating the systems economic and social inequalities. The intersection of the two, the historic organization of the workers' movement, its institutions and its leaders, so weighed down by commitments to the status quo, and the radical new movement so disdainful of the established order, and so alive with the sense that confrontation and even conflict can create change, poses the question: Can Occupy help to inspire in the labor unions the desire to fight for a different kind of economy, society and polity?

Since the very beginning in September, 2011, union activists have been involved in the Occupy movement. The relationship between Occupy and the unions has been a complicated and sometimes conflicted affair as the new movement has challenged the unions that claimed to represent the working class. While the unions came out to defend Occupy Wall Street, and while Occupy has mobilized in support of unions in Chicago, the relationship between Occupy and the unions has been more conflictive on the West Coast. Occupy Oakland's two port shutdowns in November and December of 2011, and its intervention in the ILWU contract struggle with EGT Corporation in Longview, Washington, led not only to strong difference of opinion, but to a physical attack on Occupiers and rank-and-file ILWU members by some ILWU union leaders.

As some Occupy Oakland activists have argued, Occupy speaks for the 99% while the unions have for years spoken only for the 11 percent of organized workers. Occupy's challenge to the labor union leadership happens to coincide with the beginning of the election season, as the unions attempt to mobilize their members to work for the Democrats. As we write (in mid-April 2012), throughout the country there is a struggle between Occupy's attempt to regroup and mobilize its members in direct actions against the 1% and the labor union officials and the Democratic Party's desire to channel all the energy they can into the Barack Obama campaign.

We offer here a survey of the relations between Occupy and the labor unions in three major cities: New York, Chicago, and Oakland. Amy Muldoon, an Occupier and Communications Workers of America member, writes a personal essay discussing the impact of Occupy on her union and its members in New York. Susan Dirr, a Chicago Occupy activist, discusses the complicated relations between Occupy and the unions in the nation's "Second City." Bill Balderston, a teacher, Oakland Education Association member and Occupy activist, examines the relations between Occupy and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and Bay Aarea unions. All three articles raise the questions: what does Occupy mean for the unions? and how will the unions and their members respond to Occupy?

Occupy Oakland and the Labor Movement

Bill Balderston

The relationship between the Occupy movement and segments of organized labor, in their varied institutional and ideological forms, has been a source of much speculation on the left. While there have been strong linkages created in other cities such as New York, many see this interaction as most focused in the East Bay (Oakland, Berkeley) of California. This article is a personal account of the growing dialogue between the labor movement and the Occupy organizing as seen by someone heavily involved in attempting to build these linkages. The dance of these partners is not without tension and contradiction, but while considering the criticisms of those both supportive and hostile to both labor and Occupy, I believe it has great potential.

This article is divided into three segments reflecting this interaction. The first deals with the events of the "general strike" of November 2nd, 2011, in Oakland and the related shutdown of the Port of Oakland on December 12. The second focuses on the campaign in support of the longshore workers in Longview, Washington. The third reflects on other efforts by Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity Committee following these more spectacular actions, and leads to some conclusions about the lessons learned from these experiences.

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Part I. The Oakland Port Shutdowns

The beginning of the trajectory between both labor and Occupy in the East Bay goes back at least to the response to the heavy-handed action by hundreds of police on the night of October 24, removing the Occupy Oakland (OO) encampment participants. That was followed by a massive police assault the following evening, involving tear gas and flash grenades. The Alameda Central Labor Council (CLC) leaders mobilized quickly in protest and followed this shortly with a statement condemning the police action and the local Oakland political leadership, who were relegated to "being on the wrong side of history."

All this began to provoke much more discussion within the ranks of unions about the clout of Occupy and was immediately followed up on the 26th with a motion brought to the OO General Assembly (GA) for a "general strike" on November 2. This call, initiated by labor activists, was voted on by a gathering of over a thousand participants and ratified by a 95 percent approval. It reverberated immediately within labor circles and a number of key unions came out in support, including SEIU 1021, California Nurses Association (CNA) and my own union, the Oakland Education Association (OEA), which planned a satellite rally and march to protest education cuts and school closures. But the key to this mobilization was the involvement of ILWU Local 10, representing the dockworkers at the Port (the largest employer in Oakland). The day involved mass actions varying from major bank protests to a march targeting the notoriously anti-union Whole Foods outlet. The culmination was a set of marches involving 30,000 activists, including countless union members (over 400 from the OEA) who helped shut down the Port.

The euphoria over this action continued to ripple within many unions, despite the problems created that night by a confrontation between police and hard line militants (especially those advocating the "black block" tactics). Within two days there was a gathering of labor and Occupy representatives who planned a mobilization and a march for November 19th.

This event involved more bank actions and a protest gathering at one of the schools scheduled for closure; it was planned jointly by people from OO and key unions. As part of the initial rally, several labor leaders spoke, including Betty Olson-Jones, president of the OEA, and Dan Coffman, head of ILWU Local 21 of Longview, Washington. Coffman spoke of the dire circumstances the grain dockworkers are facing in Longview and of the fact that any militant action here and along the coast would boost their struggle.

Coincidentally, the day before the OO General Assembly had discussed and supported a proposal from Occupy Los Angeles in solidarity with an action called to defend the largely non-union immigrant, low wage, port truck drivers who had been victimized with threats of denial of work. Thus, the direction was set and a variety of ILWU and other union activists rallied around the call to shut down ports along the entire coast. This was problematic for ILWU leaders and some activists, since the union was facing major legal constraints, including injunctions and massive fines resulting from earlier actions in support of the workers at Longview.

While initial efforts were not attuned to all the realities, often blaming obstacles simply on the "bureaucracy" as undemocratic, rather than reflecting on Occupy Oakland's limited ability to involve more rank-and-file activists, the OO Labor Solidarity Committee did undertake to work with ILWU members, spending much time at the Port leafleting and discussing. Equally important, OO activists with the help of Teamsters, reached out to the non-union truckers. These two issues became the center of unity, along with protesting the repression facing the Occupy movement, for the December 12th call.

There were a variety of forums for workers to discuss this action, including the large

> The Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity Committee has insisted on its independence vis-à-vis the Democratic Party, but has been less consistent in its relations to the labor bureaucracy.

December 2 mobilization in San Francisco in opposition to Federal cuts in social programs and corporate rip-offs of taxpayers. . More important was the discussion at the Alameda Central Labor Council the next Monday, where delegates, including those from the OEA who had endorsed the action, debated for over an hour the key political issues around the relationship of labor and Occupy as reflected in this mass action. Finally, Richard Mead brought a motion, to table the proposal from the CLC exec board for "no endorsement" of the Port shutdown. In his remarks, Mead stated that any blow against EGT (owner of the new Longview terminal) and their corporate allies was an act in support of the ILWU. Further, he bluntly stated that the ILWU was in a fight for its very existence. His proposal passed by a 3 to 1 ratio, despite the opposition of the CLC leadership (including an ILWU trustee).

The following week solidified the preparations for the Port Shutdown action, despite massive fear mongering in the local media and doubts by many within the labor left and progressive Bay Area community. While the November "General Strike" had not pushed many activists out of their comfort zone, this action did. Union militants had to decide whether this would strengthen the upsurge represented by Occupy or not. Those distant from the organizing missed the practical dynamism that was growing and failed to see the political maturity that was developing. Those who simply wanted to make the labor bureaucracy the principal issue or who wanted slogans around a "permanent general strike" became marginalized. At the same time the strategic discussions around the importance of a labor bastion like the ILWU and the victimization of immigrant truck drivers came front and center, as did the question of ports as critical chokeholds in the capitalist system.

The clear success of the day's action, with over 1,500 people shutting the docks in the early morning and over 5,000 converging to reinforce the Port shutdown in the afternoon, was not only based on good organizing but also supported by thousands of young activists with this Occupy-labor alliance. It was a combination of effective organizing and the fear of deepening this insurgency which stayed the hand of the state's repression. And the coordination of the Occupy groupings along the coast, from Portland to LA, Hilo to Seattle, Bellingham to Longview attests to the efforts to spread exponentially this militancy around working class issues.

There is no question that some criticisms of Occupy were accurate, especially those concerning poor communication with labor and misunderstanding union democracy where a majority of union members vote to support particular proposals, but the growing sense of worker solidarity within Occupy and beyond was the great gain for the Shutdown.

Part II. The Battle of Longview

The actions of November and especially December led to a more concerted focus on solidarity by Occupy Oakland with the longshore workers in Longview. This labor battle involved questions around jobs, pensions and automation, as well as the massive expansion of commerce in agricultural goods. The Portland-based transnational grain exporter EGT is a creation of a trio of multinational corporations: the St. Louis-based Bunge North America, the Japanese firm Itochu, and the Korean shipper Pan Ocean STX. These corporations joined together to link up shipping ports in such diverse locations as Vietnam and the Ukraine, primarily to ship grain to China and the East Asian market.

The operation of the $200 million Longview terminal was initially posed in the context of a struggle in which the ILWU — whose strength is especially tied to its longshore worker base and whose members have worked the grain trade in the Northwest for eight decades — was confronting further automation, a concern that the union has battled over since the 1950s. EGT wished to impose new work rules, especially around the length of shifts (12 hours long) which ran counter to ILWU past practices and would have eliminated some jobs. Clearly, the immediate question was not around short-term profit rates, since savings to EGT amount to barely over a million dollars — mere chump change. The economic impact for ILWU members was more serious, since the grain work accounts for 20 percent of the financing of its pension and welfare funds, which are already seriously underfunded).

Yet, the real issues were around strategic and class questions. The ILWU has demonstrated historically its power to take concerted action around economic issues, community issues, and around issues of international solidarity. The ILWU has engaged in strikes or job actions around causes ranging from South Africa and

Palestine, to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to the case of Mumia abu Jamal and issues of police brutality, as well as the action that ILWU members took during the Port of Oakland shutdowns. The position of the union at critical chokeholds in international trade gives them leverage. When negotiations broke off, EGT and its corporate sponsors and allies saw a golden opportunity to deal a blow to what is regarded by many activists on the West Coast as the bellwether of union militancy. This was an attack at the overall coastwide ILWU pattern agreements, not the grain contract with EGT in one part.

Over one thousand Local 21 (in Longview) and other ILWU members and supporters in the Pacific Northwest responded with a dynamic campaign, dating back to July when a number of grain-loaded trains were blocked and later in September when hundreds of union activists gathered to dump large amounts of grain, and de facto shut down virtually all the ports in the region in an effort to bring EGT back to negotiations. EGT countered by going to court and succeeded in having over $300,000 in fines levied on Local 21, with other charges targeting the union leadership. At the same time, EGT attempted to break the ILWU's hold on the West Coast grain terminals by signing an agreement with Operating Engineers Local 701 to represent the port's workers. All the regional labor bodies condemned the Operating Engineers for becoming involved in the ILWU's jurisdiction.

Into this difficult situation came the forces of the Occupy Movement, especially the Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity Committee. While there had already been a Defend the ILWU Committee established in the Bay Area, largely through the efforts of several senior Local 10 members, to build support for the Longview campaign, including sending people to the port when the first ships arrive at the new terminal, it was the infusion of energy from Occupy Oakland which altered the whole dynamic. The December 12 mobilization described earlier was truly the turning point in the organizing campaign, demonstrating not only the ability for coordinated Occupy action, but gaining a response from ILWU members (not only Locals 21 and 10, but in Portland, Seattle and elsewhere), despite a statement from ILWU President Bob McEllrath, distancing the union from the December 12 actions, and identifying Occupy Oakland as a "third party," an unwanted interloper.

The linkage between Local 21 and the Occupy movement, as well as the Defend the ILWU committee, continued to be very strong. The joint campaign was supported by a number of unions and labor councils in the Bay Area that began to mobilize to greet the grain ship scheduled to arrive in Longview. There was also further co-ordination amongst Occupy groups along the coast, including the one in Longview, and even with Occupy groups in the Midwest, where protests occurred at the Bunge offices in St. Louis. As this organizing was taking place, new tensions surfaced when some ILWU local union leaders and thugs broke up a meeting on January 6 involving Occupy activists and Local 10 members, who were speaking in Seattle.

A new element in the battle was the growing involvement of the Federal Government, not only threatening Local 21 members with the revocation of their Transport Worker Identification cards issued under Homeland Security, but in mid-January announcing that Coast Guard vessels would accompany the scab grain ship going to Longview. This was the first time the federal military was used against organized labor in the United States since military air traffic controllers were called out during the crushing of PATCO in 1981.

Shortly afterwards, the Coast Guard did escort a vessel seemingly destined for Longview just as news broke that negotiations had resumed between EGT and the ILWU on January 23. Initially only legal matters were discussed, and shortly after, the Local 21 picket lines came down. Then, the ILWU was again recognized as the bargaining agent in Longview and workers began unloading a ship there on February 7, and finally, on Thursday, February 9, members of Local 21 voted to ratify the contract, despite their having had little or no input into the negotiations.

What became evident was that the organizing efforts of ILWU Local 21 and of Occupy led to some resolution of this struggle. The fact that Governor Gregoire of Washington expressed major concern over the proposed Occupy mobilization, led Clarence Thomas, long-time militant in Local 10 from Oakland, to state, "When the Governor intervened a year ago, nothing was settled. It wasn't until the rank and file and Occupy planned a mass convergence to blockade the ship that EGT suddenly had the impetus to negotiate. ... Labor can no longer win victories against the employers without the community."

Part III. More Recent Labor Organizing for Occupy Oakland

While the post-Longview period has not been as dramatic for Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity, the group is still actively functioning. It took several weeks to evaluate what impact we had had and to refocus energy that had been nearly exclusively aimed at preparing for people to descend on Longview. During those activities, other connections had been made. One was the connection with the port truckers, who employers claimed were independent contractors and therefore not workers with the right to organize. The Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity Committee has a number of Teamster activists who helped make connections with this largely-immigrant workforce.

There were also other efforts to prioritize immigrant labor battles. One involved workers at the American Licorice Company in Union City who struck over healthcare. Some of those workers, who are represented by the bakery union, had been coming to Labor Solidarity Committee meetings to present their needs. Occupy sent members to strengthen their picket lines. Similar involvement occurred with a larger struggle of members of HERE/UNITE Local 2850 who have been locked out for over two years by the elite Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton. These workers too were immigrants and were fighting over a dramatic increase in their payments for health benefits. A third such struggle involved workers at the Pacific Steel plant in Richmond where not only were there contractual issues, but where many union members were being threatened by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

While the American Licorice battle ended after several weeks, there was not an adequate balance sheet concerning Occupy's efforts, which to some extent conflicted with the local union leadership's tactics over the question of blocking entrances to the plant. The Pacific Steel Workers, somewhat similarly, divided over how to relate to Occupy. There was a more positive assessment of the work around the Castlewood solidarity, but there has not been follow-up after one significant mobilization called by the union.

Occupy Oakland has also sought to support workers in the public sector, building something of an alliance with Oakland City workers, mainly represented by members of SEIU Local 1021. We have met in their hall and have sent representatives to a major rally they organized, but not much has occurred beyond this. There are now efforts to take actions in solidarity with postal workers. A rally organized by Occupy Oakland Labor helped build the April 17th protests at the main post office in Oakland. There has also been cooperation with Occupy Education NorCal, which is composed not only of student groups and activists, but also education workers unions, mainly from higher ed, such as the Union of Professional and Technical Workers and the graduate student United Auto Workers Local 2865 (both at the University of

California), as well as the Peralta Federation of Teachers and the Oakland Education Association (the teachers union in Oakland of which I am a member). This led to support for the big mobilization of students and education workers in Sacramento on March 5th, calling for no cuts to public education, free access to college, and support for the late-lamented Millionaires Tax initiative, which has recently been withdrawn (although this latter demand was one not embraced by Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity)

The most recent actions are focused on an upcoming Workers Assembly, meeting at the California Nurses Association offices in Oakland next week, attempting to bring workers from different sectors, including those who are unorganized and/or in contingent jobs, to share work and organizing experiences. There is also involvement in May Day activities including an immigrant rights/workers march in East Oakland and direct action in support of Golden Gate toll workers facing layoffs. This latter struggle involves a coalition of seventeen unions.

Part IV. Conclusions

There are a number of contradictory organizational and analytical conclusions one can draw from all these Occupy projects and this activism. The Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity Committee has had difficulty developing a longer-term strategic perspective.

There is also some truth in the accusations of substitutionism in the Longview battle as well as in some of the support for local labor struggles, not because of a negative view of the workers involved, but rather because Occupy Oakland labor actions sometimes grew out of pre-conceived goals rather than out of such processes within unions or in collaboration between the unions and Occupy. There has also been a tendency to simply cheerlead for other actions called by the union leadership. In both cases, there is an impatience to take action at the expense of patient, organic linking with the rank and file. This is superimposed on a desire to find the “one, big battle” to alter class power.

On the positive side, activists in OO Labor Solidarity have demonstrated not only great energy, but also a growing maturity in organizing techniques. We have also been able at times to bring the full mobilzation of the broader Occupy movement to bear, as with the Port shutdowns in November and December. There is an ongoing orientation to grassroots organizing and democracy and there continue to be efforts at drawing linkages between contractual and more traditional union struggles, as well as a wide range of anti-corporate and anti-authoritarian themes.

The Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity Committee has insisted on its independence vis-à-vis the Democratic Party, but has been less consistent in its relations to the labor bureaucracy. While trying to grapple with larger strategic questions, the experience of Occupy Oakland Labor Solidarity is one which has emboldened not only its participants, but also a broad layer of the local labor movement, as evidenced by debates and discussions in the Alameda Central Labor Council and other union bodies. The real question will be how we help encourage the average worker to fight back and learn the lesson of the necessity to replace this for-profit system with an egalitarian society.

The Occupy-Labor Partnership in Chicago

SUSAN DIRR

THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT shows the potential to reinvigorate the labor movement and pull together the working class in a strong fight against the austerity measures being carried out across the country. However, the partnerships between the myriad organizations involved in fighting austerity are tested by cultural differences, divergent interests, and competing visions. In Chicago, the coalition between Occupy, labor, and community remains active on a number of fronts despite these challenges. This relative success can be traced to the media resonance of Occupy, the activist orientation of several key unions, the militancy of community organizations, and the nature of austerity in Chicago.

The participation of labor activists in the early stages of Occupy Chicago helped shape the pro-labor orientation of the movement. Throughout October, Occupy Chicago drew crowds of several hundred people for General Assemblies, rallies, and teach-ins, gaining positive media coverage and the attention of long-term organizers. Twice, the protestors attempted to secure a permanent encampment in a public park, resulting in over 300 arrests, including students, union members, socialists, community leaders, and independent activists. During the second attempt to secure an encampment, National Nurses United set up a first aid tent and, in a powerful gesture of solidarity, voted to stay after the police issued warnings to leave, resulting in the arrest of several nurses. After these unsuccessful attempts, Occupy Chicago began looking for other strategies for building power, opening up opportunities for further involvement in labor and community struggles.

During that same week, a labor-community coalition called Stand Up! Chicago organized a series of actions in downtown Chicago around jobs, homes, and schools, including a march of more than six thousand people on October 12th that involved many Occupy Chicago activists. As the largest demonstration during the fall of 2011, the success of this march helped increase the pro-union sentiment among Occupy members.

Around this time, the Occupy-labor partnership took on a more concrete form through the Occupy Chicago Labor Working Group which brought together labor leaders, staff, and rank-and-file members with Occupy Chicago activists who had little to no background in the labor movement. Labor was attracted by Occupy's ability to capture media attention and to shift the national dialogue to focus on economic inequality. For their part, Occupy activists were interested in the turnout power and resources of unions, while remaining wary of possible co-optation.

As of April, 2012, the weekly meetings of the Occupy Chicago Labor Working Group draw together 25 to 40 or more people from a variety of unions and community groups, with regular participation from members and/or staff of SEIU, AFSCME, Chicago Teachers Union, Amalgamated Transit Union, United Steelworkers, IBEW, and National Nurses United. A few of the participants attend as designated representatives of their respective union locals.

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More commonly, however, both staff and members attend as independent labor activists. For most of the last six months, the committee has been a place where participants share updates about ongoing struggles and ask for solidarity. These struggles include the fight to stop school closures and turnarounds, stop the privatization of health clinics, stop cuts to the public library system, and stop the corporatization of higher education and the accompanying attacks on staff and faculty contracts.

During the fall of 2012, several union locals in Chicago were well placed to develop partnerships with Occupy Chicago, which has allowed the Occupy-labor partnership in Chicago to grow where other cities have stumbled. SEIU was experimenting with community coalitions that mobilized union and community members for marches and direct actions. Militant members of National Nurses United were ready to staff first aid stations at Occupy actions and take arrests. The Chicago Teachers Union, led by a reform caucus, was embarking on a fight against the mayor to defend public education that would mobilize activists and working class communities. As a result, while the Occupy movement was coming together during fall, 2012, Occupy Chicago activists saw unions marching in the streets and staging direct actions. Equally important, labor activists turned up at Occupy's General Assemblies, worked in the committees, and built relationships with Occupy activists.

These relationships have thus far been able to maintain the partnership between the two groups when it has been strained by local and national dynamics. For example, Occupy Chicago activists felt deceived when union allies started endorsing Obama for the 2012 election season and strongly objected when some unions employed the 99 percent language to support the Democrats. On the other side, labor leaders and activists are wearied by national calls for a general strike and irritated when Occupy activists hand down judgements on labor's inability to organize the unorganized. Activists affiliated with both Occupy and labor often mediate these conflicts.

The partnership between Occupy Chicago and labor points toward a potential shift in public opinion regarding the role of unions in society. Corporations and conservative politicians have been waging a constant media campaign to depict unions (especially public sector unions) as greedy, corrupt, power-hungry institutions that steal your wages, drive rising deficits, and protect "bad" workers, particularly teachers. This message has made alarming inroads into the public imagination and shaped the environment within which many young Occupy activists came of age. Furthermore, these young activists have no memory of union victories, and many have never belonged to a union. Within this context, we would not necessarily expect a new movement led largely by young people to develop a strong pro-union orientation. And yet, in Chicago, that is just what has happened. As a result, a new generation of class-conscious, pro-labor activists is emerging and, through the media resonance of Occupy, providing the public with much needed images of unions fighting back for the working class.

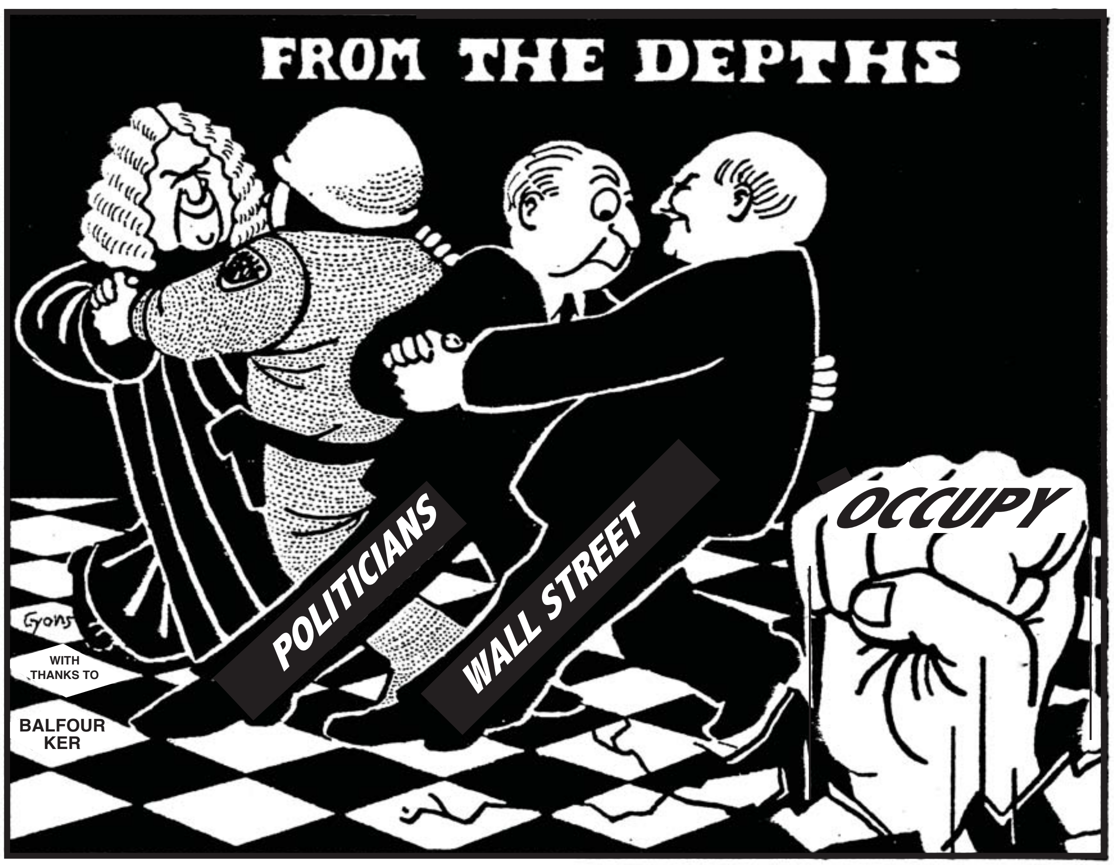
> During the second attempt to secure an encampment, National Nurses United set up a first aid tent and, in a powerful gesture of solidarity, voted to stay after the police issued warnings to leave, resulting in the arrest of several nurses.

Winning the Fight

IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, actions in New York City, Chicago, Boston, Oakland and other urban centers have demonstrated that the Occupy-labor-community coalition is capable of waging a militant multi-issue fight back. However, mobilization is hindered by legal restrictions binding unions and non-profit organizations, low density of union membership, lack of union democracy, racism and de facto segregation, and the narrowing effect of neoliberal hegemony on our political imagination.

The limitations of the Occupy-labor-community coalition are amplified by the determination of the capitalist class to implement austerity measures as rapidly as possible. The mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emmanuel, has been relentless in pushing through legislation to restrict protests, cut social services, and bust public sector unions. His 2012 budget includes layoffs, cuts to library hours, privatization of public health clinics, and the closing of six mental health clinics. In response to complaints from aldermen, the Mayor agreed to a few minor adjustments to the library cuts, while leaving intact the overall agenda of austerity. Despite a number of protests by unions and community groups, and several months of mobilization by the Mental Health Movement, the city council passed the budget unanimously on November 16th.

The same narrative applies to a city ordinance (dubbed "Sit Down and Shut Up" by opponents) which increases restrictions on protests, increases protest-related fines, gives Rahm purchasing powers without oversight, and allows the Police Superintendent to deputize



out-of-state law enforcement. Amid protests by Occupy Chicago and allies on January 18th, the city council passed the proposal 45-4.

Also in 2012, Rahm announced proposals to close seven public schools and "turnaround" ten others, meaning all teachers and staff at those ten schools will be fired. In response, parents and teachers gathered data defending their schools, submitted alternative proposals, and testified extensively at the Board of Education Meetings. As the time for the vote approached, a group of parents occupied an elementary school overnight and later that week parents and teachers led a march to Rahm's house. A few days later, on Feb 22, 2012, the Board of Education passed all of the proposed school closures and turnarounds.

Based on this record we can only expect that if we continue fighting as we have been with marches of five hundred to one thousand people, temporary occupations or sit-ins, and protests at city hall, we will not stop the austerity measures being imposed upon our city. We will be lucky if we even slow them down.

Despite renewed energy and mobilization, the movement strategy seems to be business as usual — put forth a good effort, lose, and frame the loss as a victory. Within this logic, any action that educates the public, cultivates a spirit of resistance, and draws new people into the movement is a success, regardless of the material outcome. While this approach has been useful in maintaining momentum in the face of setbacks, we cannot continue to accept this outcome if we are serious about protecting our social services and public sector workers.

Occupy Chicago, community organizations, and unions need to have an honest conversation about our strategies for fighting the austerity measures and our level of commitment to winning this struggle. In particular, we have always known that unions became involved with community struggles and direct action this year at least in part to mobilize support for Obama. When the election season kicks into high gear it's likely that some unions will withdraw from the fight in order to focus on campaigning. While awareness of the Occupy Movement is increasing among the rank-and-file, the coalition relies largely on sympathetic staff for union turnout for actions. Therefore, in order to maintain the coalition over the long term, we should be shifting focus to build deeper and broader relationships with the rank-and-file and to support reform caucuses and other forms of worker organization within unions.

Making any headway in the fight against austerity will require mass mobilization, more militant nonviolent tactics and, most importantly I believe, the conviction that we can win this fight. While the burgeoning Occupy-labor-community coalition holds much promise, we will not be able to effectively challenge the agenda of austerity until we are willing to put all of our institutional legitimacy on the line.

Zuccotti at Work: Daydreams of a Rank and Filer

Amy Muldoon

There isn't a working person alive today who hasn't idly fantasized about taking control of their lives at work. For many, this is probably just a fantasy about tossing their boss out a window or poisoning their coffee, but others have a more expansive vision of challenging the system of control that gives you an arrogant, unqualified stooge to squeeze the life out of you in the first place.

Militants and radicals in the unions are the ones who take it upon themselves to find the path between those idle dreams and reality. Not so much on the murder front (I hope) but more how to edge forward in the battle for self-control over the course of our work and our lives. The path is rough. It dead-ends, and goes over cliffs. It goes through unexpected terrain where the tools you brought are useless and improvisation is a survival skill. Sometimes the way goes pitch-black and you muddle forward by sense of smell.

Occupy Wall Street, with all its explosive force and lovely razor-clean language about the 1 percent, let the sun rise on the path forward for those of us who have been slogging away. That's not to say the road wasn't rising to our feet to some degree already, but Occupy helped us see the contours more clearly — and made them visible to other travelers.

For me personally, Occupy was the second most important thing to happen as summer climbed down into fall in 2011. Striking Verizon was number one, with a bullet. Profitable, enormous, and aggressively wound into Wall Street, the strike gave people far beyond our members a target for the dissatisfaction in their own lives. It also happened to coincide with an election in a couple of local unions here in New York. The sentiment for resistance and a fresh start permeated the strike — as seen on every YouTube video of Verizon Wireless pickets.

We were not happy to return to work without a contract. Not happy at all. Frustration with our own situation, including with our own representatives, colored everything. Predictably new leadership came in, but surprisingly it crushed outgoing incumbents, giving a sense of how much people wanted change.

Then along comes a movement that preaches (and practices) direct confrontation. Immediate action. No removed leaders giving direction. While very few of my coworkers ever went down to Zuccotti, a handful followed it closely and a much larger number were happy to see someone, anyone, stand up to the banks. As a steward said to me last week: "I didn't agree with everything that went on down there, but finally! Someone was standing up to the banks! How did [the bankers] not all go to jail for what they did?!" The moral impulse that someone must DO SOMETHING, and the obvious reality that the politicians either did nothing, or wrote checks to these criminals, makes supporting Occupy more natural than breathing.

But our movement has been challenged: We did do something, and sure, things changed — we all know that, left to the Democrats and lobbying, the political debate in this country would never stray off a comfortably, enthusiastically pro-corporate, pro-capitalist path — but

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we have been served a number of defeats from evictions and arrests to just the continued grind of inequality. And within our workplaces and unions we continue to press forward unsteadily. We still don't have a contract at Verizon. Now TWU Local 100, which runs the U.S.'s biggest transit system here in New York, has been without a contract since January.

These things challenge us, but they do not deter us. While people rarely talk about Occupy explicitly anymore, there is still that sunshine illuminating the path. Sure it illuminates a path that is subject to rockslides — my chief steward was suspended without pay for a day because he raised his voice while defending a member against threatened discipline — but we move forward nonetheless.

Part of the peculiar challenge of being a rank and file organizer, different from what many occupiers experience, is that some of our obstacles are within our own forces. The strategy of the unions for decades has been top-down and deeply wedded to the Democratic Party, both things that have hollowed out the real base of power for a union — member-driven confrontation with capital. So while many members identified with Occupy, the methods the union used to build bridges often fell flat because it seemed to come out of left field instead of arising organically from the sentiment in the Locals. There is a loud minority of right-wingers in our unions and the top-down culture doesn't constructively challenge right-wing ideas, nor does the mushy lowest common-denominator email blast approach empower the militants.

Because we have been told time and again to let the negotiators/lawyers/union presidents handle it (don't take any job actions that might cause a backlash! We don't want to provoke them!) the self-activity of the members has suffered serious erosion. Yet the impulse is still there. And in a context where it is commonsense that the bosses get away with everything because the laws are written for them, by them (tax evasion? No need to evade when the laws give you rebates greater than what you paid!) the moral impulse is also still there.

We are not doing anything spectacular or particularly innovative to rebuild our power. We work for the greatest participation in the national contract campaign — leafleting, letter-writing, sticker campaigns — and we try to go further in ways that come from us. In December we had a round of rallies in each of the Locals in New York. In ours we used the People's Mic and had supporters from TWU and SEIU speak. We had no stage and no politicians. No one with a suit who didn't work for a living spoke to the crowd of 150. We've now had three rallies like this on our own initiative, the last being 300 people (in a Local of 1200). While they don't subscribe to the Occupy principle of disruption, they have increased our confidence and unity, which will make confrontation more possible down the road.

> Hope is an essential component of organizing, and Occupy brought a joy and optimism that we all desperately need.

In my work location, we have union meetings at least three times a week, but more often every day. Just to tell people what's up. What management is up to, to clear up disputes between members, discuss initiatives and actions. Everyone expects to be talking about union issues daily. My chief steward gave a speech last month about jobs going overseas and the work conditions here and in China. He said: "there is a class war going on and the bosses are committing war crimes." He went on to explain our fight is not just about a contract any more, but is part of a struggle for the future of our society. You can't point to a specific Occupy Wall Street action that made him say that, but the fact that the *New York Times* ran a series of articles on labor conditions for Apple workers does have to do with the lasting effect of Occupy on consciousness.

It's also true that we had recently had a knock-down, drag-out shouting match about whether we could have won our strike and whether the population supported us, in which the winning blow was that Occupy popped up less than a month after we had returned to work, and just imagine what it would have been like if we'd been out 6 weeks when that happened. Just dream on that. That dream is inspirational.

Hope is an essential component of organizing, and Occupy brought a joy and optimism that we all desperately need. After completing a form-letter campaign to block a partnership between Verizon and cable companies (I think for world domination), my chief steward emailed our work unit about writing our own messages to our Senators:

> I just wrote my own personal message to them both. Why wait for the National to tell you what to write? Do you not still have your own voice and your own personal message? Inasmuch as I thank all those who did write letters, I offer you another method to participate in your future and your survival… Imagine if we all did this, the kind of impact we could have on our future. I know it's wishful thinking, but just take a moment and imagine. It's quite a hopeful image!

We are on our way. The slogans and stance of the movement are magnetic for so many working class people, but we are just at the beginning of figuring out what our movement will look like where our chief enemy lives, which although in Lower Manhattan, is on West Street, not Wall Street.

Working people have a tremendous and unique power to contribute to the movement. Direct democracy in a park is dangerous for capitalism; direct democracy in the workplace is deadly. Our self-organization is absorbing everything it can for the long haul. We distill the sunshine of Occupy into solar batteries for the path ahead.

Learning From David Montgomery

Worker, Historian, Activist

Peter Rachleff

On December 4, 2011, the labor movement, the left, the academy, and the historical profession lost a leader and friend. Eighty-four years young, David Montgomery had remained active and vital until his passing, giving an address at a labor history conference at the University of Iowa in July and speaking at a fall AFL-CIO workshop (with his son, labor economist Ed Montgomery) in Washington, D.C.; he continued to research transnational labor activism, and that research has inspired a panel at the November, 2012 American Studies Association conference in Puerto Rico. David's death occasioned many reflections among colleagues, his former students and fellow workers as far back as his pre-academic organizing days. Numerous eloquent obituaries have detailed David's accomplishments and testified to his impact. (1)

David had particular connections to Minnesota's labor movement and labor history, the place I have called home for the past thirty years. After graduating from college and serving in the military in the 1940s, he and his partner Martel (better known as "Marty") moved to Saint Paul in the 1950s, and he went to work as a machinist at Honeywell, where the United Electrical Workers was still the union. David was a shop steward, and his reputation as a militant organizer of his fellow workers soon spread throughout the sprawling plant. He lost his job when Honeywell closed his entire department, and the UE soon lost its foothold there in a raid by the Teamsters. He soon found machinist work on the Saint Paul side of the Mississippi River, where he became known and respected within the International Association of Machinists (IAM) 459. David's activism also extended to electoral politics — he worked in Joe Karth's remarkable 1958 congressional campaign (as president of an Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers (OCAW) local, Karth ran on an anti-nuclear platform) — and to local labor history, where he assisted Meridel LeSueur and a cohort of former Farmer-Laborites and Communists in the production of the booklet, *The People Together*. This remarkable publication at once commemorates Minnesota's centennial and protests against the Minnesota Historical Society's disregard for the roles played by working people in the state's first one hundred years.

Given the worsening Cold War political climate, it became more and more difficult for David to continue playing a visible role in the labor movement. He later explained to an interviewer: "I was driven out of the factory; I was blacklisted. Becoming a historian was not my first choice. I had to do something, so I took the second best choice that was around then." As a graduate student in History, David brought important lessons from his shopfloor and political experience into the University of Minnesota's department, where he found an eager mentor in David Noble. In reflecting on his grad school days, David declared: "Being in factories…involved in struggles along with other workers there persuaded me that most of what was written in academic literature about

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David Montgomery

the inherent passivity or conservatism of American workers in fighting to change anything was simply untrue." (2) The Cold War's impact on the labor movement might have prevented him from developing further as a factory organizer, but it was driving him to transform the field of labor history.

By the mid-1960s, the energies of the civil rights, women's, and peace movements were turning the study of American history upside down. New historians — many of them participants in 1960s movements — unearthed the roles of artisans and sailors in the American Revolution, the slaves' resistance to the "peculiar institution," and the struggles of women for the right to vote. The new labor historians, led by David Montgomery, Herbert Gutman, and David Brody, developed new ways of constructing the history of working women and men that questioned the more institutional analysis that had been dominant in the field since the rise of the "Wisconsin School" of John R. Commons and Selig Perlman in the 1910s and 1920s. The new labor historians insisted that the workplace was a site of struggle, that workers acted in collective fashions whether they belonged to unions or not, and that communities and local politics bore the mark of the struggles of working people for a better life. (3)

I'd like to use the space allotted me here to highlight what I think are some of his most valuable themes for those still seeking to work within the labor movement today. Some of you may disagree with my selection of key ideas, or my presentation of those ideas, and I invite you to weigh in with your own perspectives. Nothing would have pleased David more, and nothing is more useful for the ongoing vitality of our field and our movement.

Theme #1: Marxism Provides Key Insights for Labor History

David's engagement with Marxism informed his scholarly work. Without didactically insisting on the value of a Marxist critique of capitalism, his books and articles analyzed labor history within a complex, well-constructed framework which incorporated key Marxist insights. David understood capitalism as an historical product and an unstable system, and he realized it posed collaboration versus competition as key issues for workers and employers alike. Not only did capitalism set a defining context for workers' lives and struggles, but their struggles forced changes in the institutions, politics, and culture of capitalism, in the United States and throughout the world.

Class conflict lay at the heart of capitalism, and it manifested itself in workplaces, in politics, in race and gender relations, and in the formation of ideologies and cultures. His first book, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872*, suggested that we could not understand the failure of Reconstruction without examining the changing nature of class conflict in the industrial and industrializing

North. The more that capitalist manufacturers in the North were challenged by the organizations and demands of their workers, the less willing they were to promote an agenda of social transformation in the South. Similarly, in *Citizen Worker: the Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market During the Nineteenth Century,* David demonstrated fundamental contradictions between political democracy and market-driven economics, contradictions which fueled restrictions on grassroots expressions of political discontent, from Northern workers seeking the eight hour day and Midwestern farmers challenging banks and railroads to southern African-Americans confronting Jim Crow. Capitalism, David argued, ineluctably bound economics and politics, the workplace and the ballot box, corporate institutions, and the state. (4)

But these bound forces did not prevent workers from organizing and struggling, and their struggles often changed the course of American history. In *Workers' Control in America* and *The Fall of the House of Labor: the Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925,* David traced workers' struggles for a shorter working day, for an end to exploitative payment practices, against unsafe working conditions, for more control over the pace and nature of the work process, for the democratization of communities (such as mining camps and Minnesota Iron Range "locations"), against racism and nativism, and for peace in international relations. In a remarkable public address on "Labor and Antiwar Activism in Minnesota," delivered in March, 2002 to a labor conference in Saint Paul, David discussed workers' struggles to prevent World War I, their support for mobilization against fascism in World War II, and their opposition to nuclear proliferation in the late 1950s. "In all three instances," he argued, "[workers] had a tangible influence on the course of national politics, though in none of them did they succeed in reshaping the world the way they hoped and intended." Although workers and their organizations often did not win (indeed, they rarely won) such battles, there were consequent adjustments and shifts in economic, social, and political institutions and policies. And later struggles tended to build on the achievements of the earlier ones, even the defeats.(5)

Theme #2: Montgomery's "Syndicalism": The Struggle in the Workplace

For David, the workplace itself was the primary site of class struggle. In the workplace, workers and employers (or their representatives) fought over how work was organized, how it would get done, and how much would get done. He frequently referenced Carter Goodrich's notion of the "frontier of control," that "invisible dividing line" where management's authority ceased and the scope for workers' decision-making began. David understood technology as a tool in management's campaigns to expand its decision-making power, and he also saw unions as tools in workers' campaigns to expand their power and authority. This theme came up again and again in his lectures and seminars, whether he was discussing slaves' use of songs to set a humane pace in the cotton fields, Welsh and Irish miners' efforts to teach Eastern European immigrants to refuse to work when foremen came around, or machinists' strategies to use piece rates to control their pace of work. While some labor historians paid particular attention to artisans' use of traditions and skills to resist the capitalist reorganization of work, the re-division of labor, and the introduction of time discipline, David was more interested in the new strategies, tactics, and solidarities employed by new generations of factory workers, who were being reorganized by their employers not only to produce but also to join together to resist production. Here, David's engagement with Marxism and his experiences on the shopfloor combined to enable him to see how capitalism, in its own development, generated working class resistance. (6)

In a dialectical fashion, unions grew out of the shopfloor struggles, while they also served the needs of these struggles. Workers organized themselves into unions in order to codify their work practices and rules, to institutionalize the solidarity necessary to enforce them, and to provide the means to socialize new workers into them. Unions linked workplaces in local markets, regions, nations, and even transnationally, and they enabled workers to disrupt employers' efforts to interject competition across workplaces, competition which Jeremy Brecher has so aptly labeled a "race to the bottom." (7)

David's engagement with Marxism and his experiences on the shopfloor combined to enable him to see how capitalism, in its own development, generated working class resistance.

For David, then, workers' power in the workplace was indissolubly linked to workers' power at the bargaining table. They fed each other. And the logic of capitalism suggested that this dialectic would continue to unfold.

Theme #3: What Is The Labor Movement?

THE STRUGGLE OVER THE "FRONTIER of control," the struggle to embody positions of strength in contracts, job descriptions, work rules, and recognized past practices is only part of the story, part of the labor movement whose past, present, and future occupied David Montgomery's heart and imagination. My appreciation for such issues began in the fall of 1974, my first semester in graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh. One afternoon, in his crowded labor history lecture course, David dropped a bomb. "Do you realize," he asked his students, "that if you said 'labor movement' in late nineteenth century America, you would have been talking about five different kinds of organizations?" As our pens stood erect over our notebook pages, he proceeded to name them: trade unions (of course); fraternal and benefit societies (the embodiment of what he called "working class mutuality"); co-operatives (both producer and consumer); reform associations (like Eight Hour leagues); and political parties (mostly at the local or, occasionally, the state levels). If you were studying the 1880s and wanted to be precise, he hastily added, you might want to add a sixth organizational form, the mixed local assemblies of the Knights of Labor. Within them, workers from various occupations and industries came together to support strikes, boycott nefarious bosses, and promote local political issues, from restrictions on convict labor to the construction of public buildings with union labor. We furiously took notes, then caught our breath. Then, he dropped another bomb: "If you were to say 'labor movement' today [1974], you'd be talking about only one kind of organization, the trade union." (8)

There we were, "we" being, particularly, the labor history graduate students who wanted not only to write about labor history but also, from within the labor movement, to help make labor history, and our mentor was serving notice — more than a decade before scholars and activists would begin to decry the "decline" of the labor movement — that the "labor movement" of our era, the last quarter of the 20th century, was a profoundly narrowed, diminished, and restricted shadow of its historical self. We might not have understood all the implications of such an historical assessment at that moment, but it has certainly haunted my awareness as I have witnessed plant closings, the contracting out of jobs, defeats of strikes, collapse of union organizing campaigns, the firing of union activists, and the passage of anti-union legislation. (9)

David's work and that of many of his

graduate students explored the complex organizational infrastructure of the labor movement from the last quarter of the 19th century through the passage of the Wagner Act (1935) and the Taft-Hartley Act (1947), and the construction of the modern American system of collective bargaining. In books like *The Fall of the House of Labor: the Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925,* and *Citizen Worker: the Experience of Workers in the U. S. with Democracy and the Free Market in the Nineteenth Century,* and many scholarly and popular articles, David researched, analyzed, and documented how working women and men organized themselves outside as well as inside workplaces, how these organizations were interconnected through shared values, ideologies, and leaderships, and how they ebbed and flowed historically in strength and influence.

His students' explorations have added many layers of richness and complexity to this scholarship, and their contributions — and their teaching of subsequent generations — suggests that David's legacy will continue to shape our understanding of capitalism, class relations, the workplace, working people, and the labor movement. Consider this selection of examples, drawn from some of the dissertations David supervised which then became books: Bruce Laurie's attention to volunteer fire companies and other neighborhood organizations in the struggles of Philadelphia artisans and first generation factory workers; Shel Stromquist's research into community support for railroad workers' struggles in the late 19th century; Jim Barrett's examination of Chicago's "back of the yards" communities' support for immigrant packinghouse workers in the era of the *Jungle*; Eric Arnesen's exploration of both black and inter-racial organizing on the New Orleans docks and its waterfront neighborhoods; Peter Gottlieb's and Kimberly Phillips' reconstructions of the peregrinations of Southern African- Americans into and out of Pittsburgh and Cleveland steel mills and the relation of these migrations to black communities North and South; a range of investigations of working-class communities and independent labor politics, including Reeve Huston on small-town political activism against a regional landed gentry in antebellum upstate New York, Julie Greene on political activism by the supposedly "apolitical" American Federation of Labor, Grace Palladino on anthracite miners' quest for government regulation of conditions in their workplaces in 19th century Pennsylvania, and Cecelia Bucki on the working-class base for socialist municipal politics in Bridgeport, Connecticut; and then there are the studies of race and gender as sources of bonding and organization as well as division and competition, including Iver Bernstein's painful retelling of Irish immigrants' involvement in the New York City "draft riots" in the midst of the Civil War; my own study of African-American workers' organization, on their own behalf and with white workers, in post-Civil War Richmond, Virginia; Tera Hunter's appreciation of African American working women's struggles to control laundry and domestic labor in the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction urban South; Dan Letwin's exploration of interracial organizing among Alabama coal miners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; Priscilla Murolo's exploration of working girls' clubs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; Gunther Peck's excavation of class struggles within immigrant and ethnic communities in the early 20th century West; Ileen DeVault's investigation of the roles played by gender in the construction of white collar work at the turn of the 20th century; Dana Frank's documentation of working-class women's use of consumer organizing to buttress the post-general strike (1919) labor movement in Seattle; Dorothy Fujita-Rony's reconstruction of Seattle's Filipino working class within a transpacific framework. And I fear having given offense to those scholars I have left out. (10)

David Montgomery's Living Legacy

Learning from the key themes which I

have discussed — the value of Marxism in analyzing capitalism, the centrality of the workplace as a site of class struggle, and the variety of institutions which make up a labor movement — can serve us well today, not only as labor historians but also as labor activists. The 2008 financial crisis and the ensuing "Great Recession" remind us that capitalism is an unstable system. Struggles by nurses to control patient staffing ratios, by teachers to control class size and curriculum, and by manufacturing workers to challenge the logic of the products they make remind us that the workplace continues to be a site of class struggle. In the "Madison Uprising" of 2011 (and the larger and ongoing Wisconsin struggle) workers, students, social justice activists, immigrants, welfare recipients, and even Democratic politicians created a veritable soviet in that capital city, inspired by struggles for democracy in Tunisia, Egypt, and elsewhere, and inspiring broad-based struggles against the right-wing agenda in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, and more. True, the much bemoaned current percentage of the workforce in unions (perhaps 10 percent) is well below that of 1974 (when the percentage was closer to 20 percent) or the great unionized decades of the 1940s-1960s, (when it was 30 percent or more), and such figures reflect a shift of the frontier of control in the workplace towards management and a consequent shift in bargaining table clout in the same direction. But capitalism's instability, on the one hand, and the 1 percent's efforts to make the 99 percent bear its burden, on the other hand, has provoked working-class resistance of an order not seen in decades.

At the same time, working class organization has spread a thicker and thicker web. Particularly due to the massive influx of immigrants since 1990, diverse forms of working class organization — fraternal and benefit societies, reform organizations (especially on behalf of immigrant rights), and worker centers (which provide services, teach English, maintain hiring halls, and mobilize protests) — are emerging. There has been a multiplicity of local political organizations (the Working Families Party in New York, Greens, Independents of various stripes), many of which include significant working class voices. There are food cooperatives aplenty, plus community supported agriculture (CSA) networks, with working class participants, and growing interest in building the infrastructure of local food movements. There are a range of local, national, and international media and communications, from "Labor Radio" to "Labour Start." And then there is the Occupy Movement, its presence, its impact on political discourse, and its widening web reaching into issues of foreclosures, healthcare, the environment, education costs and content, and more.

In all these ventures, even in their inchoate forms and despite the suppression from without, are all of David's themes about capitalism, the workplace, and the labor movement. I see in the determination and the ferocity of these developments, both in their local depth and in their international connections and inspirations, their creativity and militancy, the great fierce spirit of David Montgomery: restless, indefatigable, strategic, and propelled by the lived agonies and desires for freedom in those all around.

Editors' Note: A fully footnoted version will be found on our website newpol.org

Some Lessons of 1989's East European Revolutions

Reflections of a U.S. Peace Activist

JOANNE LANDY

IN THE 1980S, the U.S.-based Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West was deeply involved in the struggle for "détente from below." CPD/EW collaborated with the European Nuclear Disarmament network to build solidarity and mutual support between, on the one hand, peace groups and progressive trade unionists in the West and, on the other hand, the democratic movements in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. As CPD/EW co-director I traveled frequently to East-bloc countries, Western Europe, and Latin America to promote grassroots solidarity across Cold War boundaries. Now, more than two decades later, I would like to look back at our experience and explore critically the role of activists, East and West, in the years leading up to 1989.

I will try to answer the question of why the outcome of the 1989 upheavals, despite their undoubted benefit of consigning the old Communist regimes to the dustbin of history, was in many ways disappointing, and why they failed to realize the hopes of millions for a new era of peace, social justice, economic betterment, and meaningful democracy. I will also discuss some implications of the 1989 revolutions for the historic movements of the last few years, from the 2009 Iranian mass demonstrations to the Arab Spring, to popular protests in Greece, Spain, Portugal, and the rest of Europe — and to our own Occupy movement.

In the 1980s here in the United States CPD/EW succeeded in enlisting leaders of many peace groups — including the War Resisters League, Fellowship of Reconciliation, American Friends Service Committee, and Sojourners — in defense of Polish Solidarnosc trade union leaders, Charter 77 members in Czechoslovakia, and independent peace activists throughout the Soviet bloc. This defense of East-bloc activists transcended the crippling binaries of Cold War thinking that could be summed up in the unfortunate slogan "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." One example of such CPD/EW work was a 1983 *New York Times* ad entitled "U.S. Peace and Labor Activists Support Polish Solidarity Leaders on Trial" signed by 78 individuals, including Ed Asner, Barbara Ehrenreich, Noam Chomsky, Daniel Ellsberg, Allen Ginsberg, Maggie Kuhn, Manning Marable, David McReynolds, Robert Meeropol, Holly Near, I.F. Stone, and Cornel West.

Moreover, CPD/EW argued that solidarity wasn't a one-way street, and in addition to organizing initiatives like the one described above it also succeeded in promoting solidarity in the other direction by engaging East-bloc activists

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NOTE: This essay is adapted from a talk given at the Campaign for Peace and Democracy panel on the lessons of 1989 on March 17, 2012 at the Left Forum in New York City.

in campaigns to oppose anti-democratic U.S. policies in countries like Chile and Nicaragua. In that vein, the Campaign in 1986 took out another *New York Times* ad entitled "Independent Voices, East and West, Speak Out Against Reagan's Nicaragua Policy" with dozens of Western signers and a large number of signatures from dissidents and independent activists in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, the USSR, and Yugoslavia.

What if the democratic movements and new governments had made egalitarian demands on the world's political and economic leaders, rather than acquiescing with no programmatic resistance to the logic of capitalism and the nostrums of the IMF and the World Bank?

Though I wish we had been even more successful in our efforts, I am very proud of that record. Today we at the Campaign for Peace and Democracy (the name was shortened by dropping the "East and West" after the Cold War ended) continue to oppose war threats and imperial sanctions by our own government, while supporting the fight for democracy and social justice everywhere, whether it occurs in countries within the U.S. orbit like Egypt, Bahrain and Tunisia, or in countries to which the U.S. is hostile, like Iran.

Critical Solidarity

As we move forward, we need to think more about HOW we build international solidarity. Does solidarity mean automatic agreement with everything the leadership of a democratic movement says? A rubber stamp? I don't think so. There is a need for what Danny Postel, quoting Fred Halliday, called "critical solidarity" in his Summer 2010 *New Politics* article, "Revolutionary Prefigurations: The Green Movement, Critical Solidarity and the Struggle for Iran's Future."

In retrospect, I think we in CPD/EW could have been more critical in our solidarity work with East-bloc movements. While we did discuss and debate with East European activists about issues of peace and disarmament, and never concealed our own anti-capitalist perspective, we didn't talk as much as we should have about our view of what kind of society should replace Communism, nor did we discuss in any depth the disastrous consequences we believed would follow if their countries were to adopt the neoliberal prescriptions of privatization and slashing the social safety net. In thinking back, I believe one major explanation for this shortcoming was that while we were supporting struggling movements for democratic change in the Soviet bloc and on one level strongly believed in the possibility of their victory, it was nonetheless hard for many of us to really absorb the idea that East-bloc repressive governments, seemingly so invulnerable, would actually collapse within a very few years. Therefore it didn't seem so urgent to discuss future visions.

When the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe fell, the new governments, virtually without exception, did not question the need for wholesale integration into the capitalist world economy and to one degree or another accepted the legitimacy of demands from the West that they undergo "shock therapy" to speedily achieve that integration. The result of that acquiescence has been that millions of people have suffered from unemployment, insecurity, and loss of social services that were provided by the old Communist governments. Moreover, many East

European economies are further threatened by today's global economic and ecological crises.

Within movements for democratic change in authoritarian societies there is powerful pressure not to pursue discussions of differences of opinion about long-term goals, given the imperative of fighting to end the rule of a terrible, repressive regime. But sidestepping those discussions comes at a high price — not only internally, within opposition circles, but more broadly because it means that ordinary people can't be aware of the debates, participate in them, and begin to think about and propose future alternatives themselves. Different political currents of course do need to unite in a broad movement against authoritarian governments — but there is also the need to explore and expose differences about agendas for the future.

WHY WAS IT THAT EAST-BLOC dissidents, mostly leftists in the 1960s and 1970s, failed to pose a left alternative by the time the system was coming apart in the 1980s? I am unsure of the answer to this question, but I will make a stab at an explanation.

First of all, the decline of the global left was an important element in weakening the left in Eastern Europe. Despite the "Iron Curtain" there was historically a general awareness in the Soviet bloc of the existence of socialist ideas and movements elsewhere. Their appeal, however, was limited to the extent that the very idea of socialism was associated with pro-Communist elements of the left. For a time, in the 60s and 70s, the new Western independent left, especially the student movement, exerted an influence in the East. But as these left movements declined they had less standing in Soviet-bloc countries. Moreover, the failure, with some honorable exceptions, of what global left there was to actively and energetically support democratic movements in the East bloc tended to alienate people suffering from Communist repression. Finally, the advance of globalization made it even more difficult to mount a successful anti-capitalist struggle in a single country than it had been before, and this doubtless contributed to the feeling that trying to forge a socialist or left alternative would be doomed to defeat.

I don't mean to argue that a better outcome would have been easy, much less automatic, had the dissident community maintained its leftwing politics into the years of Communist collapse. However, it's important to remember the great international moral and political power of the democratic upsurge of 1989. What if the democratic movements and new governments had made egalitarian demands on the world's political and economic leaders, rather than acquiescing with no programmatic resistance to the logic of capitalism and the nostrums of the IMF and the World Bank? Even if they had been forced to make concessions to the power of capitalism, if the new governments had resisted and challenged capitalism's legitimacy instead of embracing it they could likely have won at least some interim concessions for themselves while moving the terms of global debate to the left. This was a great opportunity lost.

Implications for the Future

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS of the 1989 experience for the upheavals and revolutions of our time? It is clear that international solidarity is needed now more than ever, not only to defend labor, dissidents, student, ecological and women's rights activists, and religious, ethnic, and sexual minorities against state repression, but also, while respecting the rights of people within a country to determine their own destiny, to strengthen through grassroots solidarity left and liberatory currents such as socialists, greens, and feminists within broad anti-repression movements. Moreover, critical solidarity today ought not to be a one-way street. So, for example, democratic activists in Egypt or Iran should be encouraged to speak out against repression and inequality in the United States (as the Egyptians so wonderfully did when they sent pizzas to the protestors in Madison, Wisconsin) and also to express their views about debates within Occupy and other U.S. protest movements.

There is ample reason to expect that the new governments in the Middle East will be under pressure from below to resist neoliberal prescriptions for their economic and social ills. An important contribution solidarity activists can offer to this resistance is to make it difficult, through public protests and campaigns, for wealthy countries and international financial institutions to impose their retrograde solutions.

A MAJOR CHALLENGE grassroots movements everywhere face today is the absence of political parties that can champion their cause and offer progressive solutions to the larger society. In countries emerging from decades of authoritarianism one reason for the lack of left wing political parties is that they were illegal under the old governments, so left activists often have to start building parties almost from nothing. But the problem goes beyond this legacy. In the past year we have seen an explosion of protest in countries with more democratic liberties like Greece, Spain, and Portugal, as well as here in the United States with our Occupy movement — and these protests also have no electoral expression. All too often the consequence is that after massive demonstrations and inspiring protests the new governments that come to power are far to the right of the popular upsurge that propelled them to power, while the left remains politically disorganized.

Notwithstanding technical obstacles to forming new parties, there is another, deeper explanation for why the contemporary left generally doesn't have parties of its own or the intention to form them, and that is the "anti-politics" sentiment of many of today's protestors — an outlook that incidentally was also shared by many of the East-bloc dissidents of the 1980s. This outlook is understandable given the terrible failure of existing parties to represent and defend popular aspirations, but it leaves protest movements at a political dead end. To paraphrase the old Greyhound bus ad, it "leaves the driving to them."

We are entering an age of tremendous turmoil because of the failure of global capitalism to fulfill the economic, social and personal needs of ordinary people around the world, and because millions have asserted their claims to dignity and security and are inspiring millions more to do the same. We need to shake off the old Cold War "the enemy of my enemy must be my friend" way of thinking and build a truly international left that can honestly fight for the rights of people everywhere and connect their struggles — not in a sectarian way that counterposes the left to mass democratic movements, but as integral, independent participants in these movements. Those of us who are socialists face the challenge of rescuing the image of socialism from the bureaucratic authoritarianism of societies in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that assumed the name, but this rescue effort is worthwhile because its success will help people to see a way out, to see that, despite Margaret Thatcher's deadening assertion to the contrary, there is a democratic, radical, and egalitarian alternative to the grim realities of contemporary capitalism.

NOTES: The Campaign for Peace and Democracy's papers are available at New York University's Tamiment Library and its current activities are posted on its website, www.cpdweb.org. For more on the "détente from below" perspective of European Nuclear Disarmament see E.P. Thompson's *Beyond the Cold War: A New Approach to the Arms Race and Nuclear Annihilation*, Merlin Press, 1982 and *The Heavy Dancers*, Merlin Press, 1985. For a similar post-Cold War view, see the incisive essay, "Solidarity from Raha Iranian Feminist Collective, Jadaliyya, Feb. 19, 2011 and visit the website of the new group *Havaar*: Iranian Initiative Against War, Sanctions and State Repression, www.havaar.org.

Getting Serious About Class Dynamics: Culture, Politics and Class*

William Tabb

Labor historians have detailed how the structure of the workplace, the cultural aspects of community, and spatial patterning all impact class consciousness. From coal mining that paradigmatically has the workers living in the hollow and the bosses on the hill to the ethnic enclaves of steel town where different nationality/ethnic groups each occupied their own distinct neighborhoods with taverns, union halls and churches, socialization matters. Capital has learned the virtues, from its perspective, of replacing single River Rouge-like plants with a number of redundant smaller facilities located far from each other and pitting workers spatially distant from the easier solidarity that came from the traditional industrial concentration. It is not without interest that where labor can be tightly controlled as in Foxconn's huge plant at Shenzhen, China with its hundreds of thousands of workers the old industrial regime is possible. So long as the reserve army of potential workers is available, inhumane levels of exploitation can continue.

While in 1960 the most profitable American companies had international divisions and exported, they were basically U.S. companies. Today some of the most valuable American corporations like Apple don't employ many workers in the United States. International solidarity will be and is important. But the workers in each country have national and sectoral struggles to fight. It is only strong movements in particular countries that can offer solid support for struggles in other countries. One victory for the American labor movement is that after long term collaboration with the C.I.A. and U.S. Cold War policies, American labor has not only ended this shameful practice but, thanks to groups like Labor Against the War, has enlisted in honest solidarity work from what is objectively an anti-imperialist position.

The growth of the globally available labor force capital can remain a major obstacle to the advancement of class solidarity, given differences of language and culture. The tripling of the size of this workforce in recent decades with the entry of India and the former Communist countries into the international division of labor has been hard on formerly more protected workers in the advanced economies. But just as in response to bosses in mill towns bringing in strike breakers from different ethnicities or racial groups had to be overcome through class unity, the workers of the world will have to unite. But the primary focus of struggle remains at the national level. Even as we think globally we act

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*This essay is based on a presentation to the 2012 Left Forum, Pace University, March 19, 2012 and draws on my essay "Globalization Today: At the Borders of Class and State Theory," *Science and Society*, Vol. 73, No. 1, January 2009.

locally, to coin a phrase.

Understanding the evolution of the working class in the United States (as well as elsewhere in a globalized capitalism) sensitizes us to the ongoing reformation of the class in this country in our time. The terrain has been harsh for some decades. The United Automobile Workers, once the most powerful union in America, has lost 80 percent of its members in the past three decades. It has had to acquiesce to contracts under which newly hired autoworkers make $13-15 an hour doing the same work on the same assembly line as those members getting twice as much. As Bill Vlasic writes of two-tier pay, "What was once seen as a desperate move to prop up the struggling auto industry is now considered an integral part of its future."[1] Chrysler, which Clint Eastwood tells us is "back," expects the proportion of two-tier workers to rise from 13 percent to at least 25 percent by 2015. BNA, a business and legal publisher, estimates that 20 percent of U.S. workers in 2010 were covered by such two-tier wage and benefit provisions.

Seven of the ten occupations that are expected to see the greatest growth, according to the Department of Labor, are low-wage or very low-wage ones.

Another change is that when today's auto company hires a thousand new employees, it creates four times as many jobs for marketers, managers, car salesmen, and subcontract parts makers. In the economy more broadly there are fewer secretaries and office clerks and more professionals and low level service sector workers. This bifurcation has political consequences, as does the sheer proportion of low-wage non-union jobs.

What has become most visible since the start of the Great Recession is the explosion of freelancers, including those with titles like "president" and "founder" of companies of which they are the sole employee. There are predictions that 40 percent of Americans will be self-employed at some point in their life. David Callahan, author of *Freelance Nation*, suggests that in the future "a greater number of workers will be on their own whether they like it or not, as corporations continue to shift toward 'just-in-time' labor practices — replacing salaried employees with temporary independent contractors." [2]

In thinking about class and politics the murky categories of culture and consciousness are important. They are shaped in significant measure by changes in the forces of production, of technology, and the way it is deployed and work organized — that is by the changing composition of jobs in the labor market. Paying attention to these changes and how they have changed the working class is my first topic. The second part of my discussion will include thinking about the 2012 Presidential election in class terms.

Restructuring Production, Reconstituting the Class

Today while transnational capital has grown more powerful, much of the U.S. labor force is employed in small establishments in the service sector that are often part of giant chains or segmented from others in offices where distinct hierarchies divide labor into separate fractions without obvious points of unity. These conditions disempower attempts at solidarity. We see this in the shift from manufacturing and blue collar work. In 1960 the largest employers in America in order of size were General Motors, the Bell System with its phone monopoly, Ford, General Electric (a

G.E. that was overwhelmingly a manufacturing company before its finance divisions grew to make most of the company's money), and U.S. Steel. A half-century later Wal-Mart is the nation's largest employer followed by Kelly Services (the job placement firm), IBM (now a business service company), UPS (the parcel deliverer), McDonald's and Yum! (operator of Taco Bell, KFC, and Pizza Hut).

The number of employees working in the 2010 largest corporations is roughly twice that of the industrial giants of fifty years ago. But these workers are spread over vastly more numerous, smaller work sites. Employment in the former giants was characteristically for life; in today's low-wage non-union megacorps worker turnover is substantial and many are on temporary contracts and formally hired by subcontractors.

Seven of the ten occupations that are expected to see the greatest growth, according to the Department of Labor, are low-wage or very low-wage ones. This does not mean that personal and home care aides, for example, are not being organized but that without major political change, including serious labor law reform, we can expect income and wealth inequalities to continue to increase.

Serious attention is now being paid to a growing white underclass of unemployed and low waged whites, of the epidemic of methamphetamine destroying rural white poor communities and the economic impact of really existing capitalism on white people who thought since they weren't black this couldn't happen to them. As Nicholas Kristof writes: "Today, I fear we're facing a crisis in which a chunk of working-class America risks being calcified into an underclass, marked by drugs, despair, family decline, high incarceration rates, and a diminishing role of jobs and education as escalators of upward mobility. We need a national conversation about these dimensions of poverty…"[3] Income is now a bigger factor behind the large gap in education than race — a big change over the years since Reagan became president in 1980.

The importance of contestation in the political arena brings us to the important work that needs to be more completely carried out by labor studies investigators breaking down the 59 percent of America that Michael Zweig tells us compose the working class majority.[4]The fractions of the class are not static but as I have indicated have changed dramatically over the decades of neoliberal globalism.

In approaching this task it is useful to start with Marx whose views on class in relationship to the politics of a particular historical conjuncture need to be better understood. Let us recall Marx's own multifaceted understanding of class — which I must say are not all that easy to separate out. To Marx, classes exist on a number of levels of analysis: the level of generality of class history, that of the era of capitalism, or of modern capitalism, and of the immediate political situation. Far from the certainties demonstrated by many Marxists who use the term class, I agree with Bertell Ollman's conclusion that Marx cannot escape the accusation of "having a litter of standards for class membership and of changing them without prior warning."[5]

In Marx's writing the same word can take on different meanings in different contexts. The word's meaning shifts because the relational context changes. Categories are interpenetrating and thus do not represent separate realities. The same group can be placed in different taxonomies depending on the question being asked, the level of social reality being explored. Ollman writes: "Marx conflates a number of social ties (relations between groups based on various standards) which are generally treated separately. He views them as interacting parts of an organic whole, the society in question."[6]

Most popular treatments of the topic focus on one of two ways Marx himself used the construct "class." He was concerned with the two great classes of a social formation: slaves and their masters, serfs and lords, workers and capitalists. But for our purposes here another usage is relevant. He also used the terms to mean class fractions or the "complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank," in the words of the *Manifesto*. These ranks become anachronistic as societies evolve. Capitalism is a dynamic system and so societies are in a constant state of change. The consciousness of individuals and the groupings of which they are a part, the way working people think about their problems, who their enemies and friends are — all of this changes. Some classes, or what are better called class fractions, cease to exist or become less important in the totality of a society, or they are restructured as the capitalism in which they exist undergoes new developments. New classes come into being. The definition of a class fraction in a particular mode of production in a given historical conjuncture depends on the question being asked and so the purpose of the social map being drawn and employed. In my introductory remarks I tried to convey what some of these important changes in our time have been.

In his political writings when Marx deals with the current events of his time, he examines the general beliefs of the different ranks of society. Marx made distinctions among small landowners and hereditary lords, petty bourgeois shopkeepers, captains of industry, a class of financiers, and so on. He analyzed the interests of each and how their material conditions influenced their worldview and political actions. In The *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* Marx produced the classic analysis of political struggle in which he correlated the interests of class fractions and political movements contesting for power, an analysis in which contingency, personality, and opportunism all figured. In that canonical work he delineates the groups opposing the Paris proletariat in 1848: "the aristocracy of finance, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, the petty bourgeoisie, the army, the lumpen proletariat organized as the Mobile Guard, the intellectual lights, the clergy, and the rural population," and then discusses their various roles. He also notes in passing that "in the United States of North America where... classes, indeed, already exist, they have not yet become fixed but continually change and interchange their elements in a constant state of flux. . .." Classes continue to be in flux due to capitalism's dynamic changes through time. Intuitive politicians have always been sensitive to this and have assembled voting majorities for a top-down historic bloc by manipulating understandings of the categories of "them and us."

For the 30 years since Ronald Reagan became President, conservative politicians have done a pretty good job of misdirecting working class anger toward people they call "the liberal elite" of professionals and highly educated individuals whom the right has quite successfully stereotyped. The successful misdirection has meant that people who really have influence over the direction of the economy and government are hidden from view.

The Democrats as the party of reformist capitalism have enraged those working class whites who understood that they had in effect betrayed them in two ways, by their being too sensitive to racial minorities and in their support of feminism in defiance of traditional patriarchy, and on the other hand catering to transnational capital and international finance against the interests of working people by assisting offshoring with subsidies and treaty agreements.

Richard Nixon's Southern Strategy was based on an appreciation that the Democrats' effort to modernize the South would have a devastating impact on Southerners' loyalty to that party. The impact was felt beyond the South, and was consequential in the de-industrializing Midwest where factories were closing and manufacturing downsizing devastated communities. The strength of the religious right is in part a tribute to the women's movement and the support the employer class has given to expanding the labor pool by welcoming women to the workforce. The legislative support the Democrats gave was anathema to working class conservatives.

On globalization the Democrats, wedded to international capital, were not about to do anything significant to protect the jobs of American industrial workers. For one thing, they saw a more important constituency in the growing technical-professional classes which would compensate for the loss of the white working class voters. For another, to defend the industrial working class would not have been well received by those fractions of capital funding the party. At the same time many in the professional-technical stratum of the working class gained from the low cost of imports, from cheap immigrant labor, and were in occupations positively connected to the global economy and so opposed protection measures to help manufacturing.

Thomas Edsall has provocatively written: For decades, Democrats have suffered continuous and increasingly severe losses among white voters. But preparations by Democratic operatives for the 2012 election make it clear for the first time that the party will explicitly abandon the white working class.

All pretense of trying to win a majority of the white working class has been effectively jettisoned in favor of cementing a center-left coalition made up, on the one hand, of voters who have gotten ahead on the basis of educational attainment — professors, artists, designers, editors, human resources managers, lawyers, librarians, social workers, teachers, and therapists — and a second, substantial constituency of lower-income voters who are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic.[7]

This seems too strong a formulation. Obama needs at least some of the battleground states of the Midwest/Rust Belt if he is to win re-election. Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin are six of the twelve states most likely to be the highly contested this election. Winning white working class votes will not be easy given the sense of betrayal by the Democrats and the reactionary appeal of the Republicans on race, gender, and the need to support "job creators." We need to seriously ponder a reality in which the Republican Party has become the party of the white working class. That white working class voter support for Republican House candidates by a record-setting margin: 63-33 in 2010 is an ill omen for the Democrats in this election year. If we define working class voters as those with incomes between $30,000 and $70,000 with no college education, most of them voted for McCain in 2008 (52-46 according to a national exit poll). The 2010 election was far more dramatic. White working class voters went Republican by 30 points.

Despite recent positive trends in job creation the question remains: what if this crisis for working people continues into the middle future without any real improvement in the economic situation of working people here and in Europe and if the now clear trend to stagnation and falling wages, benefits, and worsening working conditions comes to be understood as the new normal? It will be harder to misdirect anger at the conservatives' traditional target, a so-called liberal elite. It is the case that this "elite" that many working class people with a high school education or less encounter are mostly lower level professionals with college degrees who in one way or another can be seen as not us, not ordinary people, not our friends. But when the financial sector crashed and the government rushed to bail out the bankers who had caused the mess, people began to think differently about who was the real elite. As Barbara Ehrenreich and John Ehrenreich have written, the idea of the "liberal elite" created by conservatives could not survive the exposure of the real 1 percent, "by the discovery of the actual, Wall Street–based elite and their crimes. Compared with them, professionals and managers, no matter how annoying, were pikers. The doctor or school principal might be overbearing, the professor and the social worker might be condescending, but only the 1 percent took your house away." [8]

In Wisconsin we saw a tremendous outpouring of support from private sector unionists and other workers for college-educated public sector unionists who had been portrayed by Scott Walker and his cronies as a privileged elite living off the taxpayer. The solidarity showed by an incredibly large cross section of the working class — and not only in Wisconsin — is an emergent class understanding refuting the conservatives' worldview. The right, which has done so well misdirecting popular rage at Wall Street and capitalism onto working people and service recipients who did not cause the crisis but are made to bear its costs, is being challenged. An alternative left perspective redirects people to the failings of the so-called free market system at a time when global trends in economics and demography are undermining the illusions of a territorial United States they grew up with and is now a matter of nostalgia. Not only is there China and the rise of other once subject nations, but Republicans know in their gut that theirs is a demographically declining party. The GOP does poorly among younger voters, and it has little appeal to ethnic minorities who represent a rising share of the population. The native-born whites at the party's base worry that they are losing control of American society. But they are also learning that they never had it. The class analysis of the 1 percent/99 percent, even if overly crude, is politically effective and Wisconsin and Occupy have had their impacts.

Many workers will no doubt cling to the illusion of American exceptionalism; but as far as transnational capital and international finance are concerned all such exceptionalism is over. The transnationals consider the territorial United States a not very competitive production venue unless American workers continue to accept continuous draconian givebacks.

Indeed, as Robert McChesney writes: "The gap between the concerns of the masses and the solutions countenanced by the corporate-run political system are wider than at any point in generations. It is the defining political story of our times."[9] What the masses know at one level or another is that "capitalism is eating up our future." It is this knowledge that capitalism is the problem that has always motivated movements for revolutionary change.

In conclusion let me say that the very major disruptions — the relative decline in power of the United States in the global economy, the rise of China, demographic shifts and the expectation that the United States will be a majority minority society in a few decades, the acceptance of inter-marriage and of gay rights, the erosion of patriarchal norms in the number of college-educated women professionals, the downward mobility of working class white men, the growing income and wealth inequalities, the role of anonymous donor super-PACs — have unleashed a powerful rear guard active reaction in defense of white-skin privilege, patriarchy, and national chauvinism. Our task is to develop a usable class analysis in which the system itself comes into focus for people and the need for non-reformist reforms (understood as things working people need that are reasonable in their eyes and build working class consciousness) are widely put forward. The system either makes major concessions or reveals it will not or cannot meet such demands and perpetuates a situation of continued hardship for most working people. Such an answer speaks to the need for a post-capitalist society. Concessions that are of a non-reformist kind change the balance of class forces and help build the movement for further structural change to displace the system itself. I am not suggesting this is easy. But it is our job.

NOTES

1. Bill Vlasic, "Detroit Sets Its Future on a Foundation of Two-Tier Wages," *New York Times,* September 12, 2011.
2. This is from Scott Shane and cited by David Callahan, "Freelance Nation," *The American Prospect*, March, 2012, p. 41.
3. Nicholas D. Kristof, "The White Underclass," *New*

York Times, November 27, 2011.

4. Michael Zweig, *The Working Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, Second Edition, 2012). (p.3) Zweig defines classes "in large part based on the power and authority people have at work....A relative handful of people have great power to organize and direct production, while a much larger number have almost no authority. In a capitalist society such as ours, the first group is the capitalist class, the second group is the working class….For all their differences, working class people share a common place in production, where they have relatively little control over the pace and content of their work, and aren't anybody's boss. They produce the wealth of nations, but receive from that wealth only what they can buy with the wages their employers pay them. When we add them all up, they account for over 60 percent of the labor force. They are the working class majority."

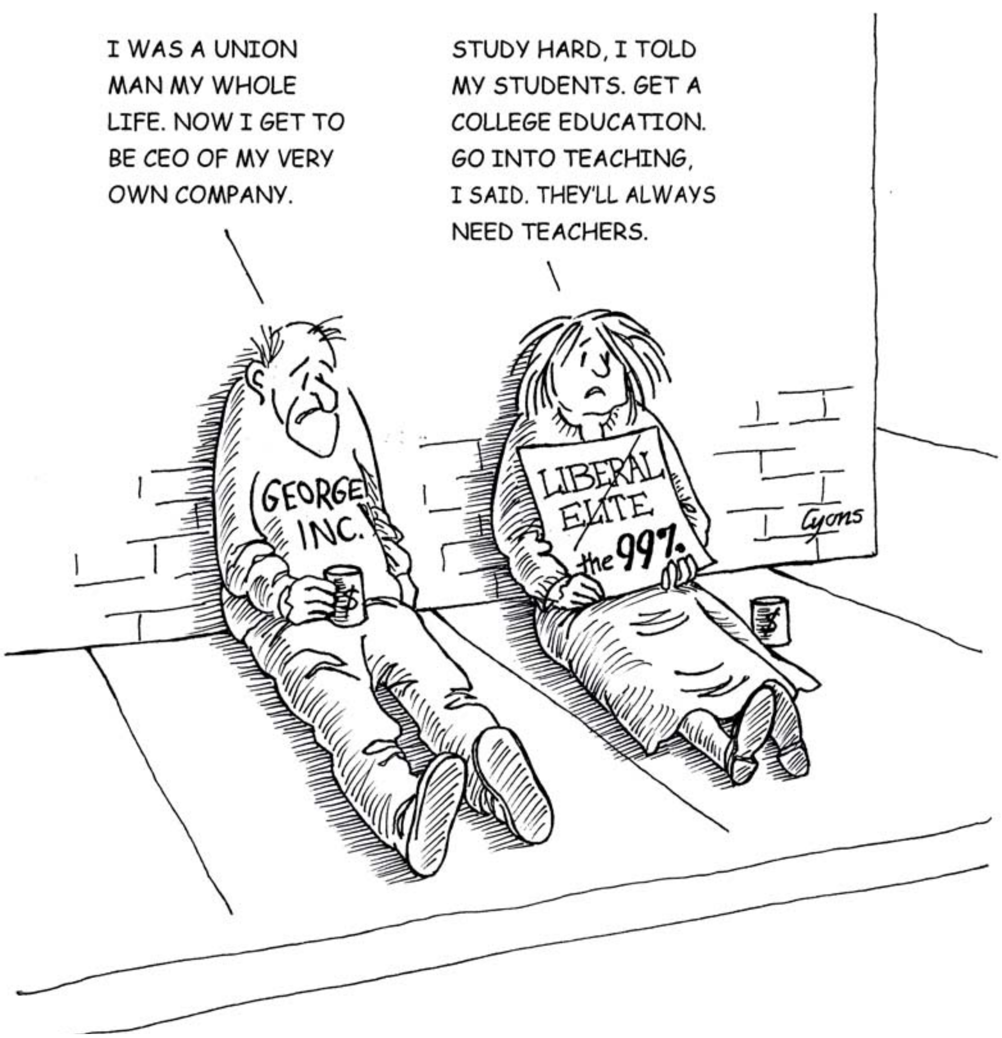
5. Bertell Ollman, *Dance of the Dialectic: Steps in Marx's Method*. (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 40.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Thomas B. Edsall, "The Future of the Obama Coalition, *New York Times*, November 27, 2011.

8. Barbara Ehrenreich and John Ehrenreich, "The Making of the American 99 Percent," *The Nation*, January 2, 2012, p. 19.

9. Robert W. McChesney, "Foreword" to Michael D. Yates, ed., *Wisconsin Uprising: Labor Fights Back* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010) pp. 15 and 17.



Mobs, Vigilantes, Cops, and Feds

The Repression of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Martin Oppenheimer

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, or "Snick") came out of the sit-in movement that began on Feb. 1, 1960 in Greensboro, N.C. Its founding convention was at Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C. April 15-17 that year. 200-plus-delegates representing student civil rights organizations at 52 colleges and high schools attended. By the summer of 1964, SNCC was able to mobilize approximately 1250 staff and volunteers for the famous "Freedom Summer" campaign to register black voters and to run "Freedom Schools" for black youth in Mississippi. That fall SNCC counted 160 full-time staff.

In December, 1973, nine years after the peak of its influence, the New York office of the FBI ended its surveillance of SNCC and closed its file, noting there had been no activity for several years "and that future prospects for such are exceedingly faint."[1]

SNCC changed from an integrated mass nonviolent direct action reform movement to a revolutionary black cadre organization.[2] It was destroyed by a combination of strategic errors and miscalculations, internal discord, and indirectly by its own successes. Its major strategic turning point was when it adopted the slogan of "Black Power," which soon led to the exclusion of whites from the organization. This may have led to a temporary uptick of organizing, but it meant a significant loss of experienced personnel, and a major decline in financial support. It was a big step towards SNCC's isolation.

But probably the single most important contributing factor to its demise was violent, as well as secret, repression: by mobs of white Southern citizens, by vigilante gangs (especially the KKK), by local and state police forces, and by the federal government (mainly the FBI). There is no disagreement by anyone in or around the movement, or those who have studied it (not mutually exclusive categories) as to the importance of this factor. Nor is there any disagreement that the categories "mob," "vigilantes," and "cops" all overlap: mobs were instigated by the Klan and allied groups such as the Citizens Councils, cops were Klan members, cops participated in and were complicit in vigilante activity, cops stood aside and allowed mob violence against people exercising their rights as citizens. The FBI (under J. Edgar Hoover) also looked the other way on numerous occasions, delayed action in other instances, and infiltrated SNCC and attempted to destroy it in its COINTELPRO operation.[3]

The South, in the years after World War II, had more in common with South Africa than it had with the U.S. North. More than half of all blacks were living in rural areas. A "Black Belt" of counties in which blacks were the majority or close to it ran from rural Maryland to East Texas. Their political influence in this belt was nil. In county after county where blacks were 60 percent and more of the population, not a single one was allowed to register to vote. All community facilities were segregated, or blacks were excluded entirely: restaurants, public libraries,

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swimming pools, movie theaters, bus terminal waiting and rest rooms, and of course housing and education including higher education.

The 1960 sit-ins[4] came on the heels of the 1954 and 1955 Supreme Court decisions requiring a "prompt and reasonable start" to eliminate segregated schools. This triggered a vast movement to resist school integration throughout the South and to the founding of the Citizens Councils, supposedly a more respectable version of the KKK, which itself enjoyed a big revival. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, under the leadership of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., was next (Dec. 1955-Nov. 1956). There were sit-ins to integrate the eating facilities of restaurants and chain retail stores prior to Greensboro, but they did not catch on. In Greensboro, however, contacts and resources were available to what would soon be a movement; the press and radio carried reports, and within sixty days the sit-ins spread to nearly 80 communities from Ohio to Florida. Most of this activity was in the "Upper South," that is, in communities where blacks did not constitute a major numerical and potentially political threat, in communities that were, by the standards of the day, "progressive." In March, 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was able to report that 138 communities had integrated at least some facilities.

Yet this did not come easily. Nearly 1,000 black and white civil rights activists were arrested during the first two months of the sit-ins. Hundreds of students suffered tear gas, police dogs, burning cigars on clothing, and beatings. Nonviolence training in the form of workshops did not prevent hostile and brutal attacks by

local whites, especially white youths, but did probably limit the damage. Local police normally either absented themselves, or stood by as these attacks took place, when they did not actively intervene to arrest the sit-in students or chase them from the premises with dogs.

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In the Deep South (South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana) the nonviolent movement and its community allies met with intense repression. Yet sit-ins and other nonviolent demonstrations (rallies, marches, picketing) did take place in places like Montgomery, Alabama (where the police department was heavily Klan), Columbia, South Carolina (where on one occasion 192 students were arrested while marching around the State Capitol building), and Orangeburg, South Carolina (where some 500 students were arrested and hosed down in a stockade in freezing weather). In these states integration of any facilities, never mind voting, was viewed by most whites as a threat to the basic social and political order, not without reason. Black participation in elections would (and ultimately did) lead to the election of black mayors, sheriffs, and other local and state officials. Intense resistance by local and state authorities, backed by mob violence, the Klan, and local Citizens Councils was the common response to any attempt to alter the status quo.

On April 17, 1960, SNCC was officially established. Even here, at black Shaw University, which hosted some 200 participants including King and others from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), two visitors to the conference were assaulted, one while picketing the local Woolworth "five-and-dime" store.

Although Shaw welcomed the conference, other Southern black colleges were generally hostile to the movement. They were dependent on white philanthropy, and their survival (especially the state colleges) depended on the good will of segregationist governors and legislatures. These proceeded to pass various kinds of laws restricting or banning picketing, allowing store keepers to bar whomever they wished, and providing local police with new "anti-riot" weaponry. The colleges themselves expelled student leaders (about 45 during 1960) and fired professors sympathetic to the movement (about ten that year alone). The cases of academic freedom and tenure coming to the attention of the American Association of University Professors increased from 37 in 1961 to 55 a year later; the majority of censured institutions were located in the South for many years after that.

Mobs

SEGREGATIONIST MOBS SHOWED UP on innumerable occasions upon the appearance of blacks (with or without white allies) attempting to integrate various facilities or register to vote. The assaults on the Freedom Riders in May, 1961, were atypical only in their setting: On May 4, 13 volunteers recruited by CORE (7 blacks, 6 whites) set forth in two buses from Washington, D.C. to test Court rulings banning segregation in interstate travel. Two of the 7 blacks belonged to SNCC. They were assaulted first in Rock Hill, S. C. Then a mob attacked the buses in Anniston, Ala. One bus was burned, the mob beating the riders as they fled. The second bus continued to Birmingham, where a white mob attacked the riders as they debarked for the waiting room of the terminal. The police, in cahoots with the Klan, were absent. The FBI did nothing, claiming (as in other instances) no jurisdiction. CORE was forced to discontinue the ride because no bus driver could be found to take the riders further. But now students from predominantly black Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn., vowed to continue the ride and on May 17 a group took a bus to Birmingham. All ten students (including two whites) were promptly arrested and a day later escorted to the Tennessee border. On May 20 a new group of riders left Birmingham for Montgomery, the state capital, escorted by police. The police disappeared as the bus approached Montgomery and when the bus arrived, a mob first attacked reporters, then the riders and a white Justice Department official, John Siegenthaler. Attorney General Robert Kennedy sent federal marshals in case of further trouble. However, the following evening, when the riders and local blacks assembled to hear Rev. King speak in a local church, whites began to riot outside, forcing the congregants to remain inside for the night. The governor of the state at first refused to intervene, but at the threat of federal troops being sent finally declared martial law and state troopers dispersed the mob.

Voter registration soon became SNCC's priority. In August and September, 1961, SNCC workers went to rural Mississippi to persuade local blacks to register. Progress in the face of assaults by local whites, including officials, and arrests, was impossible. On August 15 SNCC worker Bob Moses was jailed for two days; following his release he was assaulted and severely beaten. His assailant was subsequently acquitted by an all-white jury. In McComb, Miss., arrests and assaults followed a black student rally at City Hall. Bob Zellner, a white SNCC worker who was a native Alabaman, was beaten and severely injured. In Southwest Georgia, the number of incidents of blacks being attacked during demonstrations in 1962 and 1963 ran to eight single-spaced pages.[5]

There were several instances of mob activity that amounted to armed insurrection. The most notorious was at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss. in 1962. James Meredith, a black Air Force veteran, applied to the all-white University in early 1961. He was rejected. Ultimately the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the University to admit him. What happened then, in summary, is that by the time Governor Ross Barnett, who had sworn to use the state police to thwart the order, relented in the face of federal marshals, the town of Oxford was teeming with armed men, including units of the KKK. There was solid information that many more armed men were on the way. The marshals were insufficient to deal with such an insurrection. President Kennedy ordered in the Army, the vanguard unit of which was the highly trained riot-fighting 503rd Military Police Battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division from Ft. Bragg, N.C. These were all integrated units. In violation of direct orders to send all black troops back to Ft. Bragg, this unit, including a Chemical Company (gas), took off for Ol' Miss.[6] Other units removed their black soldiers and kept them away from the action, despite protests from both men and officers. President Kennedy also federalized the Mississippi National Guard. By the end of this episode, 31,000 soldiers including units of the 101st Airborne and 11,000 Mississippi National Guardsmen had been called in—three times the number of U.S. soldiers in West Berlin at the time. A two-day battle (Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1962) between armed mobs, marshals, and soldiers then ensued, as Meredith was quietly sneaked into the Lyceum Building, the administrative center of the University, to register. Two people were killed; 160 soldiers and 28 marshals were injured. Meredith graduated in August, 1963. In 1966 he would appear in the headlines once more.

Vigilantes

Vigilantes are people (individuals or groups) who believe that the law is unwilling or incompetent to defend the social norms of a community. Using various unlawful tactics including beatings, arson, and murder, they "take the law into their own hands." The Ku Klux Klan, from the post-civil war era to date, is a vigilante organization. During the 1960s individuals acting with or without organized assistance carried out numerous bombings and assassinations. A vigilante acting, as far as we know, alone, assassinated Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968.

On Sept. 5, 1961, Herbert Lee, a local black who had assisted SNCC in Mississippi, was murdered by a white State Representative, who was never indicted. A black witness to the shooting was beaten and several years later murdered. 1963 was marked by assassinations and bombings. Among those murdered were William Moore, a white civil rights activist who was assassinated on April 20 in Alabama; Medgar Evers, a NAACP leader in Mississippi, was shot down on June 12. A notorious local segregationist, Byron De La Beckwith, was charged but after two trials with all-white juries, no conviction was forthcoming. (In 1989 new evidence was produced, and he was finally convicted and sentenced to life. He died in prison in 2001.) On Sept. 15, four girls aged 11-14 died in the bombing of a black church in Birmingham, Ala.

Late in 1963 the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a coalition of civil rights groups with SNCC as the strongest component, CORE, and other groups, began to organize a massive campaign to register black voters in Mississippi. In mid-June, 1964, some 300 college students, mostly white Northerners, were brought to Oxford, Ohio, to prepare for the campaign. At the training sessions, a representative of Robert F. Kennedy's Department of Justice, John Doar, told the volunteers that the federal government could only investigate; it could not protect voter registration workers. He said protection was up to local police, which in effect meant the opposite, since it was well known that police in Mississippi were collaborators, if not actual perpetrators, of outrages against civil rights activists. The volunteers were shocked. But Doar's statement was patently untrue. Two years earlier President Kennedy had sent federal troops to the University of Mississippi to assure James Meredith's right to enroll. Federal troops had been used on any number of occasions to enforce court integration orders, as in Little Rock, Ark. in 1957 to enforce a school integration order. Moreover, there are many federal laws (not to mention Article 14 of the Bill of Rights) that were at President Johnson's hand.[7]

On June 21, 1964, at the beginning of "Freedom Summer," three volunteers including two members of CORE, James Chaney (black) and Michael Schwerner (white), and one fresh from the Oxford orientation, Andrew Goodman (white), went to investigate the burning of a black church, the Mt. Zion United Methodist, near Philadelphia, Miss. The church had hosted civil rights meetings and had agreed to sponsor a Freedom School. It had been burned to the ground. The men disappeared after having been briefly arrested in Philadelphia. Their bodies were found on August 4. During the search, the bodies of three other black men, one wearing a CORE T-shirt, were also found. The record is clear that the FBI was notified immediately when the men went missing but took no action in the critical two days between the disappearance and the date (it would be established) of the murders. The FBI in Mississippi at that time was all white, and most agents were native to the state. Eventually the U.S. Department of Justice charged 18 men with violating the civil rights of the victims (since the state had refused to indict for murder). These included the Sheriff, the Deputy Sheriff, and a Baptist minister. Most were acquitted, or served short sentences. The minister was retried in 2005, convicted, and sentenced to 20 years for each of the murders. He was 80 at the time. He was sent to the Mississippi State Penitentiary, better known as Parchman, which in the 1960s had hosted many civil rights workers including some of the Freedom Riders.

The murders of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were the work of Klan vigilantes in complicity with local police, assisted by foot dragging by the FBI. The project went forward, despite continuing attacks, including bombings, many assaults, and about 1,000 arrests. COFO collected data about these events that went to 26 pages. They ranged from murder to such relatively minor incidents as harassing arrests for vagrancy and "traffic violations." Not all were related to civil rights activities, but easily 90 per cent were, and many were police-related rather than vigilante.

Vigilante activity continued in many parts of the South. In the spring of 1965 a white SNCC staffer, Ira Grupper, paid a visit to Vernon Dahmer, a black businessman who was the head of the Hattiesburg, Miss. NAACP. Nailed to a tree in Dahmer's yard was a KKK recruiting flyer, clearly meant as a threat. Dahmer tore the flyer off and gave it to Grupper. The following January, after an apprehensive Dahmer had sent his family away, his house was firebombed and he was killed. Also that January, SNCC volunteer Sammy Younge, a Navy veteran, was shot and killed as he tried to integrate a "white" bathroom in Tuskegee, Ala. Then in June, James Meredith, of Ol' Miss fame, decided to walk from Memphis, Tenn. to Jackson, Miss. to promote voter registration. He was shot and wounded by a sniper on the second day of the walk. SNCC, CORE and King decided to continue the march. It was during this march that Willie Ricks, a SNCC organizer, proposed the slogan "Black Power" to arouse local blacks to join the voter registration campaign. It was quickly adopted by SNCC's main leader at the march, Stokely Carmichael, at which point the NAACP withdrew from the march. Even Meredith was opposed to the slogan. The march was attacked by white mobs and the police before it finally reached Jackson, the state capital.

Cops and Feds

THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT was that in the Deep South blacks in general and civil rights activists in particular (including whites) had no legal protection. When Charlie Cobb Jr. went to Ruleville, Miss. to initiate a voter registration campaign, he and two colleagues were stopped by a white man with a pistol, who ordered them into his car. This man was the mayor, the justice of the peace, and the head of the local Citizens Council. The three were told to get out of town. When they protested that the U.S. Constitution gave them the right to be there, the mayor's reply was, "That law ain't got here yet."

In Orangeburg, S.C. there were at least three major confrontations with the police: in March, 1960, with 500 arrests (mostly or all students) following a series of marches protesting segregated facilities; in August-October, 1963, further marches led to over 1300 arrests (including black community leaders); and then the "Orangeburg Massacre" in February, 1968. In this incident, after a series of student demonstrations about university policy, and about still segregated facilities in the downtown area, police backed by the National Guard occupied the campus. Believing that a shot had been fired at a police officer, police fired on students. Thirty-three of them were shot, three died.

Thousands upon thousands of civil rights activists were arrested during the 1960s, both individually and in groups, all while engaged in activities presumably protected by law. On October 19, 1960, 31 demonstrators including Rev. King were arrested in Atlanta, Ga. at a department store sit-in. President Kennedy telephoned his personal sympathy to King's wife, and the local judge was persuaded to release everyone. Kennedy won the election that November by a very narrow margin, attributed by many observers to a significant swing by black voters from their traditional Republican affiliation, some very likely influenced by the arrests and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy's intercession in the case.

Police arrested Freedom Riders on numerous occasions. Hundreds of arrests accompanied voter registration attempts over several years. In February, 1962, Charles McDew, who was then SNCC chairman, and two other SNCC workers were arrested in Baton Rouge, La. on criminal anarchy charges based on their membership in SNCC, which was thought to be seeking the overthrow of the state government. McDew and Bob Zellner were jailed for 35 days in "sweatbox" cells that could well have killed them. Zellner had already been convicted on similar charges in Albany, Ga. and served a month on a black "chain gang" repairing roads even though he was white. He was not endangered since his affiliation with SNCC was well known to the black convicts.

In Cambridge, Md. the Maryland National Guard was called out to block a march intended to protest the appearance of segregationist Governor George Wallace of Alabama at an all-white rally on May 11, 1964. Several of the leaders of the march were promptly arrested and the rest subjected to a gas attack. Guardsmen then began to fire, at which point apparently some local blacks began to fire back to protect the fleeing demonstrators.

Early in 1965 Rev. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Council initiated a voting rights campaign in Selma, Alabama. King was arrested Feb. 1, setting off marches that led to a thousand more arrests including hundreds of school children. In March, following the shooting of a black protester, Jimmy Lee Jackson, by a state policeman, SCLC decided on a march from Selma to Montgomery to publicize the disastrous conditions faced by blacks in that state. About 2,000, including a well-organized team from SNCC, began the march on March 7. At the Pettus Bridge just outside Selma the marchers were ordered to disperse and when they did not, the police attacked using clubs and tear gas. There were many injuries. SNCC chairman John Lewis (now Congressman) was hospitalized with a fractured skull. The march resumed a few days later only to be halted by police once more. King, at the head of the march, then turned it around in order to avoid further violence. During the following days three white clergy who supported the movement were attacked. One, James Reeb, died of his injuries. In contrast to the shooting of Jackson, this incident created a public uproar. The march finally did continue to Montgomery, accompanied by Army and Alabama National Guard troops. On March 25, after a rally at the capitol, Viola Liuzzo, a white volunteer who was driving to Montgomery, was killed by a sniper.

It was clear by 1966 that local authorities were willing and able to come down heavily against civil rights demonstrators. In Atlanta, after a riot broke out following a police shooting, Stokely Carmichael and several other SNCC workers were arrested and charged with inciting to riot (a typical charge). Their convictions were later overturned on appeal. SNCC leader James Forman, probably the leading theoretician of SNCC, concluded at the time that "the total power structure of the United States… was out to destroy SNCC."[8] Following a talk by Carmichael at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., April 8, 1967, an incident, again involving the police, triggered a riot. Police riot squads fired, hitting a building at nearby black Fisk University, and injuring several students. SNCC was blamed for this riot and its offices in Nashville raided. Several SNCC workers were arrested. At Texas Southern University in Houston, University officials prohibited the formation of a "Friends of SNCC" chapter. That May, during a mass student demonstration protesting this prohibition, police fired into dormitories, invaded and vandalized rooms, and arrested 481 people.

It should not be assumed that police repression was restricted to the South. SNCC and other direct action civil rights groups, including the Black Panther Party, were subjected to frequent police harassment, raids, and (in the case of the Panthers) even murder. In April, 1968, Panther Bobby Hutton, a teenager, was killed during a shootout with Oakland police even as he was surrendering, and Eldridge Cleaver was wounded. The Chicago police killed Panthers Fred Hampton (asleep and apparently drugged) and Mark Clark during a raid on Dec. 4, 1969. From March, 1968 to December, 1969, 19 Panthers and sympathizers working with them were killed.

In Philadelphia, Pa., in August, 1966, some 80 police backed up by a thousand more raided the SNCC office, its library, and two residences housing local militants. Four people were arrested and charged with possession of dynamite. Eventually the charges were dropped, but SNCC's efforts in Philadelphia came to a halt. SNCC warned its staff against "plants," frameups, and other attacks by the government intended to destroy the organization. In Chicago the SNCC office was also targeted by the police. SNCC's lead organizer left for exile in Tanzania. The Philadelphia Panthers suffered constant police harassment and in August, 1969, Panther offices were raided. By 1973 the Panthers had disappeared from the Philadelphia scene.

By the spring of 1967 SNCC joined the Panthers in openly advocating the right to armed self-defense (in practice nonviolence had been abandoned for some time). The new chairman, H. "Rap" Brown was quoted as saying "if America chooses to play Nazi, black folks ain't going to play Jews." Its claim to be "student" was outmoded as well, and by then it was coordinating very little. Following a speech at an anti-Klan rally in Cambridge, Md., a riot broke out, the National Guard was sent in by Gov. Spiro Agnew (later Richard Nixon's Vice-President), and Brown was arrested for arson and a few days later faced, for a second time, a weapons charge. SNCC staff was down to seventy.

The government's two-pronged strategy was becoming clearer: repression on the one hand, and active recruitment by Lyndon Johnson's anti-poverty programs on the other, although top leaders who had become notorious were excluded. The attraction of regular paid jobs, and the ability to support families, while actually organizing in the service of programs that were supposed to involve "maximum participation of the poor" could not be denied. After 1965, civil rights legislation passed under Johnson promised new opportunities in the realm of practical politics in the Democratic Party. Moreover, the constant talk of revolution and guns was apparently taken seriously by the authorities. "The government was on the offensive and everyone who had taken a revolutionary leadership position seemed to be fair game."[9]

Surveillance of movement activists, even by the Internal Revenue Service on alleged tax violations, became more intense. The government's strategy immobilized resources as activists were forced to divert attention to legal issues. COINTELPRO and other government actions (including the use of agents provocateurs) contributed greatly to creating an atmosphere of distrust within SNCC, and between it and other organizations. The FBI fabricated letters with fake threats by the Panthers to murder James Forman and Stokely Carmichael in order to stoke differences between the two groups. At SNCC's staff meeting in Atlanta in December, 1968, two of the 28 in attendance were FBI agents. One long-time staffer believes that FBI informers had been monitoring SNCC from the first, a notion that would not be surprising to older readers of this journal. Soon, battle fatigue would set in for some SNCC workers.

Following the assassinations of King and Robert F. Kennedy, and the police riot at the Democratic Convention in Chicago, urban guerrilla warfare became a topic of conversation both within radical black circles and its white sympathizers, and among the police and military. Many black activists (and many whites in and around Students for a Democratic Society, plus the usual left sects) concluded that efforts at reform had become futile in the face of repression, and that the only realistic road was armed struggle. The film The Battle of Algiers was popular on black college campuses. I.F. Stone, in his weekly newsletter commented on August 19, 1968 that "we face a black revolt…that the black ghettos regard the white police as an occupying army…that guerrilla warfare against this army has begun…" In *Army* magazine a Colonel Robert B. Rigg predicted, "in the next decade at least one major metropolitan area could be faced with guerrilla warfare requiring sizable United States army elements." Local police forces developed elaborate contingency plans, special tactical units, and the latest in counter-insurgency weaponry to deal with the feared onslaught of black guerrillas. On the ultra-right, the John Birch Society, the Minutemen, the Klan and similar groups were also preparing for race war.

Did SNCC fail? The short answer is "no." On a day-to-day level by 1970 the South was a vastly different place compared to just ten, and certainly twenty years before.

SNCC's mistake was to take state repression for a sign of weakness on the part of the power structure. SNCC only slowly came to understand that repression was now undergirded by a well-organized political backlash against the movements of the 1960s, especially against advocates of black power, which was widely portrayed as a call for violence against whites. SNCC was now at an impasse: The 1964 and 1965 Civil Rights Acts supported black voting and outlawed segregation. The more pragmatically oriented SNCC workers quit to work in the Democratic Party. In the South it was rapidly becoming the "black party" as whites defected after the passage of the 1965 Act. A number of SNCC veterans were now active in anti-poverty programs.

By 1966 only a handful of the many who had enlisted in 1960-64 remained. Conflicts with other civil rights organizations had become irreconcilable. Bob Zellner summarized the problem: SNCC began with three important tools. One was nonviolence, religiously-motivated, superbly suited for public relations (outside the South and throughout the entire observant world), and effective in changing "race relations" in Upper Southern states in significant ways, if not completely. The second was its interracial composition, also important in public relations and fund-raising. The third was its commitment to long-term organizing and the training of local leaders. The first and the second were abandoned by late 1966. Nonviolence was abandoned in the face of Southern mob and police terror. Going all-black was the consequence of the move to "Black Power." The third, grassroots organizing, was gradually whittled away as more and more SNCC workers took the route of working in various reform campaigns. The remaining militants felt increasingly isolated, yet were more convinced than ever that the revolutionary road, however vaguely defined, was correct. But that rhetoric led to further isolation and abandonment by liberals and mainstream civil rights organizations, and increased attention from the federal government.

Going into 1970, "Rap" Brown, the SNCC chair (the name had by now been changed to the Student National Coordinating Committee) still faced gun charges in Maryland. On March 9, the day before his trial, William "Che" Payne and Ralph Featherstone, who were to pick Brown up and take him to court, were both killed when a bomb in their car exploded. Brown then disappeared, going underground in Canada, but then in an episode still unexplained was wounded in a gun battle with New

York police following a robbery. He served five years in the notorious Attica prison, where he converted to Islam, changing his name to Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. After his release he moved to Georgia where, in 2002, he was convicted of murdering a black police officer. He is currently serving a life sentence in a super-max federal prison.

After the killing of the two SNCC workers, organizing activity virtually ceased. Purges and resignations among the remaining members continued. The FBI reported, in May, 1971, that in recent months SNCC had not "participated in any demonstration or disruptive activity, and it is believed incapable of accomplishing same in view of limited membership, lack of funds, and internal dissention."

It was over. The state had demonstrated that open black defiance was dangerous and suicidal. Black militants were imprisoned, assassinated, or they fled into exile. Stokely Carmichael, who had been expelled from SNCC for his association with the Panthers, changed his name to Kwame Tourè, and died in Guinea in 1998. Others, such as James Forman, who had also quit SNCC to work with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit, continued to be active. The League faced harassment and violence at the hands of the police (plus the bitter opposition of many white workers and the Auto Workers union officialdom, including its black officials) struggled into the 1970s, suffered a series of splits, and finally expired. But that's another story. Forman died in 2005.

Could SNCC have gone another route, could it have rejected the "Black Power" slogan, thus avoiding repression and again becoming a major factor in civil rights and American politics more generally? Probably not. Black power was certainly in the air before the Meredith march of June, 1966. Black nationalism in general and the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X in particular had attracted wide attention among younger blacks. The slogan of black power, joined to armed self-defense, recruited many for whom nonviolence had never made sense. The opposition to Malcolm X's militancy by the civil rights establishment made him even more attractive. Several SNCC leaders met with him just prior to his assassination on Feb. 21, 1965. The Black Panther Party soon became an increasingly attractive alternative model for SNCC and others impatient with the slow pace of progress for blacks.

Could SNCC have maintained at least a formal commitment to nonviolence while not criticizing local blacks who had, and used, arms? Could it have adopted "Black Power" and stayed committed to nonviolence? Not if it wanted to maintain its militant reputation and avoid being side-lined, given the temper of the times, especially in the ghettos of the North amidst the scenes of riot and police and national guard violence.

CORE had also abandoned its nonviolent tradition and adopted the black power slogan. Most of its white members, as well as James Farmer and other blacks from the days of its founding left after its 1965 convention. The momentum towards a black power strategy, however defined (and there were many definitions, from black power as support for black entrepreneurship to the theory of the ghetto as an internal colony) was irresistible. As Julian Bond recently wrote, "The current of nationalism, ever present in black America, widened at the end of the 1960s to become a rushing torrent which swept away the hopeful notion of 'black and white together' that the decade's beginning had promised." [10] The abandonment of SNCC and CORE by "white" liberal and labor groups and mainstream civil rights groups such as the NAACP simply confirmed the sense that there was no alternative to a militant black power strategy if real progress towards black liberation from white (and capitalist, in some views) oppression was to be accomplished.

The FBI under Hoover made little distinction between the respectable and the revolutionary among black activists. Nevertheless, while other organizations survived, the feds were committed to destroying SNCC and the Black Panther Party by any means necessary. There are limits: the state, which by definition claims a monopoly on the "legitimate" use of violence, ultimately cannot tolerate a challenge to that monopoly, whether by black revolutionaries, or by insurrectionary mobs. The use of federal troops to enforce court decisions from Little Rock to Ol' Miss, as well as the FBI's role in the demise of SNCC, rather than demonstrating the state's "neutrality," much less its weakness, reaffirmed its role as guarantor of stability and security, conditions essential to the capitalist enterprise.

Did SNCC fail? The short answer is "no." On a day-to-day level by 1970 the South was a vastly different place compared to just ten, and certainly twenty years before. "In the South," as Piven and Cloward said in 1977, "the deepest meaning of the winning of democratic rights is that the historic primacy of terror as a means of social control has been substantially diminished."[11] SNCC was central to this progress. Their veterans continue to this day to be active in progressive causes from coast to coast and even abroad.

The reforms envisioned by civil rights activists decades before the 1960s have been substantially won. The South has rejoined the Union at last. But the revolutionary changes that SNCC finally understood would be required for full equality and liberation from racism and oppression remain on the agenda.

NOTES

1. Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981) p. 298.

2. A cadre organization consists of members who make a maximum commitment to the cause, often as full-time workers, as distinct from a general membership organization where the level of commitment by most members is minimal or temporary.

3. Counterintelligence Program: "This program has as its objective the neutralization of black extremist groups, the prevention of violence by these groups and the prevention of coalition of black extremist organizations." FBI Memorandum, reprinted in Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret War Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (South End Press, 1988), p. 38. Neutralization meant, according to Hoover, efforts to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize" groups including the Deacons for Defense and Justice, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), SNCC, and even Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), plus others such as the Nation of Islam. Tactics included collaborating with local police forces to arrest local leaders "on every possible charge" and to make efforts to discredit these groups in the eyes of the "responsible Negro community." (Carson, pp. 262-263.)

4. The sit-ins were a strategy in which groups of blacks, mainly students, would occupy seats in restaurants and in the eating sections of department stores such as Woolworth's that did not serve black people, and ask to be served. When ordered to leave they would not, until closing time. They would return the following days until, it was hoped, the policy would change. Similar strategies were used to challenge segregation in other facilities such as "white" churches, public swimming pools, libraries, and amusement parks.

5. James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (Seattle, WA: U. of Washington Press, 1997), p. 274.

6. For the full story, see William Doyle, *An American Insurrection* (N.Y., NY: Anchor, 2003).

7. For example: "Whenever the President considers that unlawful obstruction…or rebellion against the authority of the United States makes it impossible to enforce the laws of the United States…by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, he may call into Federal service…and use such of the armed forces as he considers necessary to enforce those laws or to suppress the rebellion." In Len Holt, *The Summer That Didn't End: The Story of the Mississippi Civil Rights Project of 1964* (N.Y., NY: William Morrow, 1965) and (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1992).

8. James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (Seattle, WA: U. of Washington Press), p. 470.

9. Cleveland Sellers, *The River of No Return* (Jackson, MS: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1990) p. 258. Sellers started writing this book while serving seven months in jail after being shot, then arrested on multiple charges following the 1968 "Orangeburg Massacre" incident.

10. In Leslie G. Kelen (ed.), *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement* (Jackson, MS: Univ. Press of Miss.), p. 14.

11. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements* (N.Y., NY: Vintage, 1977), ch. 4.

Why the Tea Party?

Charles Post

The anti-capitalist left in the United States and around the world faces a paradox. A mere five years ago, the world capitalist economy entered a new long period of falling profits, stagnant accumulation, and growing long-term un (and under-) employment. The 2007-8 financial crisis threatened a wave of bankruptcies across the capitalist world that seemed to herald a collapse of major sectors of industry and finance. The dominant economic orthodoxy — neo-liberalism —with its worship of unregulated and self-correcting markets appeared to be in ruins. Capitalist governments around the world were pumping billions into their economies to forestall an economic implosion and stimulate new investment. In February of 2009, a lead article in the mainstream U.S. magazine, *Newsweek,* went as far as to declare, "We are All Socialists Now!"[1] A Rasmussen poll in April 2009 found that only 53 percent of those asked preferred capitalism to "socialism" (government regulation of a capitalist economy), while 20% preferred socialism and a full 27 percent were unsure.[2]

Yet, it is a new, militantly "free market" populist right that has channeled much of the popular anger sparked by the economic crisis in the United States and around the capitalist world. By the end of 2009, it was the "Tea Party" right that dominated the streets, mobilizing tens of thousands to oppose Obama's health care plan as "socialism" — despite its massive subsidies to private health insurance companies. The left, the labor movement, and movements of people of color, women, and queer people were completely marginalized, while the new right fueled a Republican sweep of the 2010 Congressional elections. In 2010, the "Tea Party" had its greatest impacts in Republican primaries and contested "swing" Congressional districts that Democrats had taken by relatively small margins in 2008.[3] The Republicans, with a substantial minority of "Tea Party" zealots committed to a new era of austerity and economic deregulation, won a majority in the House of Representatives and deprived the Democrats of their filibuster-proof super-majority in the Senate. As the 2012 Presidential campaign unfolds, candidates associated with the Tea Party — Ron Paul, Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum — scored upset primary victories against the Republican "establishment" candidate, Mitt Romney, and remain in the race in late March 2012.

Liberals and leftists have put forward a number of explanations for the rise of this militantly nativist, anti-labor, and libertarian populist right. Many have claimed that the 2010 election demonstrates the fundamental conservatism of the U.S. population. In some variants, the Obama program of change turned out to be "too radical" for most Americans, pushing them back into the arms of the Republican right. In other variants, the election of Obama was an anomaly, a temporary break to the left in a basically "center-right" country.

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Has the United States Moved to the Right?

EXIT POLL DATA for the 2008 and 2010 elections does not support the claim that the U.S. population has moved to the right. The "seismic shift" in representation in the House in 2010 was the result of very small shifts in the participation of key groups in the electorate.[4] In 2008, the Democrats received a total of 54.2 percent of the popular vote, with nearly 62 percent of the electorate voting, and won 58 percent of the House of Representatives. In 2010, the Republicans won 53.8 percent of the popular vote, with only 40% of eligible voters participating, and won 55 percent of the House. An eight percent shift in an election where only 40 percent voted — a shift of approximately three percent of the total eligible voters—accounts for the Republicans' victory.

> The "Tea Party" represents a radicalization of the white, suburban middle class of professionals, managers, and small business owners, who have garnered the support of a minority of white, native-born workers.

The Republican victory in 2010 was not simply a result of the sharp fall in overall voter participation compared with 2008, but in a marked change in the social composition of the voting population. The Democrats retook the House in 2006 with only 40 percent of voters participating. However, who voted changed radically. In particular, several key Democratic constituencies—people of color, youth and union members — turned out in much smaller numbers in 2010. In 2008, people of color (African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, and others) made up nearly 26 percent of the electorate. In 2010, only 22 percent of voters were people of color. We see an even sharper drop in the participation of young voters. Voters under the age of 45 made up nearly half the electorate (47 percent) in 2008, but only around one-third (34 percent) in 2010. Finally, the share of the electorate made up of union households dropped by nearly one-fifth between 2008 and 2010, from 21 percent to 17 percent. Put simply, a significant portion of those who voted for Obama and the Democrats in 2008, giving them substantial majorities in the House and Senate, did not vote in 2010. In other words, we saw a return to the patterns of voter participation in the United States since the late 1970s — an electorate that is disproportionately middle class professionals and managers, white, older, and suburban.

Additional evidence that U.S. popular opinion has not shifted to the right are polls that show consistent support among potential voters for a non-interventionist foreign policy, expansion of social services, and increased regulation of capital.[5] Recent Gallup Polls[6] have found that majorities of people in the United States have consistently believed that wealth and income should be more evenly distributed since 1984. In the most recent polls, 57 percent of those polls believed that income should be more evenly distributed, and 47 percent believed that the government should raise taxes on the wealthy. Almost two thirds of those earning less than $30,000 annually and slightly over half of those earning between $30,000 and $75,000 wanted higher taxes on the rich. In sum, it was the massive disaffection of working class, minority, and young people with both major U.S. political parties that allowed the electoral victory of the Republican right and a further rightward shift in the center of gravity of mainstream U.S.

politics.

Capitalist Manipulation?

An alternative argument is that the capitalist class is behind the Tea Party right and its street mobilizations and electoral victories. Many point to the role of right-wing billionaires like the Koch brothers in financing the Republicans' assault against collective bargaining rights in Wisconsin and across the midwestern United States.[7] It is clear that broad segments of capital in the United States support a resurgent and militant neoliberalism — demanding budgets balanced on the backs of working and poor people, social service austerity, and new attacks on public sector unions. There is also ample evidence that elements of the capitalist media — in particular the right-wing Fox News — has played a key role in creating and promoting the Tea Party.[8] However, there is little evidence that capitalists lead, finance, or direct the growing populist right.

Contributions to Congressional campaigns in 2010 do not show a marked capitalist preference for the Republicans or the right. In fact, the data indicates that capitalist donors had a slight preference for Democrats in 2010.[9] Of the total of $1,331,535,623 contributed by individual capitalists and corporate Political Action Committees (PACs), $640,651,184 (48 percent) went to Democratic Congressional candidates. Only $616,930,199 (46 percent) was contributed to the Republicans. Corporate PAC contributions were evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats, while Democrats received 50 percent and Republicans 48 percent of individual capitalists' donations in 2010. As of March 1, 2012, Obama has raised a total of $137 million, while Romney, Gingrich, Paul, and Santorum have only received a combined total of $130 million.[10] Put simply, the capitalist class in the U.S. continues to finance both Democrats and Republicans.

On practical policy issues, capital is quite willing to back the new populist right when its interests coincide, pushing for tax cuts on the wealthy, cuts to social services, and further deregulation of capital. In the context of a bi-partisan neo-liberal consensus, the issues of immigration and a willingness to risk a possible Federal credit default distinguish the Tea Party right from the rest of the political establishment. The two most important capitalist financed and led policy planning groups — the Business Roundtable and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce — have been publicly distanced themselves from the new right on these questions.

The Chamber of Commerce, which represents a broad cross section of capitalists in the United States, welcomed Obama's 2010 budget proposal and "pledged to work with the administration, the new House majority, and Democratic legislators on the Chamber's priorities over the next year."[11] While supporting cuts to social services, including Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, the Chamber also wants to increase the Federal debt ceiling. In a message to members of the Chamber urging them to contact their Congressional representatives, Bruce Josten, the Chamber's Executive Vice President, Government Affairs, argued:

> And we are going to remind you again. If Congress fails to raise the debt ceiling, there will be real impacts, for every American. Interest rates will rise for everyone — which means higher rates for American consumers and the small businesses who drive our economy. Car loans, mortgages, and business and student loans will all be more expensive.
>
> Now, make no mistake; too much spending and the need for real entitlement reform has led to the debt crisis we're in today. But jeopardizing our country's credit rating and fiscal security by refusing to compromise isn't the answer.[12]

On immigration, the Chamber has denounced Arizona's anti-immigrant law and initiated action in federal court, with the support of the ACLU and various Latino organizations and Arizona business organizations, challenging the constitutionality of SB 1070.[13] The Chamber of Commerce has also joined immigrant rights groups in denouncing the Obama administration's "silent raids" — in which Federal Immigration Control and Enforcement (ICE) officials inspect employers' hiring records and force the employers to lay-off undocumented workers.[14] This is not surprising, given that many of the Chambers' members — small and medium firms in labor-intensive industries—depend upon the cheap and "flexible" labor of undocumented immigrants.

The Business Roundtable, which speaks for the largest transnational corporations, has distanced itself even more clearly from the Tea Party's most radical positions. On immigration, the Business Roundtable's agenda is quite different from the Tea Party's calls for militarizing the border, criminalization of undocumented immigrants, and mass deportations. For the CEOs of the largest transnational corporations, the immigration system is "broken" because it fails to give them the supply of "flexible" workers it needs:

> Immigration reform must address the need of American businesses to access qualified, highly skilled professionals around the globe to remain competitive. Reforms must also address the current green card backlog for our Chinese and Indian employees and include an H1-B cap that is flexible based on market needs.[15]

Like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable supports the right's call for reductions in corporate taxes and the evisceration of Social Security and Medicare,[16] but clearly opposes any attempt to undermine the credit of the Federal government. During a conference call on March 30, 2011, Ivan Seidenberg, Chairman and CEO of Verizon Communications and the Chairman of Business Roundtable was quite clear:

> I don't think any of the CEOs would welcome a Government shutdown. I think you have all sorts of disruptions in the value chain, the supply chain, and our government services, so hopefully that could be avoided.[17]

On April 7, 2011, the Business Roundtable issued the following press release:

> We urge the Administration and Congress to agree on a sensible budget solution in time to avoid a government shutdown. A shutdown would have negative and unforeseen consequences, including heightening uncertainty and disrupting basic business services to government agencies.[18]

The Business Roundtable sent a letter to both Republican and Democratic Congressional leaders — co-signed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and several dozen industry-based associations — calling for raising the debt ceiling by August 2, 2011. They argued:

> Raising the statutory debt limit is critical to insuring global investors' confidence in the creditworthiness of the United States. With economic growth slowly picking up we cannot afford to jeopardize that growth with the massive spike in borrowing costs that would result if we defaulted on our obligations… In making this recommendation, we remain extremely concerned about the level of federal debt and large annual budget deficits… Tough calls on U.S. spending must be made as part of a debate about the budget and we agree that restoring balance to our fiscal position will require the government to spend less and spend more wisely.[19]

In the run-up to the deadline on the Federal debt ceiling, capital found other ways to make clear its desire for a compromise that would preserve the credit of the U.S. state. According to the *New York Times,*[20] Obama's 2012 campaign had already raised $46.3 million by July 2011—more than all of his potential Republican challengers combined. Approximately 40 percent of these contributions are collected by "bundlers" — wealthy individuals collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars.

A bi-partisan plan to raise the debt ceiling and preserve the credit of the U.S. state was passed despite objections from far-right Republicans in Congress. While Tea Party supporters on the right opposed any increase in Federal indebtedness and a small number of Democrats continued to demand small tax increases on the wealthy and corporations, the capitalist class was able to discipline its political representatives and avoid a U.S. debt default. The resulting cuts —especially to social services and education — will be severe. The establishment of a joint Congressional committee, whose proposals for future cuts will be subject to an "up-or-down" vote without any opportunities for amendments, will further restrict the ability of the new middle class right to oppose the demands of the U.S. capitalist class. [21]

The Radicalization of the Middle Class

In sum, the rise of a new populist right targeting immigrants, people of color, and unions during the current economic crisis is not the result of either the majority of Americans embracing its politics, or the machinations of the U.S. capitalist class. The "Tea party" represents a radicalization of the white, suburban middle class of professionals, managers, and small business owners, who have garnered the support of a minority of white, native-born workers.[22] As Matthew Rothschild argues:

> With economic pain at the highest level ever seen by most Americans, and with minorities especially hard hit, we're seeing a revolt not by people of color, not by the unemployed, nor the foreclosed upon. Instead, we're seeing a revolt by the white middle class. It's a revolt against the very notion of a positive role for government in helping people. It's a revolt against Latin American immigrants. It's a revolt against Muslim Americans. And it's a revolt against…[a] black president… Opportunistic and right-wing Republicans, politicians, business front groups, and media outlets like Fox have ginned up the hatred." [23]

Capital is more than willing to use this nativist, racist and anti-worker movement of the middle classes when their interests coincide. However, the new right has an agenda independent of, and at points (like immigration and the Federal debt ceiling) opposed to that of capital.[24]

Clearly, the growth of the Tea Party has emboldened the still small and marginal fascist right — the Klan, White Christian militias, and the like. While there are ideological similarities between this new right and classical fascism, the Tea Party mobilizes elements of the middle class primarily as passive voters, not as armed paramilitaries attacking unions, people of color, and immigrants.[25] Paul Street and Anthony DiMaggio make a convincing case that the Tea Party was a thoroughly top-down, primarily electoral and media-fueled phenomena with none of the characteristics (membership organizations, etc.) of a social movement — including classic right-wing populist movements.[26]

> The militancy and creativity of (the Wisconsinites') struggle, their ability to draw in workers not directly affected by the bill (police, fire-fighters, private sector workers), and the massive mobilizations put a lie to claims that American workers are hopelessly conservative and passive.

Ultimately, the rise of the right in the United States — as in the rest of the capitalist world — is the product of the dual crisis of liberal (in the rest of the world social-democratic) reformism in addressing the economic crisis, and of the labor and social movements to pose a political and social alternative to the failure of liberalism.[27] On the one hand, Obama and the Democrats have failed to address the economic crisis, in particular the persistent un (and under-) employment rates that still hover in the region of 15-20 percent despite the "recovery" of the past few months. If anything, Obama and the Democrats continue to embrace neo-liberal policies — maintaining low corporate taxes, business deregulation and global "free trade," and a federal budget balanced on the backs of the poor, working people, and the elderly. Their willingness to concede additional budget cuts, including to "entitlement" programs like Social Security and Medicare, to the Republicans to avoid a federal government shutdown and raise the debt ceiling demonstrates, once again, the Democrats' commitment to neo-liberalism.

On the other hand, there is the inability of the labor and social movements — in particular their official leaderships—to mobilize working people in support of our own agenda. Rather than organizing for an immediate end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, single-payer health care, universal amnesty for undocumented immigrants, the defense and expansion of public education and public services, the official leaders of our movements have gone along with Obama and the Democrats' pro-corporate agenda. Put another way, rather than giving a progressive and class direction to the growing anger over unemployment and falling living standards, the forces of official reformism—the officials of the AFL-CIO and CTW federation, the leaders of the mainstream civil rights, immigrant, women's, LGBT and anti-war movements — have helped create the political space for the new racist, xenophobic and pro-imperialist right. The "Tea Party" is simply filling the political vacuum left by the failures of liberalism and the labor and social movements.[28]

Unfortunately, many on the anti-capitalist left have contributed to this situation by seeking "strategic alliances" with Obama, the Democrats, and the forces of official reformism.[29] Many believe that a coalition of the left, labor officials, and the leaders of the social movements can push the Democrats to the left — to take up more progressive demands in order to mobilize disaffected workers, people of color, women, and queers to retake the House and White House in 2012. Unfortunately, the Democrats have never shifted and are not going to shift to the left to "recapture their base." Instead, they will continue, as they have for the past thirty-five years, to move to the right to attract middle class voters and corporate donors.[30]

Across the country, Democratic state legislators and governors like New York's Andrew Cuomo and California's Jerry Brown have joined hands with Republicans to gut social spending, cuts taxes on corporations and the wealthy, and attack public sector unions. At the federal level, the willingness of the Obama administration and the Congressional Democrats to meet the Republican leadership "half-way" will only embolden the Tea Party right to demand even deeper cuts in taxes and spending.[31] Even before the threats of a federal government shut-down and debt-default, Obama's Fiscal Commission issued a plan for "deficit reduction" in December 2010, including no new taxes on wealthy individuals and corporations, new regressive taxes (national sales tax, increased gasoline taxes) and deep cuts in social services, including Social Security pensions, Medicare, and Medicaid.[32] Despite the opposition of Moveon.org and other left-liberal organizations, the Democrats freely agreed to again sacrifice the living standards of its working class and poor constituents to prevent a U.S. debt-default. [33]

The Dead-End of "Lesser-Evil" Politics

Historically, attempts to simultaneously build an alliance with Democratic Party centrists and build social movements have led to the disorganization and decline of the movements and a shift to the right in U.S. politics. Time and time again — from the CIO upsurge of the 1930s, through the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s, to the movements against the Vietnam War[34] — the decision of the leaders of powerful and potentially radical social movements to pursue an alliance with the Democrats have derailed these struggles.

Today, trying to "push the Democrats to the left" or "make the Democrats fight" will not only be futile, but will actually strengthen the Tea Party right. Such calls became louder in the wake of Obama's speech of April 13, 2011 unveiling his plan for deficit reduction.[35] Obama's plans included a proposal for ending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest households, severe cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, small reductions in defense spending, and smaller overall cuts in federal domestic programs than the Republicans. Backing Obama's proposals will, again, lead the left to limit its organizing and demands so as not to confront and embarrass the Democrats.

In the name of "being realistic" we will not demand real, progressive taxation on individuals and corporations, the establishment of "Medicare for All" (single-pay health insurance), the dismantling of the military budget and expansion of public services. As we again adopt our politics to those of the Democrats, they will be free to "compromise" once more with the Republicans over cutting taxes on the rich and spending for working and poor people. With our movements further weakened and invisible, our "alliance" with the Democrats will allow the new right to remain the only voice of militant opposition to the failed policies of the Democrats.[36]

At the same time, the anti-capitalist left needs to be clear that growing disillusionment will not spontaneously lead to a left wing radicalization.[37] Clearly, in the past few months there have been some hopeful signs that there are significant minorities of working people who are looking for a class alternative to the failures of liberalism and the rise of the right. In November, 2010, Howie Hawkins' Green party campaign for New York Governor, and the explicitly socialist campaign of Dan La Botz for Senate in Ohio raised the profile of the anti-corporate and anti-capitalist left. The outrage of former Obama supporters like Cornell West and Keith Obermann and the surprisingly positive responses to independent Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont's attempt to filibuster the tax bill last year are also hopeful signs. Even more encouraging are the recent struggles against union busting and austerity, most importantly in Madison, Wisconsin in March 2011 and the "Occupy" movement in Fall 2011. Clearly, there are some working people who are ready and willing to fight back.

Reorganizing the "Militant Minority"

HOWEVER, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE STRUGGLE in Wisconsin and "Occupy" demonstrates both the possibilities and limits of working class and popular fight-back in the U.S. today.[38] All of us on the anti-capitalist left were inspired by the sight of tens of thousands of workers, students and community people mobilizing day after day to block Governor Walker's union busting bill. The militancy and creativity of their struggle, their ability to draw in workers not directly affected by the bill (police, fire-fighters, private sector workers), and the massive mobilizations put a lie to claims that American workers are hopelessly conservative and passive.

However, the official union leaders in Wisconsin were able to keep the struggle within a framework acceptable to the Democrats. On the one hand, the labor officials accepted both cuts to public services and public worker concessions in the interest of "balancing the budget." On the other, they were able to undermine attempts to spread strike actions, like the sick-outs by Madison public school teachers, into a wider strike movement that could have defeated Walker's attack on public sector workers and services. While there were and are continuing attempts to organize rank and file union and community activists to oppose austerity and build more militant actions, their relatively small numbers made them incapable of posing an effective alternative to the labor officials and their Democratic allies.

While much broader and militant than

the Wisconsin uprising, especially on the West Coast where it inspired work-stoppages (Oakland "General Strike"), the Occupy movement that swept the United States in the fall of 2011 exhibits similar limits. Although it temporarily shifted public discourse to the left — making the issue of growing inequalities between the 1 percent (capital) and the 99 percent (the rest of us) a central issue of discussion — the movement failed to win many concrete victories. In early 2012, many of those radicalized by Occupy are facing tremendous pressure from the union officials to "move from protest to politics" — abandon militant demonstrations, occupations of public space and work stoppages to campaign for Obama's reelection.

Drawing on the work of David Croteau, Sheila Cohen[39] points out that the failure of rank and file workers to effectively counter the capitalist offensive is not the result of some innate social conservatism:

> … workers agreed with almost all the radicals' demands on such issues as war, the environment, etc; the difference was that they did not see how these demands could be achieved. The study makes an important distinction between the "expressive" and "instrumental" orientations of these two groups. While radicals achieved solace from the experience of "movement" struggles per se, for workers the essential issue was not the demands, but how they would be achieved. Their reigning attitude was one of fatalism, a "Yes, but what can you do?" approach.

The root of the crisis of the labor and social movements is the long-term decline of the "militant minority" — worker and community activists who continue to organize, educate, and struggle independently of the official leaders of the labor and social movements between big struggles. There are simply too few activists with deep roots in their workplaces, communities, schools, and universities who have a radical vision and a strategy for organizing to pose an effective alternative to the dead-end politics of the forces of official reformism. As a result, what the Canadian socialist Alan Sears[40] has called the "infrastructures of dissent" — working class and popular organizations (unions, tenants groups, immigrant rights organizations, etc.) and institutions (cultural centers, book stores, newspapers, etc.) — are much weaker than in the 1960s and 1970s.

Not surprisingly, most working people have been forced to pursue individual solutions to declining living standards over the past thirty years.[41] Put simply, workers' capacities to fight and win have been greatly diminished. The weakness of working class and popular organizations provides a fertile ground for deepening cynicism, which opens significant minorities of working people to appeals from the populist right.

Fighting the right will require the revival of working class and popular struggles that can effectively pose an alternative to the bi-partisan, neoliberal offensive. There will be opportunities for building broad political challenges — anti-corporate election campaigns, coalitions against budget cuts and social service austerity, mobilizations against the war. However, in the absence of the experience of mass, militant, and successful struggles the audience for a broad movement against neo-liberalism will be limited. The anti-capitalist left needs to commit itself not simply to educating and agitating for alternative political programs and demands, but the long-term process of rebuilding the capacities of working people to organize and struggle in the workplace, the community, and the streets. This process of rebuilding will begin around very immediate and "limited" issues — speed-up or lay-offs in a workplace, closing of a school or hospital, or opposing tuition hikes. Only through this experience of collective organization and action against capital and the state — and some concrete victories — will we be able to turn disillusionment with liberalism into left-wing radicalism.

Editors' Note: A fully footnoted version will be found on our website newpol.org.

Joe Hill Revisited

Jose Colina

> Dance among the standing cars,
> Each suit will blow his horn…
> Let's make them doubt the system
> To which they were lately born.

I recently read *The Man Who Never Died*, William Adler's new biography of Joe Hill. Before he died a martyr to the Industrial Workers of the World and the radical labor movement in general in 1915, Joe Hill wrote songs to encourage workers who were striking or demonstrating, and sometimes workers whom he felt needed convincing.

Joe Hill's songs, like those of Woody Guthrie, united and inspired the people who were singing them.

It doesn't feel as if it should be necessary to tell anybody about Joe Hill, but recently I was speaking to the adult daughter of two radicals, and she'd never heard of him.

> The occupiers talk for hours…
> What a patient bunch.
> I hope that dinner time don't come
> Before they vote on lunch.
>
> But from their talk there comes a sound,
> A great, united roar
> About the few who have so much,
> The many who need more.

Joe Hill would have written about the Occupy Movement if he'd been around to do it. His songs were collected in several editions of a volume called *The Little Red Songbook.* It was passed around in mines and mills and labor camps. It's preposterous to suppose that a man could be railroaded and ultimately murdered by the state (Utah, in Joe Hill's case) for writing songs about solidarity and workers' rights. Therefore, officially Hill was executed after he was found guilty of murder, though the case against him was at best shaky.

> They tell me I must vote, and who's to say? Perhaps I should.
> But how am I supposed to think that it would do much good?
> For both sides running candidates are funded by the men
> Who've always been the winners, and they're out to win again.
>
> Republican or Democrat, you're gonna need the dough
> That only corporations have if you're inclined to show
> The people watching TV that they ought to vote for you…
> Their lives will be much better, right, if that is what they do?

Joe Hill and many of his fellow IWW members believed that wars pitted young men — many of them feeling they didn't have a lot of options other than the military — against each other to achieve various ends desired by corporations and politicians. This position is certainly as valid today as it ever was, perhaps more so. Nations have always celebrated their war machines and even as investigations have demonstrated that soldiers returning from war are poorly served in terms of medical care, psychological and psychiatric care, job counseling, housing, and various other less obvious needs, this nation celebrates the glorious IDEA of the soldier with noisy martial demonstrations and flyovers between halves of football games.

> It's said that nations can't make peace by gearing

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up for war,
But those who build the guns and bombs are crying out for more…
And we are urged to back the troops, no matter whom they kill.
It's always been that way, I guess. Perhaps it always will.
But maybe there should be a day for recognizing those
Who've walked away from "duty," punched a general in the nose,
Or spiked the mighty cannons so those cannons couldn't roar…
The ones who've seen in mankind higher purposes than war.

Doggerel isn't song, of course, and it certainly can be argued that Joe Hill's songs and even his death changed nothing, and that Woody Guthrie's guitar didn't really kill fascists. On the other hand, perhaps there's something to be said for remembering their efforts and adding a few lines in their memory…especially when considering some of the more stubborn notions poisoning our political discourse these days.

They tell me I must vote, and who's to say? Perhaps I should. But how am I supposed to think that it would do much good?

I've heard it said that Mexicans who've moved should move on back.
But let us look to history to keep us on the track.
An awful lot of Mexicans would get along just fine,
If we could hear them when they said, "Hombre, you moved the line!"

I don't have any idea how the Occupy Movement will influence people in the long run. It does seem to me that it's a heartening development, since at least it means people are feeling the impulse to squawk about the obvious and persistent inequities in this country and elsewhere.

Joe Hill squawked, too.

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill at every Occupying site.
His voice rang out, encouraging those folks that they were right.
And when the parks were emptied, Joe was jailed, but not for long…
Wherever protest flourishes, Joe Hill will sing along.

Occupy Wall Street, Composers, and the Plutocracy

Some Variations on an Ancient Theme

John Halle

In the six month since its difficult birth in mid-September, Occupy Wall Street has attracted a widespread and largely favorable reaction among the public with a recent poll indicating 54 percent support, far higher than most political institutions, established parties and elected officials. Of course, the reaction has not been universally favorable. The political right wing has been withering in its criticism, but they have not had a monopoly on their viewing Occupy as a alarming, corrosive, and even sinister development in political consciousness. Indeed, some of the most brutal and violent assaults against Occupy encampments have been undertaken by municipal governments in Oakland, Albany, Portland, and Chicago having the reputation as at least liberal, and even on the radical left.

So the question of who supports Occupy is by no means as unproblematically aligned on the left/right spectrum as it initially appears. As for specific social classes and professional categories, matters are just as confused, with supporters claiming a broad representation from all walks of life and critics of Occupy denigrating participants as trust fund babies or slacker college grads who need to "get a job." When it comes to artists generally and composers in particular, the question of how involved we are is more problematic still, and is likely to remain unanswerable for the forseeable future.

But that doesn't mean that composers can't usefully discuss the question with an eye to learning more about who we are and what makes us tick. And it is with that in mind that I will offer the following short answer, based on my experience as a relatively active participant in the movement and my having attempted to organize support for it among composers here. I don't think that we have been well represented in the Occupy Movement. This, however, needs to be accompanied by a disclaimer; more than most professional categories, composers are profoundly committed to what we do. Keeping our distance from OWS prevents us from getting mired in the swamps of politics, something which we would avoid as we would anything else which takes us away from our work.

That said, we know this cannot be the entire explanation. For example, many of us will recall having devoted considerable energy to the Obama campaign, demonstrating that composers can be highly political when we want to be. With this in mind, we can return to the original question: why have we not been involved in a movement whose stated objective is advancing economic justice for the 99 percent?

Now a somewhat more problematic answer suggests itself: for centuries, composers were beholden to the one percenters of their day, the feudal aristocracy. And while aristocratic patronage would decline during the 19th century, the traditions and political allegiances inherited from this golden age live on. While we are not, like Haydn, required to wear powdered wigs

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and military uniforms, the barriers separating us from the plutocracy are significantly less pronounced than those obtaining in other professions. And as the degrees of separation diminish, we are more likely to view economic elites as individuals who, like any others, deserve our respect rather than as a class that has earned our contempt.

That we are in relatively close proximity to them can be seen in the following tour of some of the premier arts institutions with which we are associated or at least hope to gain favor. Having familiarized ourselves with these surroundings, I will continue with some reflections on the broader picture which emerges, and conclude with some thoughts on how composers who choose to become active in the OWS movement can most usefully direct their energies.

> When radical style turns into radical substance — that is, when it challenges the economic basis of elite prerogatives and privilege — the one percenters of today, as of generations past, are ready, willing, and able to replace the proverbial velvet glove of acceptance with an iron fist of repression.

A GOOD PLACE TO BEGIN is with the winner of this year's Alice Ditson Prize for the promotion of American music, the New York Philharmonic. Much of the credit for this programming goes to the recently appointed music director, Alan Gilbert. But the financial wherewithal for these programming decisions is provided by the NY Philhamonic board and its chairman, Gary S. Parr. Mr. Parr is currently CEO of Lazard, his bio on the NY Phil website informs us, in which capacity he

> has recently advised on transactions such as the sale of Lehman's North American investment banking business to Barclay's; the sale of Bear Stearns to JPMorgan; he served in numerous capacities at Morgan Stanley, including as vice-chairman, Institutional Securities and Investment Banking.

Accepting a commission from or performance by the New York Phil in no way implies that we are sympathetic with these activities — for example, the "sales" of Lehman and Bear Stearns[1] underwritten by the extortion of hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars. But it does mean that we have an indirect financial stake in concentrating wealth in the hands of one percenters like Mr. Parr who provide the ultimate financial basis for our work.

The same can be said about our relations with Sanford Weill, the chairman of the board of another pre-eminent uptown musical institution, Carnegie Hall. In this capacity, composers are grateful to Mr. Weill for helping to foot the bill for the impressive range of contemporary music under Carnegie's auspices.[2] This Dr. Jekyll is complemented by the Mr. Hyde who was the former CEO of Citibank, the company perhaps most responsible for the marketing of subprime loans which were to blow up the economy, immiserating hundreds of millions, while helping itself to hundreds of billions of dollars in bailout funds.

Returning to Lincoln Center, we find ourselves truly in the belly of the beast upon entering the David Koch Theater, named after the notorious sponsor of far right initiatives, and home to the New York City Ballet, a frequent and consistent advocate for American composers. Also in this category is the New York City

Opera, whose orchestra is now being subject to a vicious union busting campaign by its director, George Steel, which Mr. Koch and others of his ilk would undoubtedly heartily approve of. A few lateral steps will land us in the Metropolitan Opera, whose $300 million budget is underwritten by a board including billionaire heiresses from the publishing and oil industries, a managing director of Goldman Sachs, and former CEO of Texaco. Among the more problematic features of the Met in recent years has been the Alberto Vilar Grand Tier, the name having been removed following the donor's conviction on multiple counts of defrauding investors.

Mr. Vilar reminds us that not all of the crimes on which were constructed the great fortunes we benefit from went unprosecuted. Moving a couple of blocks uptown from Lincoln Center provides us with more evidence: Merkin Hall was presided over for many years by Ezra Merkin, the chief marketer of the Bernard Madoff line of investment products, whose once eager purchasers are now required to subsist on Social Security, having lost their life savings to the smooth talking Talmudic scholar, White Shoe lawyer, and music lover. Some of the programs at Merkin have been sponsored by the Milken Center for Jewish Music and here we are submerged in the previous wave of financial crime presided over by the Milken brothers, the notorious junk bond kings.

Major artistic institutions such as these are, of course, well known for their longstanding connections to financial elites, so the above list could be continued almost indefinitely. Given that the latter has become a de facto criminal class, we shouldn't be surprised that our tour has by now degenerated into a kind of perp walk — albeit perps attired in Brooks Brothers suits with refined musical tastes.

IT WAS AT LEAST PARTLY IN REACTION to the stifling artistic climate created by these stuffed-shirt connections that the downtown school of composition would arise in the sixties and seventies, though it was probably inevitable that, as it became established, downtown institutions would be underwritten by similarly problematic sources. This became apparent in the nineties when numerous downtown events received sponsorship provided by the preeminent rogue corporation of its day, Philip Morris, including a major gift to the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Another source was the DIA foundation, established by the heiress of the Schlumberger oil services fortune and most notable for its sponsorship of a six-year residency of the iconic minimalist composer La Monte Young.

Another pole of downtown, the Bang on a Can Festival, has now been held for some years at the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center. This merits comment since, as I write this, OWS demonstrators are being violently dispersed by the police at the behest of the Winter Garden's owners, Brookfield Properties. This dichotomy provides a renewed demonstration that elites have little difficulty countenancing expressions of artistic radicalism. Indeed, they will open their doors to it and — quite literally — invite us in. But when radical style turns into radical substance — that is, when it challenges the economic basis of elite prerogatives and privilege — the one percenters of today, as of generations past, are ready, willing, and able to replace the proverbial velvet glove of acceptance with an iron fist of repression. This is the logic through which the Winter Garden, formerly the site of many years of the classical music world's version of Woodstock, has just now become a war zone.

Interestingly, one of the board members having signed off on Brookfield's actions is Diana Taylor, the live-in companion of the Pontius Pilate of OWS, Mayor Bloomberg. The billionaire mayor himself is also a strong supporter of the arts although, in another indication of the entanglement of the public and private, his contributions frequently compensate for budget cuts enacted in his executive capacity. That there are strings attached to these donations became clear when *The New York Times* reported that the beneficiaries were expected to enlist in support of the mayor's controversial ballot initiative to revoke term limits.[3]

It should be recognized that attempts at advancing a political agenda through pulling artists' purse strings are uncommon. In the concert music world they are rarer still, the only recent instances which come to mind involving donors pressuring the Boston Symphony to rescind an invitation to Palestinian rights supporter Vanessa Redgrave and subsequently to cancel a concert staging of John Adams' opera *The Death of Klinghoffer.* That these instances are so rare might be taken to be indicative of orchestra boards' tendency to maintain a hands-off policy with respect to artistic decisions. But it would be a mistake to claim that they do not exercise significant influence, albeit in an indirect fashion. As elites have understood for generations, their simple presence at the upper levels tends to insure that they will not have to exercise direct veto on forms of expression of which they would disapprove.

The megalomania of a composer like Wagner and that of a CEO like Rupert Murdoch may not be so different after all.

Rather, a climate is created in which artistic decisions are made with an awareness of the location of certain political boundaries, and those at all levels of the organization choose not to transgress them. These decisions don't need to be conscious as those making them have often, to cite a remark by Noam Chomsky, "internalized the values of the elites themselves" to the degree that they do not require guidance or discipline. The extent to which we do so will be the last subject I will address.

THE CLAIM JUST MADE is a slightly more pointed formulation of the suggestion made previously that our long history of aristocratic patronage may offer an explanation for our inherent tendency to throw in our lot with the one percent. But there is more to our identification and affinity with elites than shared history and economic self-interest. First, as composers we function in an executive capacity, one which involves, to cite a provocative remark of John Cage, "telling other people what to do." Just as the CEO dictates the precise specifications of a product and the conditions under which his labor force produces it, composers, if anything, go a step beyond the most repressive corporate executive, dictating every gesture by a workforce which is almost totally under the control of the choreography we produce for them in our scores. The megalomania of a composer like Wagner and that of a CEO like Rupert Murdoch may not be so different after all, and it should come as no surprise that the Met, a three ring circus of *gesamkunstwerklich,* e.g., activity, is the most generously endowed of all art institutions.

Second, just as CEOs define themselves according to an intensely structured and rigid hierarchy which they have succeeded in ascending, so too do classical musicians take for granted something roughly equivalent. Our training as performers or composers is founded on the notion of the transcendent musical masterpiece — those works whose inherent excellence and structural sophistication have allowed them to survive the Darwinian competition for survival in the musical marketplace of the concert hall. Our own work, insofar as it is successful, also manages to survive and thrive within its own place and time. In accepting this hierarchy, and the basis on which it rests, we recapitulate what are by now familiar arguments of corporate executives in the top 1 percent as to their own fitness and legitimacy. Given this shared set of attitudes, the mutual affinity of composers and plutocrats probably shouldn't come as a surprise. And, to return to the original observation, it is more or less natural that we would view with suspicion a movement whose commitment to radical democracy seeks to challenge not just the basis of the social hierarchy, but the notion of hierarchy itself.

Finally, there is the matter of the highly controlled, quasi police-state atmosphere of the concert hall, one which forces audiences to submit passively to the experience imposed on them by the composer. As pointed out by Lawrence Levine in his much discussed 1988 book *Highbrow Lowbrow*, it is no coincidence that domestic classical music institutions were created by industrialists at the turn of the century confronted with mass popular uprisings. The codes of conduct attached to classical music were seen by them as a means to impose discipline on what they regarded as a dangerous mob and their support for it can be seen as another front in the war waged by elites against "the rabble." That we might not perceive ourselves as having allied ourselves with them does not mean that we are not objectively supporting their broader agenda.

AT THIS POINT, it should be recalled that what I have laid out here are my opinions, which I have reached in the absence of rigorous studies relating to the representation of musicians within OWS, none of which, to my knowledge exist. That said, there are two pieces of hard evidence, albeit limited and circumstantial, worth mentioning here. The first is the Occupy Musicians website alluded to previously, and the mixture of negative responses and non-responses I received in my attempts to organize for it. Compounding this with the relative absence of names of well-known composers, many of whom were contacted for inclusion and chose not to sign on, provides one general indication that composers have kept their distance from OWS.

The second piece of evidence implicating the unexpressed attitudes towards OWS comes in the form of the numerous comments attached to the viral Facebook posting created by Los Angeles-based composer Eric Guinivan:

TOP: *Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn*
MIDDLE: *Brahms, Tschaikovsky, Mahler, Strauss*
BOTTOM: *Debussy, Bartok, Stravinsky, Shostakovich*

While it is always a dicey business to excavate the foundations of a joke, in this instance it is revealing that the majority of the respondents simply register agreement with the proposition, making note of the disproportionate representation of a small number of elite composers in the world's concert halls, "Sooooo true. Ha, ha!" says one.

But these comments beg the question: why does pointing out this self-evident truth seem funny to us? What appears to be operative here is humor of the classic Freudian type: the joke masks the introduction of a taboo topic, namely that the Darwinian world of the concert hall is a brutal one in which very few of us can be expected to survive either in the here and now or in the future. And so we tend to broach the subject in jest or after a few beers.

Another possibility is that the humor resides in the Pythonesque absurdity of the premise: that programming decisions should be, like the OWS general assembly, radically democratic, granting all composers, living or dead, equal access to public performances. The logical consequence of this philosophy, for example, that the Wagenseil Piano Concerti should be programmed with the same regularity as those of Mozart would strike many as coming close to a dystopia, of course. One commenter's avowal that "he's with the 1 percent on this one" seems to be a recognition that this scenario, equivalent to imaging a hospital intensive care unit staffed by chimps, is perhaps better left to the imagination.

In either case, whatever is the basis of the joke, which I found as amusing as everyone else, the reactions to it are entirely self-referential at best or merely self-absorbed. They give no indication of any particular sympathy or, for that matter, even any understanding of the basic issues which have motivated OWS and its supporters.

In laying out some of the reasons for our not having done so, I don't mean to suggest that composers can't be active participants in OWS. If there are any doubts of our potential, they will be removed by viewing Alex Ross's extraordinary video taken on Lincoln Center Plaza following the final performance of Satyagraha at the Met on Dec 1. In what is by now a minor legend, Phillip Glass decided against taking his curtain call on stage and to stand with occupiers on Broadway across the plaza requesting that the Met audience exiting the theatre join them. Police barricades had been erected to prevent precisely this — a demonstration in support of Occupy in Lincoln Center — but Glass's presence, the message of the opera, and occupiers' repeated reminder that "the opera is your life," proved so compelling that hundreds ignored the police orders.

It needs to be well understood that these actions were illegal — indeed textbook cases of civil disobedience; had typical OWS demonstrators disobeyed police orders would have subjected them — possibly hundreds of them — to arrest at least, violent assaults at worst. Indeed, Glass himself could have reasonably been charged with incitement, a serious felony. But, even in the nascent police state into which New York City has devolved under the current administration, such a response would have been unthinkable. The opera audiences engaged in the act are one of the few constituencies which Bloomberg must treat with deference. And Glass himself has by now become an iconic figure, one of the very few classical composers who can legitimately stake a claim to real cultural and even moral authority.

That Glass's protest appeared in the pages of *The New York Times* speaks to the unique power which classical music and classical musicians still command. Resting on top of the pinnacle of elite artistic culture, constructed on generations of aristocratic patronage, our work provides us an entry into in the inner sanctum of the one percent. Few of us will ever achieve the status as composers which will allow us this access. And, it could reasonably be argued that Glass, a member of the composerly one percent, knowing that he is immune from retaliation, can exercise his rights to protest in a way which composers of the 99 percent cannot. Some of Glass's numerous detractors may see his activism as nothing more or less than another public relations stunt profiting from the "buzz" surrounding the now fashionable OWS movement. But that is too cynical. All that needs to be said is that Glass stepped up to the plate. It remains to be seen how many of the rest of us will.

The tendency of composers to throw in our lot with those Theodore Roosevelt called "economic royalists" will not come as a surprise to some in that it amounts to another form of what the Marxists call false consciousness. Another probably more familiar variant of this minor pathology was personified by the brief celebrity of Joe the Plumber during the 2008 campaign who, it will be recalled, was concerned that Obama's economic policies would place an excessive burden on him, as a prospective owner of the firm he worked for.

Of course, the difference here is that, unlike Joe, few composers imagine ascending to an economic status where we would benefit from policies designed to enrich the 1 percent. Rather, our tendency to do so has at least a superficially rational basis: while we will not be the recipients of the flood of cash precipitated by upper-income tax cuts, "right to work" legislation, the repeal of the Glass-Steagal act and the bail out of financial institutions, our close proximity and historical ties to the elites — so the thinking goes — will insure that we will be first in line to collect the scraps from their table. Even if we don't believe in trickle down economics providing broad social and economic benefits, our narrow interests might be served by the making the richest still richer.

But while we might (as do many others) adopt this morally questionable posture, there are reasons for believing it is shortsighted purely on self-interested grounds. While the initial discussion above focused on the ties between classical music institutions and economic elites, zooming in on the picture a bit reveals that composers are rarely the beneficiaries of plutocratic largesse to the degree many of us would hope.

The reasons for this have to do, first, with the reduced status of classical music relative to other musical genres. A generation or more back, classical music had an effective monopoly on elite philanthropy, as can be seen, for example, in the names attached to the major halls for classical music in New York, e.g., Avery Fisher, Morgan, Frick, Carnegie, etc. In recent years, elite philanthropy has tended to balance their support in the direction of diversity, with jazz having been a particular beneficiary. Some have gone even further in their support of what had been, in prior generations, denigrated as "commercial" musical genres. A good example is the former Microsoft billionaire Paul Allen whose major contributions in his hometown of Seattle have gone towards the construction of the EMP museum (devoted mainly to rock music) and the purchasing of fan memorabilia associated with icons of rock history (to be displayed therein). Providing financial support to an enterprise which has shown itself capable of competing most effectively within the marketplace would seem to constitute a kind of coals to New Castle philanthropy. Despite, or maybe because of this fact, it has become increasingly routine among the new generation of financial elites.

> The arts will remain a low priority for most of the rich, except when, as is sometimes the case in the visual arts, investing in it offers the potential for significant returns.

Secondly, even within the world of classical music proper, composers tend to be viewed somewhat more ambivalently than instrumentalists. While the latter might be regarded as (at worst) mere technicians, few would question the competence of a violinist able to dispatch a Tschaikovsky concerto or a pianist able to rip through Rachmaninov études. As I have discussed elsewhere composers have had to contend for at least two generations with the charge of charlatanism, emanating not just from philistines but from credible, sensitive, and even eminent cultural and intellectual figures, and that our claims for expert status are an elaborate scam to mask our essential artistic incompetence.

This widely shared, if infrequently expressed, perception of contemporary music as an intellectually and artistically bankrupt enterprise began to take hold in the sixties, and would become increasingly widespread to the extent that it has had a clear influence on the perspective and priorities of economic elites. One consequence is not only are legendary patrons on the model of Madame von Meck, Baron von Swieten, or Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge absent from premiers of significant pieces of contemporary music, they are conspicuously absent from the title pages of contemporary scores. In their place are the names of a hodge podge of foundations whose surprisingly paltry awards often require a "consortium" to be formed to insure anything like a reasonable fee for the composer.

Interestingly, in recent years, composer advocacy groups have tried to resuscitate the tradition of individual patronage by matching donors with composers and ensembles with a personally inscribed final score and an invitation to the gala premier performance. The first and most conspicuous success of this approach was *The Daniel Variations*, funded by an Oakland lawyer by the name of Richard Goodman.

Aside from obvious, namely, to applaud Mr. Goodman and those who facilitated the commission, two aspects of this initiative are worth noting. First, the sum of $70,000, while certainly generous in terms of the usual fees composers tend to receive, is, in fact, quite small when one considers that the recipient is Steve Reich, perhaps America's most eminent and widely acclaimed composer. A striking comparison is with paintings produced by equally well-established contemporary visual artists. These routinely sell in the high six figure range — with a solo show by artist Damien Hirst netting the controversial British installation artist over $150 million — far more than most composers, even those of Reich's stature-receive in a lifetime of work. Even within the concert music world, this fee suffers considerably in comparison to the high five figures which top level soloists and conductors command for a single night's work. In any case, one trusts that Mr. Goodman recognized his having gotten an extraordinary bargain.

Furthermore, although a partner in a successful and thriving real estate practice, Mr. Goodman does not appear to issue from upper ranges of the 1 percent, those whose accumulated fees, bonuses and salaries land their incomes in the eight or even nine figure range. For them, such a sum would represent only a tiny fraction of their disposable income, in the same order of magnitude of what they would dole out for a dinner at an East Side restaurant — two orders of magnitude below what they earmark for a child's bat mitzvah or sixtieth birthday party.

This raises the question of how our world would be different had the traditional sources of elite patronage, namely the highest levels of the plutocracy, decided to make a serious commitment to composers, say to the tune of eight or nine figures. This would not be unprecedented. To take a couple of examples, in donating $200 million to *Poetry Magazine* Ruth Lilly, an heir to the Eli Lilly fortune, single-handedly greatly expanded the opportunities for the creation, appreciation and dissemination of the work of contemporary poets. Also in this category, colleges and universities are reliable recipients of elite philanthropy with even relatively small schools now able to engage in nine figure capital campaigns. Meeting this goal, as a college development director once observed to me, requires a million dollars a day coming in over the transom. Reich's entire commissioning fee would therefore require diverting a mere twenty minutes from the firehose of cash which many college and universities take for granted as available to them.

That said, by now we should be sufficiently aware that, barring a freak event — an eccentric billionaire taking an interest in contemporary music — no large increase in philanthropic support is likely to be in the cards. Rather what we know is almost certain to materialize is more of the same. The rich will continue to consolidate their wealth, extracting it ever more effectively from the ninety nine percent, keeping most for themselves and their heirs. A few approved, uncontroversial charities will benefit from the many trillions of dollars controlled by the upper 1 percent, many of the most deserving of these (as pointed out above) made necessary by policies which the 1 percent themselves had strongly supported and lobbied for. The arts will remain a low priority for most of the rich, except when, as is sometimes the case in the visual arts, investing in it offers the potential for significant returns.

THE IMPOVERISHED WORLD which composers must now negotiate is, of course, only a small piece of the broader neoliberal reality which has obtained for most of our adult lives — one in which the victors have hoarded the spoils of a successfully waged class war reducing much of social, cultural and artistic life to rubble. So complete has been their victory that we now see it not as a product of human agency but as the natural environment which we must acclimate ourselves to as best we can. There is, according to Margaret Thatcher's phrase "no alternative," all those believing otherwise being hopeless romantics at best or merely ridiculous. At least, so the story has gone for some years and there is little reason to believe that composers have been any less accepting of it (or at least resigned to it) than anyone else.

There was, of course, a shining moment when it seemed that cracks were becoming visible in the edifice of neoliberalism. This occurred with the financial collapse of 2008 and the subsequent election of an African-American president running on a platform of hope and change. But these prospects for hope were shown to be a chimera and by now few see any prospect for reversing the ever intensifying domination of our society by money and those obsessed with accumulating it.

Furthermore, artists and musicians had an early preview of the disillusionment with the Obama administration which is by now widespread. These came in the form of indications that, despite the hopes of many, the administration would do little to improve on the starvation regimes imposed on federal arts agencies by Republican and Democratic administrations for two decades. The background can be seen in a Nov. 21, 2008 letter sent to the Obama transition team from a collection of arts advocacy organizations containing detailed proposals for a significant reorientation of federal arts priorities. Central among these was a request for significantly greater federal support for the arts, with the recommendation that the budget for the NEA be increased to attain the real dollar peak reached in 1992.

The Obama administration would do little to improve on the starvation regimes imposed on federal arts agencies by Republican and Democratic administrations for two decades.

What made the letter more likely to be taken seriously was the widespread recognition at the time that a large increase in federal government spending was required to compensate for the multi-trillion dollar loss in demand resulting from the financial crisis. Arts institutions had a particularly strong case to make as recipients of these funds on two grounds. First, as has been shown in numerous studies, arts spending, in comparison to other forms of stimulus, has a very high multiplier effect. That is, a dollar which is spent on the arts remains in circulation within the consumer economy, producing other forms of economic activity, amounting to, according to studies, six to eight dollars generated for every dollar spend, considerably more than other forms of stimulus, most notably tax cuts for middle and high income earners. Secondly, the projects funded by arts agencies tend to be, to appeal to a phrase briefly in circulation, "shovel ready," which is to say that the infrastructure necessary for the project is already in place such that the funds will be put into circulation in relatively short order — months as opposed to years in the future. For example, across the country numerous presenting organizations are already in place, as are the halls and staff necessary to accommodate the events they book. While they have suffered year after year of budget cuts, most could easily ramp up their activity from two, three or four concerts a year to eight, nine, or ten, and they could do so within the current fiscal year. This contrasts with, for example, expenditures on the federal highway program requiring years of advanced planning before ground is broken on many projects.

These and other arguments for increased funding were advanced at a meeting with transition team officials in December of 2008. According to those present, the proposal received a respectful hearing with arts advocates coming away encouraged that, if not the whole, at least a reasonable fraction of their $392.2 million request would materialize. Follow up discussions seemed to be favorable and the group made plans accordingly. When the administration released its budget, the proposed figure was $155 million, reflecting no increase over previous years. Subsequent budgets have included not increases but cuts to the NEA. The additional proposals outlined in the letter, including the appointment of a senior level official in the White House itself and increased cultural exchange, have, like so many of the hopes invested in the administration, withered on the vine.

On the one hand, this is just another instance of a constituency discovering what turned out to be their bankrupt investment in the Obama brand. But more significant than this is to notice the extent to which the consortium's proposal was itself indicative of the same neo-liberal mindset dominant in the administration: the proposal, after all, called for an increase in the NEA budget to 1992 levels of funding — namely, those which were obtaining at the height of the neoliberal era, following three administrations committed to fiscal austerity. What arts advocates should have recognized was that the relevant comparison was not to 1992, a period of comparative economic health, but to 1932 when the entire nation was in the first throes of a full-blown depression.

Then, as the legend goes, in a few weeks, the Roosevelt administration created the alphabet soup of federal agencies which began to lift the nation out of the Depression. Embedded among these were substantial funds for the arts, most notably through the WPA which sponsored numerous free concerts of new and traditional music, including premiers of works by Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Elliott Carter among many others. For us, the lesson of this history should be that robust and enthusiastic, as opposed to grudging and palty support for the arts existed, and not so long ago, taken for granted within, indeed, defining the lives of our parents' and grandparents' generation. There is no reason, aside from a mere failure of imagination, that we should be limiting our demands to the worm's eye horizons imposed on us by neoliberalism. It is not only in our self-interest to recognize that there are enormous concentrations of wealth which could and should be tapped via taxation to support composers of new music and the ensembles performing it, it is our civic duty to demand that our maximal, and not just minimal, needs are met.

For what might seem to be extravagance, not just in the arts, but in all areas of government's public function, is the bare minimum of what is necessary to prime the pump and return the economy to normal levels of growth and employment. The broader principle, which has been common knowledge among economists for years, has now been again demonstrated through the vindication of the predictions of Paul Krugman and others that President Obama's $700 billion stimulus would only be sufficient to staunch the hemorrhaging of jobs following the credit crisis and would not make a dent in a 9 percent unemployment rate. Rather, what was required went far beyond not only what those schooled in the Washington/Wall Street Consensus were recommending but what they could imagine as within the realm of possibility.

As a professional class whose business involves constructing worlds of our own imagination, we are among the best able to recognize the truth of the saying that not only is another world possible but also that it is now absolutely necessary. If it appears not to be so, within the stunted imaginative world of corporate bean counters and Washington technocrats, that is all the more for reason for why we should be demanding the impossible. It is to the great credit of the occupy movement that we are now asking the right questions on these and related subjects and increasingly to see what have always been the fairly obvious answers.

NOTES

1. For a detailed examination of these cases see, for example, recent books by William Black and Nomi Prins.
2. www.carnegiehall.org/About-the-Music/Commissions/
3. www.nytimes.com/2008/10/18/nyregion/18termlimits.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

Where the Rubber Meets the Road for the Indefinite Future

An Interview with Jefferson Cowie

BEN HOLTZMAN AND CRAIG HUGHES

JEFFERSON COWIE is Associate Professor of History at Cornell University and a leading scholar of labor and class in the United States. His works include *Capital Moves: RCA's 70-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Cornell University Press, 1999), the co-edited volume *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (Cornell University Press 2003), and, most recently, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New Press, 2010), which has been awarded prizes from the Society of American Historians, the Organization of American Historians, Labor History, and the United Association for Labor Education. In this interview, Cowie discusses these works as well as what led him to become a historian, the complexities of contemporary class conflict and identity politics, the oppressive function of student debt, and the connection between scholarship and activism. This interview was conducted in August 2011 in Greenwich Village, New York City, with some reflections on Occupy Wall Street added in October 2011.

HH: *Can you discuss your upbringing, particularly with respect to how your earlier years contributed to your research interests and political beliefs?*

C: I was raised in the Midwest, and I think that not being from either of the coasts had an important effect on how I thought about things. Starting when I was a little kid, my dad showed a remarkable skill at downward mobility. By the time I was in third grade, he was the custodian at the local high school—a job he held until he retired. Politically, he went from being kind of an Eisenhower Republican to a Reagan guy. I watched his transformation and his growing intolerance for the changes in the world. He was a political and occupational bellwether: non-union, service sector, and conservative. I also watched what was happening to our community and what was happening to the area around us, and I began to appreciate how class worked in subtle and in obvious ways.

People often talk about "the canon" with regard to class theory, whether it's Marx or Gramsci or Herb Gutman or EP Thompson or whoever. But the book that really resonated with what I had seen growing up, and informed my own work, was Sennett and Cobb's *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. I read that and the light went on: "Oh, class as shame." I got that. That made sense. Class as point of resistance, class as community, I didn't get. I didn't see that growing up. But class as alienation and humiliation, that made more sense.

HH: *You've written about this a bit in an unpublished preface to* Stayin' Alive. *You note that "as the son of a downwardly mobile and politically*

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conservative father who, for most of my life, labored as a non-union janitor, I found that I approached working-class history from a different angle than those old-school liberals and New Leftists who wrote so much of the history before me."[1] Could you talk about what you mean by this? How do you see the working-class history you've written as different from what was written by the earlier generation of liberals and New Leftists?

C: So much of the so-called New Labor History — Thompson came out in 63, Gutman was taking off in late-60s and early 70s, which are informing a large swath of historians — are really of a particular moment: the emancipation movements of the 60s and also the labor unrest of the early 70s. I think that it was a pretty unique moment that really shaped their consciousness. Like all of us, they tended to see the past through the particular prism of their own times — but such extraordinary times! It could lead to a lot of romance with the past.

I really found a lot of the tools of the New Left useful, but it was shedding a lot of those presumptions and baggage that really helped me to look at things differently. For *Capital Moves*, for instance, I looked at community, which is the cornerstone of the New Labor History and saw that it really had some problems as an analytical category. It's not just a warm and pleasant place of resistance. If you project the power of capital more nationally, regionally, and globally, then community becomes less of a tool of resistance and more of a location that is charged with power relations on a global scale. My ongoing project is to continue to interrogate a lot of the main tools of working class history.

HH: *Your first book* Capital Moves, *examines the way that one company, RCA, relocated production nationally and internationally seeking cheap and compliant labor, largely in response to worker organizing. Since writing* Capital Moves *your work has continuously emphasized, at its base, an approach to understanding American history that keeps a focus on class struggle. From what influences have you drawn your interest in the historical importance of class conflict? Are there particular strengths or limitations in emphasizing class struggle in understanding American history?*

C: The term "class struggle," makes me a little uneasy because it's too unified and too complete and too tidy of an answer to an incredibly complicated set of issues. Identity, as we know, is a multivariate, complicated, conglomerate of a thing. The problem today is that the questions of class seem to have hollowed out that complex of identities. There doesn't seem to be any core there anymore, which is what I've tried to talk about in *Stayin' Alive*. By and large, what I'm trying to do is find ways to talk about the issues of class conflict and inequality and material justice in ways that get away from traditional Marxian traps. I think if you talk to working people today about "class struggle," that's a clunker. The words just land on the ground without resonance. There's no traction. I think part of what we need to do is update our vocabulary around some of those things and think about a broader terrain for discussions.

> Immigration is one of the most divisive political issues in this country.

If there is a cohesive class struggle in this country it's been waged from above. I think that given the violence of American labor relations, the fragmentation of the working class along the lines of race and region and immigration and other things, it's clear that the struggle comes from above more effectively than from below. One thing I try to do with my work is lay that bare in such a way that we can begin to think about new ways of considering how politics might unfold, because clearly — just look around us right now — it's a disaster. And I don't think resurrecting a sort of Victorian Marxist nomenclature is going to help.

You can over-theorize something to the point of it failing itself and failing you. So, for me, I'm more interested in what works and what doesn't than I am in abstractions that hold nothing for me. If an idea doesn't work, modify it, change it, throw it away. Find out what those people are doing that is successful and continually engage in a process of pragmatically assessing it. What kinds of social change that work is more effective to me than is coming up with a massive theoretical construct and saying "okay, this is how it's going to unfold." That was the problem with Marx! Marx was a great sociologist. A great critic of political economy, but a crappy prognosticator of the future. So I am much more interested in what works — a bit of a Deweyan pragmatist, I suppose.

HH: You've argued that the relatively progressive parts of the New Deal were in fact an exception in American history, and along with others, have also argued that the postwar labor-management accord is more myth than reality. Can you discuss what you see as the causes of the mythologized New Deal and labor-management accords? What impacts have they had on labor as well as the scholarship on post-World War II America?

C: First of all, I don't want to say that the labor management accord was a myth. I just think that it was smaller and much less crystallized than many historians have claimed. Nobody talked about it at the time. There was the article in *Fortune* that pointed to the "Treaty of Detroit," but that was really about a series of contract negotiations. That phrase the "labor management accord" really emerged in the 80s as people began to realize what they were losing: looking back, they saw a class truce there that was being lost, but I think it became more intellectually reified than it was in real life. The accord was there in a limited number of sectors, but industries that were largely in decline, in terms of employment numbers, by the late 50s. It's also white, mostly male, and very regional—sometimes based as much on who is frozen out as who was in. It was Midwestern and Northeast and West Coast, so it was always geographically limited, always temporally defined, and always racially defined. So, it's a deeply problematic construct but it's not a total myth. So that's point one.

In terms of the New Deal as exception, basically, this is something I don't want to be true, but I think is. The circumstances that gave rise to the New Deal, especially from the Wagner Act to the Fair Labor Standards Act, from 35-38, were pretty extraordinary. And, had it not been for the war, I think even those reforms might have been really short lived. It was exceptional because of the crisis of the Great Depression. It was exceptional because other really problematic issues in America were at bay. Immigration was suspended. We often forget about that. Immigration is one of the most divisive political issues in this country. During the 1930s and 1940s all the way up to the 1965 immigration reforms, we really didn't have to deal with that part of American politics. And I think that's very important. Religion also was not as divisive an issue. Garry Wills called this the era of the "Great Religious Truce." Some of the most divisive issues were kind of on hold from the 40s through the 70s. And, as I mentioned about the postwar accord, this was a time, as Ira Katznelson put it, that "affirmative action was white." When race broke open in the sixties, the political coalition began to falter.

Therefore, in our own time, to say, "What we need to do is rekindle the New Deal," I think is a bit misguided. The famous picture of Barack Obama in the limousine with a cigarette holder and the toothy grin, Paul Krugman talking of Franklin Delano Obama, and all this kind of stuff makes for bad history and bad policy. I think what we need to do — the project of your generation — is to come up with our own categories. The New Dealers were relying on the groundwork laid by the Progressives. And it was the crisis of the Depression that allowed a lot of the Progressive ideas to get institutional form. Nobody sat around saying "Wow, you know, what we need to do is get the Knights of Labor back." They were trying to think of their own formulas. So I get irritated and have short patience with that kind of stuff.

HH: *You begin* Stayin' Alive *by discussing a wide number of examples of labor militancy, cross-racial labor alliances, feminist labor organizing, and wildcat strikes that were occurring in the early 1970s, but note that by the mid-1970s, what possibilities there were for "a vibrant, multi-cultural, and gender conscious conceptualization of class" had been lost.[2] How did the potentials for class, race, and gender identities and politics coalescing and growing stronger during these years turn for the worse?*

C: A class identity emerged from this postwar paradigm that we were just talking about. It did exist — people talked about "the working class." If you look at mainstream journalism of the time, they talked about "the working class." The question that animates *Stayin' Alive* is, "Why couldn't there be a synthesis between that and the new social movements of the 1960s with old class ideas from the thirties?" Why couldn't what was largely a white, male class identity — and I over generalize there — from the postwar period merge with the rising consciousness around race, women's rights, democratization, and these other things? There are some very exciting moments when these disparate strands were coming together. You do see it in some very vibrant places — the farm workers, the Memphis sanitation workers, the democratization movements that were really pushing against some very, very stale, authoritarian, sometimes even corrupt leaders — but by and large labor and the new social movements were in separate camps. They even ended up in separate policy streams: the EEOC and the NLRB are completely separate worlds.

Unfortunately, the mainstream AFL-CIO leadership had a disastrous record on the changes swirling all around them. Absolutely disastrous. I tend to give people the benefit of the doubt when I'm doing research on these types of things before doing any kind of indictment, but I was actually shocked how retrograde many of the union leaders were. The war, of course, didn't help. These guys, AFL-CIO leaders, were all hardcore Cold Warriors. Obviously the new social movements were against the Vietnam War, but when it came to something like the McGovern campaign, to sabotage that campaign to the degree that the AFL-CIO went out of its way to do, it's just mind boggling. The degree to which these union leaders thought they were in charge was extraordinary. They thought the game was kind of over after the mid-50s. They knew that they were big. They were powerful. They had achieved that kingmaker role in the Democratic Party, especially by 68, that they'd dreamed of since the forties. And they thought if they could just get rid of McGovern then they could get back to where they were in charge. In fact, however, they were the waning ends of the exception and not the norm; they mistook a period of exceptional power for the new norm. They were really in the midst of this twilight of their own power and needed all of the allies they could get. There was such a moment lost.

The irony of what unfolded after the early '70s is that the union movement ended up being a diverse, multi-cultural, or as my friend Dan Katz calls it, "mutual cultural" institution. But it's also one of the most shrinking institutions in America.

HH: *You also describe this period as one in which a shift took place: "With class identity growing feeble as the decade wore on, the more powerful draw of individual rights against discrimination gained momentum."[3] Can you elaborate on the relation between "class identity" and individual rights/identity politics during these years?*

C: What you can see is a decline of collective economic rights. As I said, there was, at the same time, a failure to link together the new social movements and the old labor movement. The consequences are that that women and minorities end up looking to sort of a classical, individual, constitutional rights paradigm. Now they've achieved tremendous things through group identity: women's rights, rights for African-Americans, gay rights. But by and large these are essentially expanding the notion of what individual rights are. That's a good thing. But when justice becomes defined solely as the expansion of individual rights that becomes problematic.

You know, there was just a big victory in New York with gay marriage. You have the extension of marriage to a group of people who have not had that right socially and politically recognized. That's great. But how many gay people still don't have health care? That's the dichotomy we're left with today. So, a collective claim on the economic right of health care is a different animal. I think we've lost that. I think that's the tragedy of the 1970s.

The culturalization of politics that emerged in the 1970s plays into this, where the culture wars become — not that they're not important — the essence of what politics is. I think one of the tragedies of the left since the 1970s is to lose the economic argument. Winning the cultural argument by and large — there's still a lot of work to do — but I think the level of cultural freedom is actually pretty high compared to what it once was, while the level of economic rights is horribly low. That is the question at stake now down on Wall Street. The occupiers are, for one of the first times in recent memory, except perhaps Seattle in 1999, demanding economic accountability. The economic questions, and the way economic interests drive politics, are the umbrella for all other questions of equality and justice. I find that very refreshing.

Now we have Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as the centerpiece of employment relations, not the National Labor Relations Act. The EEOC says that you cannot discriminate in the workplace. A good thing. In the book, I point to this case in the early 50s that came up in front of the National Labor Relations Board in which an employer fired some workers and then the employer claimed, "I didn't fire these workers because they were union workers or union activists. I fired those workers because they were blacks." And the NLRB said, "Oh, ok, that's fine, 'cause we don't do race. We do unions." And today, it would be the opposite. You could fire with impunity anybody who wants to make a collective claim on the workplace, but you cannot discriminate against an individual's civil rights. Sometime we have got to get back to being able to talk about both at the same time in this country, but we have not found that discourse.

HH: *You suggest that more than an era of everyday resistance and collective action, working class history after the early 1970s might be better understood as one in which powerlessness became internalized and the class war "raged more within than without."*[4] *But what — if anything — can those continued individual acts of resistance that remained prominent in workplaces during those years through till today tell us about labor power, class consciousness, and the possibilities for collective political mobilization?*

C: When I made that claim in my book I was basically talking about the main contours of discourse, the main contours of social identity, the main contours of political life. There's plenty of other stuff going on that's really interesting. Granted, most of the labor struggles were defensive from the eighties onward — Clifton Morenci, the Phelps-Dodge strike in 83, the PATCO strike in 81 all the way up through the protests in Madison, Wisconsin. Most of those were trying to keep what they already had. I think if you go back and look at some of the 1970s struggles you'll see that the struggle against the incursions of wage, the incursions of industrial discipline, they were against those things, but it was not always clear what they were for. So that's the project: to sort of move from what we're against to what we're for. I think that's a problem. But that said, I think the richness of experimentation among working people and activists and politicians and scholars is where the rubber meets the road for the indefinite future. Let a thousand flowers bloom. I am not very critical of anything right now because it's from those actions that are taking place all over the world and the coalitions that are emerging, that the new world's going to be born, I hope. So I celebrate those, I honor those. I don't want to be dismissive of those. I think the conclusion of the book comes across perhaps as a little bit dismissive. We also need to be mindful that a lot of the leaders of many of the community-based organizations and the unions made their march through those institutions, through the 70s onward. A lot of those were insurgents of that era who kind of made their compromises and became the leaders today. So, there's more fermentation going on there than perhaps I let on. But I was trying to explore what I do think are the main contours of the way we think of ourselves as a society. That there's a big huge hole in the middle of our civic imaginations about how we think about ourselves. Nonetheless, I still think the "inner class war" is really important to think about. How do we take those internal, deeply personal anxieties, and drive them out into the open and make them political? That is the question.

HH: *You've also argued that though the working class are everywhere in American society, since the 1970s the identification of "working class" is absent from "how we think of ourselves as a society."*[5] *Given what little today's unions seem to offer in changing this — both due to their own internal calamities and the political and economic structures they are up against — where is the potential you see in reviving class-conscious identity and mobilization in the subsequent years and decades?*

C: Rule 1: Don't ask an historian to predict the future! (*laughs*) Historical pessimism can be a dangerous framework, which is sometimes why I hesitate to engage in some of the plenary debates about where we're going and what we think we should be doing. But, how and where might things emerge anew? The first place I would look is immigrants. I think that the most exciting stuff, just as it was 100 years ago, is coming from the immigrant working class. But, of course, that speaks to the mighty division between native and foreign-born workers that you see played out on *Fox News* everyday. But I think that's the future. That's really where I would look for harbingers of change. Hopefully others will follow suit. But given the current economic crisis, the rising inequality, the ridiculousness of this budget crisis, the power of finance to rule the economy, all of this — I am kind of amazed if you don't see a stronger emerging class identity coming from this. The very, very rich, the capitalists, are acting in a very coherent way to protect their interests, but there is not any countervailing voice in any kind of unified way. I find this incredibly disturbing. My fear is that if you compound this with a falling empire, you have a very dangerous situation in this country. Crumbling empires are ugly, ugly things. I don't think this country's gonna take it well. The occupiers of Wall Street are certainly raising the right questions, and maybe the diffuse class identity can be some sort of strength there, but I remain concerned.

HH: *As an academic, professor and dean, you're undoubtedly familiar with the difficulties many undergraduate and graduate students incur. Academic labor is a major arena for low-wage work, and exploitation of graduate students in particular is a serious issue. What do you see as the possibilities for a progressive turn in academic labor exploitation in the U.S.?*

C: Over half of all hires today are not tenure track. I think that the structure of higher ed in this country is in a pretty big crisis when the cost of higher ed outstrips the pace of inflation dramatically at the same time they're increasing the size of classrooms and they're decreasing the accessibility of tenure. Everybody is much less secure and stable. On top of all of that, the anti-intellectual environment that is infiltrating universities as so many universities are becoming business-schools-plus-other-stuff is deeply problematic for the creative intelligence of this country. A place like Cornell? We don't face too much of this. We're fairly insulated. We actually treat our adjuncts pretty well and keep the number controlled pretty tightly. I feel fortunate

I think that the most exciting stuff, just as it was 100 years ago, is coming from the immigrant working class.

not to be complicit in a lot of that, but it's hard not to see the proletarianization of so many professions. It's happening in medicine as well. It'll be happening in law before you know it. I think dealing with this shared instability will be part of any future struggle.

HH: *Student debt has became a major obstacle in the life of many working class people today. What difficulties do you think student debt will have on the current generation of students, and on social justice movements?*

C: I think it's a killer. I went to an okay, but not great public school, moved to California, went to community college pretty much for free, and then made the jump to one of the best public universities in the world, the University of California, Berkeley. I paid $700 a semester and paid for it with a morning job. I walked out debt free. At that point I could do anything I wanted: I could go to the Peace Corp; I could do community activism; I could go to law school. I did Central American solidarity work around that time because I could do whatever I wanted. You make enough money to put a roof over your head and then you get to explore your ideals. Today, it's the complete opposite. The structure of higher ed prevents you from having ideals. People walk out in debt. You're basically mortgaging your future if you walk out in debt. The economists will say, "This pays off. We know that anybody that graduates from 'fancy pants university' will do better economically than somebody who didn't." But that doesn't really get to the essence of the problem.

I'm always trying to get my students to think about education not as a linear path from here to law school. I'm trying to get them away from "I will do this because Professor Cowie says, but I don't really know why I'm reading this, but I'm gonna do it cause it's an assignment and I know if I get an A in this I know I'll advance to the next square." I'm trying to get them to explore their lives, explore their society, explore their politics, economics, their setting in it, their role in it, their complicity in it. But they're scared to death of those questions because if you start pulling at those threads you're eventually left naked, because they've literally put themselves on the auction block in order to get an education in order to advance themselves.

Your question was about activism. For my students, it's one step before activism. It's consciousness. It's ideas. It's free thought. People are so paranoid now about not getting into the "haves." And this has become more problematic. It used to be that a public school teacher was here and a lawyer was here. And so if you made your choice and you want to be a school teacher, a respectable professional job, or you want to go for the big bucks the difference was "this much," but now it's like many times that much because those guys are making astronomical sums and these guys [teachers] are under attack. So the emphasis for students in elite universities, which is more of the students I'm around, is to make sure you're in that wing of things that "wins." And the winner takes all. Otherwise, these guys are the losers, and you don't want to be there. I find that very demoralizing actually.

HH: *Many labor scholars have been directly involved with labor struggles — the legacy of scholar-activists like C.L.R. James, Sheila Rowbotham, Marty Glaberman and Angela Davis is awe-inspiring. How do you see the connection between scholarship and movement work, today? Do you feel there is responsibility on the part of left scholars to directly contribute to social justice struggles?*

C: I think there is often an inspirational linkage. However, I actually think some of the best work of scholarship comes from a cooler detachment from the issues. There is a difference between scholarship and an extension of politics. I know a lot of people, myself included, who at one time would have said "Everything's political and there is no way to separate scholarship from politics." I still agree with that, but I think there is a place — and the university is actually supposed to serve this role, despite the many incursions upon it that we've already talked about — where you get to step back. I think good scholarship can get at a truth that might actually transcend immediate political questions. For instance, some people might celebrate the decline of working class identity, others like us might bemoan this as a tragedy, but on some level there is a truth there that is important that I think we all need to begin to talk about. So I try to avoid my immediate political concerns impinging upon my scholarship.

For instance, *Capital Moves* happened to come out a few years after the North American Free Trade Agreement passed. Obviously, I was informed by NAFTA and the anti-NAFTA struggle, but my conclusions transcended the nature of the immediate politics of NAFTA. I found that, "wow, this is really a complicated question that's been going on a long time and it has this deep pattern in global history." If the book were a diatribe against NAFTA, it would have been ephemeral. I'm not saying it's not ephemeral! (*Laughs*) But it would have been more ephemeral. If you can be informed by political questions, but not have your work narrowly answer those questions, but try to engage some of the deeper currents in history and social life, you're gonna be a better scholar. And that may make you a weaker activist. But I think you gotta kind of make a decision a little bit. Not that I haven't had my activism or still do. But our goal as scholars is to mine those deeper veins, not just the stuff that's right on the surface. To the degree that those immediate political concerns prevent us from digging deeper, I think it's a problem and we need to be very, very aware of it. I know a lot of people want to hear "Oh, they're one and the same and good scholarship is good politics!" But I'm more cautious about that.

HH: *Is there a personal side to that as well? I wonder a bit about time and family or even more broadly about the personal dimensions of this question.*

C: There is, there's a life course dimension to it, for sure. I think that's the case for a lot of people. Young people have a sense of immediacy and urgency that is full of energy and possibility. You get toward your middle age and you worry about the next generation, and what's wrong with them. I think that's important but I also think that my politics have become deeper in a way because I think about legacy, about my kids and the unstable world that they inherit. I end up saying, "well, the system's not gonna take care of my kids, so I better make sure that I do." So it breeds, on the one hand, a radical critique of the system, but on the other hand it becomes "Alright, clearly the message is every person for themselves. I better take care of my own." And I hate that. It makes you sort of schizophrenic in a way about how you approach contemporary problems. But fundamentally, it doesn't change the way I see the solutions.

NOTES

1. Jefferson Cowie, "Autobiographical Reflections on the 1970s," (an unpublished preface to *Stayin' Alive*), available at: http://jeffersoncowie.com/Jefferson_Cowie/Seventies_Archive.html

2. Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 72.

3. *Ibid*.

4. Jefferson Cowie, "Autobiographical Reflections on the 1970s."

5. Jefferson Cowie, "Red, White, and Blue Collar" *DemocracyJournal.org* Issue #20, (Spring 2011), 84.

Means-testing: Shredding the Safety Net

Betty Reid Mandell

Means-testing benefits that everyone is entitled to receive has become popular with conservatives these days. Conservatives have called for means-testing unemployment benefits, Medicare, and Social Security.

Representative Darrell Issa, a Republican from California, has proposed means-testing unemployment benefits. He says that someone who earned $100,000 when he or she worked should not get as much as someone who earned less. Yet, all employees pay into their state's unemployment insurance fund. It is insurance, which they get to collect.

Darell Issa is the richest person in Congress. He is worth somewhere between $195 million and $700 million. He has faced outside scrutiny because of the overlap of his Congressional work and outside interests. In one case, he obtained some $800,000 in federal earmarks for a road-widening project running along commercial property he owns.[1]

President Obama has publicly supported means-testing Medicare. Rep. James Clyburn (D-S.C.), a top-ranking Democrat, has embraced the idea, as have the party's more fiscally conservative members.[2] The columnist David Brooks has endorsed it. After arguing with Brooks about it, the economist Paul Krugman wrote a blog in the *New York Times.*[3] Krugman points out that means-testing Medicare wouldn't save much money, and "the good thing about Medicare, as with Social Security, is precisely that it doesn't depend on your personal financial status — you just get it. Means-testing would turn it into something much more intrusive, like Medicaid." Krugman concludes, "if you want the well-off to pay more, it's just better to raise their taxes. . . . What we need is actual control of health costs. Means-testing of Medicare is just a badly designed, unfair form of taxation."

In 1992, third-party Presidential candidate Ross Perot proposed that future Social Security benefits be subjected to a means test. More recently, the Heritage Foundation proposed means-testing Social Security. They want to reduce payments to anyone who makes over $55,000 a year and eliminate them altogether — both for individuals who make over $110,000 a year and for couples who make more than $165,000 a year. Tim Pawlenty has endorsed something similar.[4]

Means-testing entitlement programs would be the beginning of the end for those programs. When Social Security was first begun, in 1935 during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, some people proposed means-testing it as they means-tested Aid to Dependent Children (now TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families). Roosevelt resisted it, knowing that would make it politically vulnerable. In order to protect it, Social Security needed to be universal. The rich as well as the poor would receive it.

Social Security is different from other entitlements. In their first explanatory pamphlet of 1937, the members of the Social Security Board carefully presented the program as in-

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surance, and they wrote in actuarial terminology: "[P]ayments are like premiums paid for fire insurance or accident insurance," or "saving for a rainy day."[5]

The idea of not giving government money to the rich has an appeal on the surface, and is gaining some adherence from the general public. Why should the rich get money when the poor need it more? But Roosevelt knew, as the British social welfare scholar Richard Titmuss said, "Programs for the poor are poor programs." Witness the means-tested program for children, which was begun at the same time as Social Security, as part of the Social Security Act. Women who worked for the Children's Bureau created the program. They believed that assistance should go only to the deserving, and that parents needed to be supervised closely to insure they used the money wisely. Mothers were not included in the program until 1950. Since its beginnings ADC (later AFDC, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, when fathers were included) has been intrusive and stingy and the recipients have been subjected to arbitrary and capricious treatment by caseworkers. While it began as an entitlement, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 removed its entitlement status. It is now used as a club to browbeat mothers into finding work that often does not exist, and when it does, does not pay enough to support a family. Its main goal is to force people off the rolls, and it has succeeded at that.

Roosevelt knew, as the British social welfare scholar Richard Titmuss said, "Programs for the poor are poor programs."

In contrast to that mean-spirited program, Social Security was crafted by men with male workers in mind.

Another means-tested program is the state sponsored General Assistance, or General Relief. It is for able-bodied unemployed people without children to support. It has been the first program to be cut when states face fiscal problems. Most states no longer have it, and there is no assistance except for food stamps for able-bodied unemployed people if they do not qualify for unemployment benefits. (They were even prohibited from getting food stamps until a few years ago.) In Massachusetts, General Relief for the able-bodied unemployed was ended by Governor Dukakis and Phil Johnston, then the director of human services in Massachusetts. (Johnston later became the head of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts.) The only program remaining is called Emergency Assistance for the Elderly, Disabled, and Children, and pays only $300 a month.

States have been cutting Medicaid, which is means-tested, for years. It is somewhat protected from total destruction by the fact that middle-income people rely on it for nursing home care for their parents. Some people who need nursing home care qualify for Medicaid by legally protecting their assets, making them unavailable to the state. Yet conservatives have attacked that strategy, calling for eliminating that possibility.

What is our answer to people who say the country could save money if they didn't give Social Security to rich people? The answer is to recoup the money paid to them through progressive taxation. There is no reason rich people shouldn't be taxed at a higher rate than poor people. In the 1940s and 50s, under Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower Administrations, the rate on the top bracket was 91 percent. This paid for the GI Bill, and helped finance both the VA and FHA housing loans. In short, it built the middle class. We must resist attempts to destroy it.

NOTES

1. Eric Lichtblau, "Nearly half in Congress are millionaires, study finds," *The Boston Globe*, December 27, 2011, p. A2.

2. *Huffington Post*, "Obama publicly backs means-testing Medicare," www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/15/obama-means-testing_n_899839.html

3. Paul Krugman, "Means-testing Medicare," *New York Times*, July 24, 2011. krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/means-testing-medicare

4. Paul A. Rahe, "Is means-testing just?" *Ricochet*, December 12, 2011. Ricochet.com/main-feed/is-means-testing-just

5. *Ibid.*

The Return of the Russian Revolution

Nature of and Perspectives on the Wave of Social Protest in Russia

Alexei Gusev*

"Every generation needs a new revolution"
Thomas Jefferson

"The most dangerous thing is to create a system of permanent revolution."
Vladimir Putin

On February 4, 2012, more than 100,000 people marched on the streets in the center of Moscow despite severe cold (-20 C) demanding free and fair elections and the end of Vladimir Putin's authoritarian rule. Following on the mass demonstrations of December 10th and 24th in Moscow, in which tens of thousands of people took part, this shows clearly that the period of social passivity in Russia is over; the Putin era is nearing its end. The last time such large demonstrations took place in Moscow was in 1990-91 at the height of the democratic wave directed against the domination of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Then, as a result of these mass actions, the whole party-state system of the USSR began to crumble. Those who participated in those events twenty years ago are feeling the same atmosphere again: revolution is in the air.

The rising wave of protest has demystified the key myth of Putinism: the myth of a durable "consensus" between the people and the authorities in Russia. What was revealed is that it was not just a few small "marginal" groups but the mass of ordinary active people who no longer were willing to exchange their civil and political rights for Putin-style "stability." Many people were surprised by such an awakening after ten years of social hibernation. But in fact it was inevitable. The margin of security of the regime that had taken power in Russia at the turn of the 21st Century was limited from the very beginning.

Putin's "Bonapartism"

The emergence of Putin's authoritarian regime was a logical consequence of the political and socio-economic processes that had developed in Russia since the beginning of the 90s of the last century. The collapse of the party-state and the formation of nation-states on the ruins of the Soviet empire marked the advent of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. But this revolution only partly carried out its work of radically democratizing the political system and expropriating its ruling class, the bureaucracy. The democracy movement got co-opted by political forces representing a "reformist" section of the old bureaucracy, which seriously reduced the extent of the transformations. Instead of

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creating a completely new political system by the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, there emerged a mixture of old Soviet institutions and authoritarian presidential structures. In 1993 the latter won out, which led to the installation of a "hyper presidential" republic. Since the basis of the old regime had not been destroyed and since the new authorities were born of collusion between ruling groups, the key posts in the post-Soviet political elite were occupied by members of the ex-nomenklatura. Thus the period 1992-1999 was a kind of a slow "Themidor" of the third Russian revolution. As the historical experience of past revolutions shows, after Thermidor comes Bonapartism.[1]

Having completed the process of privatization toward the end of the 90s, the ruling class wanted a stable system, an "order" that would guarantee the continuance, the "conservation," of the new status quo. So it no longer needed the liberal elements of the political regime which enabled the elite groups to express their positions and compete during the period of the redistribution of property. This led to strong demand for conservatism, materialized in the figure of Putin, the supreme arbiter and guardian of the "new order." So Putin became the unique center of real power, elections to ruling institutions were de facto eliminated, the party system was replaced by a group of puppets subservient to the Kremlin, the media were transformed into a propaganda machine, etc. All of this was just fine for the bulk of officials, upper managers and businessmen, docile members of (Putin's party) "United Russia" as the price to pay for "stability." This situation closely resembled the one Karl Marx described in his article on French Bonapartism in the Nineteenth Century:

> The bourgeoisie confesses that its own interests dictate that it should be delivered from the danger of its own rule; that to restore tranquility in the country its bourgeois parliament must, first of all, be given its quietus; that to preserve its social power intact its political power must be broken; that the individual bourgeois can continue to exploit the other classes and to enjoy undisturbed property, family, religion, and order only on condition that their class be condemned along with the other classes to like political nullity; that in order to save its purse it must forfeit the crown, and the sword that is to safeguard it must at the same time be hung over its own head as a sword of Damocles. (*18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852)

The logical outcome was a veritable explosion of corruption: according to Transparency International, Russia fell from the 82nd to the 143rd place, with a level of corruption comparable to that of Nigeria and Uganda. So it is totally logical that the ruling party be nicknamed "the party of crooks and thieves."

If the majority of the ruling class supported the installation of a Bonapartist regime, the rest of the Russian population didn't much seem to care. In the early 2000s there were fewer than 10,000 people still ready to demonstrate for freedom of expression in Moscow, even fewer against the second war in Chechnia. Soon those demonstrations petered out, and even the explosion of the "revolt of the pensioners" provoked by the monetization of social benefits didn't change the situation.[2] This apathy is best explained by economic reasons; the Putin regime took power at a time when the economy was going through a rather stable period. It goes without saying that the authorities explained this as the result of their wise policies, but in reality this phenomenon was due to several objective reasons. First of all, the structural readjustment of the Russian economy was now completed; thus the serious recession of the adjustment period of 1992-1999 ended. Secondly, the price of petroleum products, Russia's chief export, began to rise. Finally, the financial crisis of 1998 brought with it a sharp rise in the price of imported goods; this led to a rising demand for cheaper, Russian goods on the internal market and therefore rise in their production.

With the end of the 90s — and the end of crises, budget deficits, galloping inflation and delays in the payment of salaries and pensions — people sighed with relief. The improvement of the socio-economic situation seemed to make the masses overlook for the moment the reduction of their political and civil rights. Nonetheless, by the nature of things periods of reaction are always followed by social and political upsurges. And good economic circumstances favor them: the less people are obsessed with daily survival, the more their horizons widen, the more they are ready for conscious activism. Besides, the increase in general wealth poses the question of its distribution: who benefits the most from this economic stability? As the history of popular movements shows — from the early 20th Century uprisings in Russia to the recent "Arab Spring" — the potential for explosive protest can accumulate behind the façade of outward well being of authoritarian regimes.

"On the bottom, they are no longer willing and on top they are no longer able"

Putin was mistaken in believing that the rise in the price of oil would enable him to buy the allegiance of the masses. Even though the price of oil in 2008, when the economic crisis broke out, was twice as high as in 2000, from that point on, according to public opinion polls, the authorities were losing ground. And the reason was not just the stagnation of real income among the population. More important was the feeling of the injustice of the present system where some (a minority) are enjoying all its benefits while others (the great majority) only get the crumbs of the cake. Just as at the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s, aspirations, however vague, toward social justice became an important factor in social consciousness.

Indeed, since the advent of the "Putin order," social inequalities in Russia have not stopped getting worse. The richest 14 people concentrate in their hands 26 percent of the Gross National Product. Under the massive media cover of "the struggle against the oligarchs," huge material resources have been taken over by the clan of businessmen close to Putin and by the *siloviki* [members of the "enforcement agencies": Army, Interior, FSB, etc.] At the same time, the split between the wealthiest and the poorest has grown by 20 percent to a ratio of 1 to 17. The relative poverty of the majority of the Russian population has increased despite a certain amount of growth in incomes in the five years following 2000.

Putin's "reinforcement of the State," without any control from below, made it possible for the bureaucracy to begin lining its pockets as well as those of its "friends" in the business world. This was happening at every level of the state system from the President down to the townships in their districts. And what was the risk, when the fate of a functionary depended not on his voters but on his allegiance to the hierarchy. Even more-so, in that it is impossible to criticize these authorities in the media, which are subservient to this very bureaucracy. The logical outcome was a veritable explosion of corruption: according to Transparency International, Russia fell from the 82nd to the 143rd place, with a level of corruption comparable to that of Nigeria and Uganda. So it is totally logical that the ruling party be nicknamed "the party of crooks and thieves."

But the non-satisfaction of the socio-economic expectation of the population under Putin's regime merely reinforces an objective process of the formation of a consciousness of citizenship. The transformation of subjects into citizens is the direct result of social modernization due, in turn, to the immutable laws of economic development. A mature industrial society with developed technologies (notably information and communication), high degrees of urbanization, and popular education is naturally incompatible with authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. The emblematic figure of this society is the skilled worker whose daily activity requires certain autonomy and analytical capacities, and so he can't be entirely cut off from access to information or isolated from other people. Such a person is not easily subjugated by authoritarian manipulation and brain washing. Feeling himself (or herself) to be an individual, s/he naturally aspires to freedom in private and public life and, what is more, demands to participate in political life ("the crisis of participation" of political science). A system in which nothing depends on him no longer suits him ("the crisis of legitimacy"). If the regime denies him elementary political rights, even voting, protest will be inevitable, sooner or later. It is for this reason that the "communist" regimes collapsed, just as the dictatorships in Belarus and (in the long run) China are doomed to failure. And it is for that reason that Putinism in Russia can only be a passing phenomenon, even if the economic conjuncture were more favorable than it is now. The events of December 2011 show that its time is running out, if it hasn't already. The classic symptom of a pre-revolutionary situation is emerging: "Below they are no longer willing to live as before."

How About the Other Symptom of Such a Situation, the Crisis Above?

By supporting the installation of Putin's Bonapartist regime, the Russian bourgeoisie of bankers and big company owners won big gains. It was in its interests that the State Duma (the Russian parliament), subservient to the President and transformed into a rubber stamp, adopted favorable new laws on taxes, labor, real estate, etc. However, with the passage of time the Russian business community began to worry about a "Sword of Damocles" hanging over their heads, as in the case of Khodorkovski, ready to fall on any businessman who may have lost the favor of the central or local bureaucracy. Moreover, the *siloviki* had much too zealously transferred resources into the hands of the military-industrial group within the ruling class, which provoked the animosity of the bosses of civilian industries, above all in the energy sector. And Putin-Medvedev's foreign policy hardly corresponded to the needs of the stock-holders in "Gazprom" for example, who were obliged to foot the bill for increased military spending and for actions aimed at "restoring Russia's great power status" like the military interventions in Georgia.

The symptoms of the cleavage within the ruling class had to find an expression in the highest governmental circles. This is what happened in November 2011 when Finance Minister Kudrin stood up against the anti-social 2012-14 budget. The surprising fact that the "first liberal of the system" failed to show himself indifferent to the needs of public health and education, once again sacrifices for military expenses, in reality speaks to the indignation of part of the business community against the economic ascendency of the military-industrial complex.

But the main symptom of the crisis of the current administrative model is the inability of the Putin bureaucracy to successfully carry on elector fraud during the parliamentary elections. The techniques that worked in 2007 and 2008 flopped this time. Given this failure of the regime, some elements in the puppet political structures that had until recently been playing the role of a "domesticated opposition" have taken courage and begun to move. The attempts by some representatives of "Just Russia" to act independently show the decadence of the Putin system. Finally, even Medvedev, the alter ego of the "national leader," has declared that "the old political model is out of date" and promised some surface reforms. Thus, "above it is no longer possible to rule as before." Which, according to Tocqueville and Lenin, precedes revolution.

From the Crisis to the Revolution?

REVOLUTIONS BREAK OUT when society feels the need for radical changes which cannot be brought about through reforms. These are possible to the extent that they correspond to the interests of the elite in power, or at least to its influential section. Thanks to reforms, ruling groups attempt to modernize the existing system and to hold on to power at the price of a few concessions. But the concession that Russian society is demanding of the Bonapartist regime — free and fair elections — is incompatible with the very existence of the regime. The little group around the "national leader" that has concentrated all power in its hands understands this very well, and that is why the path of reform is closed to it. The regime can be transformed only by the revolutionary path.

The little group around the "national leader" that has concentrated all power in its hands understands this very well, and that is why the path of reform is closed to it. The regime can be transformed only by the revolutionary path.

However, a pre-revolutionary situation is not yet the revolution. For the potential to be realized, it is necessary for several factors to be combined. The success of the revolution depends above all on the choice of the methods of struggle. Mass demonstrations are good for demonstrating and consolidating forces, but in themselves are not able to make the authorities capitulate. The government is able to tolerate such assemblies, even numerous, for a very long time. As historical experience shows, the most effective method is the political general strike. It means that the protesters are capable not just of talking but of acting, of imposing their pressure on the economy, the functioning of the state organs and, if necessary, of paralyzing them. The struggle for democracy could unite different social layers in an anti-governmental front. Thus, in October 1905, during the first Russian revolution, the political general strike involved not only factory laborers, but other workers and even the employees of the Senat and theater actors; such a massive uprising caused the Czarist regime to retreat.

No victorious democratic revolution of the 20th and 21st Century has succeeded without political strikes. But during the recent events in Russia, this crucial word strike has not yet been pronounced, has not become a slogan. Doubtless, the initiators of these mostly spontaneous actions were afraid that such a method might be too radical and would not be supported by the masses; the lack of strike experience and the extreme weakness of the independent union movement are also factors. It may be the social conflict needs to worsen and the protest movement needs to develop more for the call for a strike to become realistic.

You can't discuss revolution without raising the question of violence. Government propaganda tries to identify these two notions, to persuade the population that revolution always means blood, death, and general ruin. But in reality mass democratic movements are hostile to violence and never use it first; on the contrary, it is most often unleashed by regimes that want to hold on to power at any price. Violence is the last recourse of these regimes, which have exhausted all other means of struggle against the social movement. That is why an important condition for the success of the revolution is a split within the forces of order where part of their personnel refuses to put down the protesters. If that eventuality seems real or extremely probable, the authorities will hesitate to have recourse to violence, which will increase the chance of a peaceful, soft victory for the revolution. This was one of the important causes of the success of the Russian revolutions in February 1917 and August 1991, as well as the "velvet" revolutions in East Europe and the "color" revolutions in the ex-USSR.

At the present hour, it is difficult to say what the attitude of the Russian police, the forces of the Ministry of Interior, etc. would be when ordered to suppress popular risings by force. On the one hand, according to a poll of the police officers union, only 7 percent of them consider the demonstrators as "extremists" and "enemy agents." On the other hand, nothing proves explicitly that in the critical situation the personnel of the forces of order would be ready to defend human rights and would choose the cause of the people.

The third important factor for the success of democratic revolutions is for the crisis within the ruling elite to worsen to the point of provoking a split within it. Thus, in 1917 the Czar was convinced to abdicate by influential Representatives and generals; and during the orange revolution in the Ukraine, the members of the Supreme Court and a number of local officials turned away from the regime. But in both these cases, the ruling elite was heterogeneous, its various representatives having certain autonomy. And that's what's missing in today's Russia: the agents of the vertical power structure selected by Putin are totally deprived of autonomy; also they know perfectly well that the dismantling of the system would automatically entail their fall from power. Only out in the provinces can one expect hesitations on the part of the local bureaucracy unhappy with the liquidation of federalism under Putin.

Therefore, despite the explicitly pre-revolutionary situation in Russia, the victory of the democratic revolution in the near future is not in the least assured. The death-throes of the Bonapartist regime could last a certain amount of time. But the revolution is ripening; it is inevitable; it is only a question of time; sooner or later it will break out.

And If This Revolution Succeeds?

OBJECTIVELY SPEAKING, the nature of this revolution is determined in advance: today it can only be political and democratic. Russian society is not ready to go further; distinct social groups that are conscious of their own interests have not yet defined themselves within it, which is quite understandable given long decades of totalitarian atomization, a serious economic recession and then Bonapartism. Society is still not structured, so there is no reason to expect miracles. The revolution will not solve socio-economic problems right away. But it can create the political and institutional conditions for their solution, more favorable to social struggles. Political freedom and democracy are not a panacea — but without them no serious improvement of the social order in the interest of the great majority of working people is possible.

It is to that majority of workers that belong most of the participants in the protest movement that began in December, 2011. The Stalinists and some of the right-wing liberals claim, erroneously, that a "bourgeois mob" was in the streets of Moscow. According to a poll, 75 percent of the participants in the big demonstration of December 24 were salaried workers in non-managerial positions; 68 percent were low and medium-low income. On the other hand, their level of education was rather high: 83 percent had the equivalent of Bachelors or Masters degrees. Thus, one of the main forces in the struggle for democracy is this 21st Century proletariat — skilled, educated, but deprived of a decent share of the public wealth. The same social layer is driving the social movements in Europe.

As for their political opinions, a plurality (38 percent) of the demonstrators called themselves democrats, 31% sympathized with the liberals. As a general rule, the leaders reflect the movement. They are democrats in the broad sense of the term who have no clear social program or penchant for liberal positions. Despite what is proclaimed by official propagandists, a Communist backlash does not represent a real threat in Russia after the overthrow of Bonapartism. It is no accident that the Communist Party separated itself from the mass protests, calling them "the orange plague" (an allusion to the Ukrainian revolution): the Party has always been a hanger-on of the Putin regime, whose fall would weaken, rather than strengthen, it. Many of the people who voted for the Communists in the 2011 parliamentary elections for lack of a real alternative or to protest against the stranglehold of United Russia would certainly prefer to vote for other political forces in free elections. One quarter of the votes is the maximum number achieved by this political mutation, which has chosen Stalin as its idol. The radical clone of the CP, the Left Front, which combines appeals to return to the USSR with political exoticism: the ideas of Kadhafi.

The nationalist threat is much more serious. The Putin decade has witnessed a large growth of nationalist ideas of the type that turn easily into Nazism. And the regime is responsible for much of this, since it has no ideology other than statism tinged with nationalism. The structural immaturity of society, the lack of freedom in social life and the lack of developed political culture also favor the propagation of such crude ideological substitutes. This has resulted in the expansion of xenophobia, inseparable from nationalism, ethnic pogroms against migrants from the Caucasus (Kondopoga 2006), Nazi terror in the streets, thuggish violence of nationalist football hooligans around Manege Square in the center of Moscow (2010), etc. The mass protests against electoral fraud called forth feverish activity among the nationalists, who tried to attach themselves to the democratic movement so as to ride on the rising wave. Their main goal is to be recognized as a political force by public opinion. But behind the "democratic nationalists" hide genuine Nazis. Indeed, the very phrase "democratic nationalism" is an empty notion: the claim of superiority of "true Russian nationality" over other ethnic groups (made by the nationalists and now by Putin) is profoundly incompatible with the principles of democracy.

This is why the membership on the organizing committee of the protest demonstrations of individuals like Thor (Kralin) — the apologist for the assassins of Markelov and Baburova[3] — who is linked with Nazi underground structures — is a serious mistake on the part of the leaders of the democratic movement. The participation in street actions of the far right with their flags and their spokesmen on the platform can have serious consequences. Not only will those forces be de-marginalized, the authorities will take advantage of it. In the hope of attracting new protesters from the camp of the far right, the movement's organizers are running the risk of discrediting their cause and shrinking its base. Even more worrisome is the appearance of a figure like the "nationalist democrat" Navalny, who would like to imitate the career of Jean-Marie LePen. This organizer of "Russian marches" and activist in the "Union of minority shareholders" openly aims at legitimizing nationalism. The example of Germany in the 20s and 30s shows where a movement of "Minority shareholders" with an anti-corruption discourse can lead.

However, it is highly improbable that the victory of the democratic revolution will reinforce the nationalists. Their target audience is already divided between the nationalist Liberal-Democratic Party (of the notorious Jirinovsky) and the CP, which leaves little ground for new nationalists. According to the polls, 75 percent of the Russian population does not feel hostility towards other ethnic groups. Consciously or not, the majority of people in Russia realize that the acceleration of xenophobia is disastrous for their multi-ethnic country. And the rank-and-file activists of the protest movement showed their strong rejection of nationalism by booing the far-right speakers at the big Moscow demonstrations. Only 2 percent of the December 24 demonstrators identified with a party of Russian nationalists. Thus, without denying the danger of nationalism, one is forced to conclude that the accepted wisdom hammered home by the media ("If Putin is kicked out, the Nazis will get in") is nothing but a piece of propaganda.

Another issue constantly brought up by the propagandistic media is the return of the oligarchs. They claim that the fall of the regime would lead to a pure and simple return to the days of Yeltsin, with period figures like Kassianov, Nemtsov, etc. coming back to power. In reality, nothing is less likely. Putinism is a natural result of Eltsinism, and its collapse would take away with it the whole political construction that it was based on. The "super-presidential" Constitution of 1993 was the basis of today's Bonapartism. There is little doubt that radical democratization would bend back the balance of powers in favor of the parliament. And even if Russia doesn't become a parliamentary republic, in one manner or another, the people will have more influence on the formation of the government, so they will be able to block the road of discredited figures like Kassianov and of open spokesmen for the interests of big business like Prokhorov.

The objective task of the democratic revolution in Russia consists in liberating civil society from the authoritarian and bureaucratic yoke, in creating a political space where all social forces can express their interests. In the long term, this will permit the void on the left wing of the political milieu in Russia to be filled. The absence of an organized left movement (outside of tiny Trotskyist and anarchist groups) cannot continue for a long time, and the different Stalinists and phony social democrats of "Just Russia" party, parading as Leftists are not up to filling the bill. Today already, 17 percent of the protesters identify with the non-Communist Left. Their position is not yet represented politically. But sooner or later, the consolidation of the democratic left forces that are anti-totalitarian, internationalist, and defensive of human rights and the rights of the workers must begin.

Although it may upset the prudent Communist Zuganov, Russia has not "used up her supply of revolutions." History knows no limits to this supply: revolutions continue as long as their tasks have not been accomplished. For example, in France it took four revolutions over 80 years to establish a democratic system. The ruling group may well stage-manage demonstrations by street-sweepers under the slogan "Fuck the Revolution!" — such feeble ploys only indicate the febrile agitation that precedes death, the senile fear of the ineluctable end. "The laws of history are more powerful than the maneuvers of a bureaucratic apparatus."

NOTES

1. The terms Thermidor and Bonapartism were born in France in XVIII-XIX centuries and later used by scholars and political thinkers to analyze general patterns of revolutionary and post-revolutionary developments in various countries. Thermidor means a victory of social and political forces that are hostile to the further progress of revolution and establish their own rule over society in the interests of the new elites. Bonapartism means a system in which the state bureaucracy, usually subordinated to one man at the top, obtains a high degree of independence from society, concentrates all power in its hands and rule by authoritarian methods; while serving social interests of economically dominating classes, it suppresses them, as well as other social groups politically. (Classical analysis of this phenomenon in France under Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, or Napoleon III [1851-1870], is presented in works of Karl Marx.)

2. In 2005 various in-kind social benefits for pensioners, the disabled and some other groups were transformed in Russia into cash payments. Since they did not really compensate the services taken away, it provoked a series of protests, mostly from pensioners.

3. The anti-fascist lawyer and the young journalist killed by Russian Nazis.

U.S. Economic Imperialism and Resistance from the Global South

A Prelude to OWS

Francis Shor

It is generally agreed that Occupy Wall Street (OWS) was a response to decades of economic inequality in the United States. However, to focus only on the national dynamics of U.S. capitalism is to neglect the global role of U.S. economic imperialism since the 1970s and the resistance that developed in the global South to specific instances of that economic imperialism. This paper will consider how imperialist policies promoted by U.S. sponsored agencies and activities engaged in by U.S. corporations' elicited acts of resistance. In turn, the blowback from and resistance to U.S. -imposed economic imperialism informed the ruling elite responses to the economic crisis of 2008 and inspired the OWS movement of 2011.

Perhaps one obvious place to begin this investigation of U.S. economic imperialism is to trace out the development of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) in the 1970s and 1980s. As both a class strategy of elite core interests concerned about their falling profits and an imperial strategy to assert additional controls over resources, markets, and capital flows in developing nations, SAP-imposed demands for privatization and deregulation had devastating consequences for numerous countries and their populations. Those consequences are dramatically revealed in Mike Davis's brilliant and disturbing book, *Planet of Slums*. As Davis points out, Structural Adjustment Programs, promoted by the IMF and World Bank, not only accelerated the move of the rural poor to growing urban slums, but also eroded, through privatization and debt schemes, the capacity of the state to underwrite public investment and development. Davis cites one researcher's study of the impact of SAPs on agricultural development in Africa:

> Subsidized, improved agricultural input packages and rural infrastructural building were drastically reduced...(P)easant farmers were subjected to the international financial institutions' "sink-or-swim" economic strategy. National market deregulation pushed agricultural producers into global commodity markets where middle as well as poor peasants found it hard to compete.

As a further consequence of these economic dynamics, Davis underscores an increasing immiseration and imposed underdevelopment throughout the developing world. "In Luanda," he writes, "where one quarter of the households have per capita consumptions of less than 75 cents per day, child mortality (under five) was a horrifying 320 per thousand in 1993 — the highest in the world." Davis cites the Nigerian author Fidelis Balogin on how IMF-mandated SAPs turned into an instrument of "re-enslaving" Nigerians:

> The weird logic of this economic programme seemed to be that to restore life to the dying economy, every juice had first to be SAPed

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> out of the under-privileged majority of the citizens. The middle class rapidly disappeared and the garbage heaps of the increasingly rich few became the food table of the multiplied population of abjectly poor. The brain drain to the oil-rich Arab countries and to the Western world became a flood.

Of course, this flood was not a natural disaster but the logical outcome of the IMF and World Bank dam busters. Behind the IMF and the World Bank stood the U.S. government, eager to find new markets for its subsidized exports and to extend what would become toxic loans to already indebted Third World nations. In 1985, the U.S. Treasury Department enacted what was designated as the Baker Plan (named for James Baker, then Secretary of the Treasury). The Baker Plan called upon the 15 largest Third World debtors to forego any state subsidies or provisions for development in order to receive needed international loans. As Davis makes abundantly clear, "Everywhere the IMF and World Bank — acting as bailiffs for the big banks and backed by the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations — offered poor countries the same poisoned chalice of devaluation, privatization, removal of import controls and food subsidies, enforced cost-recovery in health and education, and ruthless downsizing of the public sector."

Combined with real natural disasters, like drought, and other manufactured dislocations, like rising interest rates and falling commodity prices, whole continents from Africa to Latin America were subjected to conditions even more devastating than the Great Depression. As a single example of that devastation, Davis cites how a 1991 SAP raised the cost of living in one year by 45 percent in Harare and resulted in the hospitalization of 100,000 for malnutrition.

The devastation and disruption wrought by U.S. economic imperialism was obviously co-determined by willing ruling classes in certain countries. In numerous instances, foreign governments and their colluding political and economic elites helped to construct financial and political arrangements conducive to the array of domestic and foreign economic interests and detrimental to the poor majority. For example, in between the near bankruptcy in 1982 and the financial collapse in the mid-1990s, the

> As resistance mounted, the government turned to forms of political repression, resulting in the declaration of martial law in April. This did not deter the determined and organized residents of Cochabamba who responded with even more massive mobilizations.

Mexican Government and various bankers aided a "Washington Consensus" that tied the Reagan and Clinton Treasury Departments together with the IMF and private banks. Under Clinton's Secretary of Treasury, Robert Rubin, a former Citibank and Wall Street manager, private banks, including Citibank, used both the Mexican and U.S. governments to salvage their bad economic investments. With the full participation of the Mexican presidents during this time, but especially by Carlos Salinas de Gortari, neoliberal policies and programs were adopted that, among other changes, privatized former communal farms and, in the process, forced Mexican peasants into the cities or across the U.S. border. Furthermore, in taking away land that had been used for subsistence farming and the growing of corn, U.S. corn imports, primarily the less nutritious and even GMO yellow corn, flooded the Mexican markets. NAFTA accelerated U.S.-subsidized agricultural imports, in particular, even though it did lead to the emergence and resistance by the Zapatistas and others in Mexican civil society.

While primarily a response to the debt crisis and neoliberal policies in Mexico, including the implementation of NAFTA, which, in turn, drove those on the margins into further economic and political deprivation, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation *(Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional* — EZLN) opened a significant front against U.S. economic imperialism and global neoliberalism. Embracing the legacy of political struggles from the Mexican past, the Zapatistas also looked forward to creating a new and better world. In the January 1 missive that accompanied their occupation in Chiapas, the legacy of past conflicts acknowledged the role of the poor, despised, and marginalized: "We are the product of 500 years of struggles: first against slavery, in the War of Independence against Spain led by the insurgents, then to keep from being absorbed by U.S. expansionism, then to enact our Constitution and expel the French Empire from our land, then the Porfiro Diaz dictatorship prevented the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled, developing their own leadership, Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men like ourselves." After close to a year of public engagement that saw the intervention of the Mexican army and the establishment of a wary truce, the EZLN issued another declaration about their political intentions: "The Zapatista plan today remains the same as always: to change the world to make it better, more just, more free, more democratic, that is, more human."

Although the Zapatistas had been organizing for a decade prior to their dramatic public insurgency, the first years of that public existence, marked with much bad faith from the government, did manage to create waves far beyond the Mexican shore. In fact, the Zapatistas electrified a global audience not only with the audacity of their action critique against neoliberalism but also with their new ways of doing politics, from the use of the internet to their invitations to dialogue to their eschewing of seeking power for themselves. One of the EZLN's most prominent spokespersons, Subcomandante Marcos, expressed the desire and hope for that new politics (with resonances for OWS): "In the midst of this navigating from pain to hope, the political struggle finds itself bereft of the worn-out clothes bequeathed to it by pain; it is hope which obliges it to seek new forms of struggle, new ways of being political, of doing politics. A new politics, a new political ethic is not just a wish, it is the only way to advance, to jump to the other side."

The universal aspirations to realize another world expressed in the Zapatista movement caught the attention of millions around the world struggling against neoliberal globalization and for the creation of equitable alternatives. "Zapatismo is not a movement restricted to Mexico," argues John Holloway, "but is central to the struggle of thousands of millions of people all over the world to live a human life against and in an increasingly inhuman society." On the other hand, the Zapatistas were able to bring an indigenous and pre-modern sensibility to the post-modern task of imagining and creating a world that not only validates the desire for autonomy but also for emancipatory politics. As noted by anthropologist June Nash, "the discourse of the Zapatistas reflects primordial roots of both inspiration and identification: their strategies reflect a sure sense of the political process in which they are situated and which they are trying to push to new levels of pluricultural existence."

Beyond the connections the Zapatistas have established on the global stage, they have also continued to build those autonomous spaces and communities in the state of Chiapas. As pointed out by Ryan Hollon and Karen Lopez, the "Zapatistas view their efforts as part of a struggle to support all those indigenous communities living in a shared context of poverty and isolation." Among those autonomous spaces are learning communities and health facilities that both supplant the state and contest its authority. Expanding their culture of resistance, the Zapatistas have managed to sustain their own indigenous communities while building the kind of radical democratic structures that are an inspiration to those seeking another and better world.

Certainly, the conditions in Mexico that produced the EZLN are important to recognize, as well as the transformations and efficacy of the Zapatistas various campaigns in that country. However, the message, in particular, of Subcomandante Marcos resonated globally, especially as a project of a radically democratic and diverse political alternative to U.S. economic imperialism and global capital. Marcos deliberately played with a kind of shape-shifting universal oppressed person, especially evident in the following communiqué:

> Marcos is gay in San Francisco, a black in South Africa, Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Isidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, an indigenous person in the streets of San Cristobal...In other words, Marcos is a human being in this world. Marcos is every untolerated, oppressed, exploited minority that is resisting and saying "Enough!"

While embracing those who were despised and marginalized, both Marcos and the Zapatistas made clear their insistence that they sought mutual solidarity. The Zapatistas called for joining forces around the globe in a common, but diverse, endeavor for insurrection. For Marcos, the rebellion promoted by the Zapatistas was an invitation to listen to a

> network of voices...a network that covers the five continents and helps to resist the death promised to us by Power....There follows the reproduction of resistances, the I do not conform, the I rebel. There follows the world with many worlds which the world needs. There follows humanity recognizing itself to be plural, different, inclusive, tolerant of itself, with hope.

The network of voices inspired by Marcos and the Zapatistas certainly led to the articulation of shared resistance and mutual solidarity perhaps most succinctly articulated in the slogan of "One No, Many Yeses!" Seeking ways to valorize that resistance and mutual solidarity, the Zapatistas provided a critical voice in their national intervention against U.S. economic imperialism and global neoliberalism. Beyond that intervention, they offered a new way of connecting to a vision and practice of globalization from below. By invoking a global consciousness for the excluded, the Zapatistas opened up the possibility of projecting another world or even other worlds where dignity would reign. As noted by Fiona Jeffries,

> In the Zapatismo mirror, solidarity is the building of alternative resistance networks around the world through the practice of radical democracy, liberty, and social justice with a related emphasis on localism, autonomy, and horizontal relationships among all the participating groups and organizations.

Another instance of resistance to U.S. economic imperialism and global neoliberalism emerged from further south in Bolivia. When the U.S.-based Bechtel Corporation, a top-ranked global construction company with over 19,000 projects in 140 countries, took over the public water system in Cochabamba, Bolivia at the end of the 1990s, it met with growing organized resistance. At first, however, the Bolivian government facilitated the privatization of water by Bechtel through prohibiting other mechanisms of water allocation and expanding commodification over all means of water collection, including gathering water from rain.

After Bechtel's subsidiary, Aguas del Tunari, raised residential water rates that led to spending anywhere between 1/4 to 1/3 of the average monthly wage ($60) for water, Bolivians throughout the Cochabamba area began to organize opposition to the new water rates and laws. According to Rosseline Ugarte, a young woman involved with the resistance, "The water laws did not allow you to have your own well in rural communities. You had to pay a certain amount for your own well. How could they charge us for our water? Next it would be air."

Mobilizing on this outrage, rural and urban residents began erecting blockades in January 2000. The main plaza of Cochabamba became the site for the ritual burning of water bills. In response to these protests, the government froze increases but refused to cancel the contract with Bechtel even though close to 100 percent of residents supported the cancellation. As resistance mounted, the government turned to forms of political repression, resulting in the declaration of martial law in April. This did not deter the determined and organized residents of Cochabamba who responded with even more massive mobilizations. As one of the participants recalled, "All of the neighborhoods in the city were organized. They were overcome with the feeling of resistance...(They) brought food to those in the city center who were resisting, because the protests raged day and night...It was a huge gesture of solidarity." In the face of such determined opposition, the government cancelled the contract. Even though Bechtel then sued for lost revenue, national and worldwide pressure forced the company to drop its claims.

Certainly, these actions of resistance in the global south from the Zapatistas to the Cochabamba water war did not provide the immediate backdrop to OWS. The more proximate inspirations could be traced to the Arab Spring and European Summer. However, the financial implosion in 2008 led the U.S. financial and polite elites to turn to the IMF structural adjustment playbook. According to economist Michael Hudson,

> the Obama bank bailout is arranged much like an IMF loan to support the exchange rate of foreign currency, but with the Treasury supporting financial asset prices for U.S. banks and other financial institutions…Private-sector debt will be moved onto the U.S. Government balance sheet, where "taxpayers" will bear losses.

So, when protestors from OWS chant: "Banks got bailed out; we got sold out!" the connections to IMF structural adjustment programs promoted by U.S. economic imperialism may not be readily evident, but the chain reaction is there. Thus, a global thread of economic exploitation binds the multitudes from the Global South to the 99 percent in the U.S. Indeed, the fierce cries from the Global South resonate in the shouts propelling the Occupy movement into the streets and onto the path of radical resistance. What Occupy now shares with the Zapatistas and the water war in Cochabamba is a distrust of and antagonism to the political system and the ruling elites and the expression of class and communal solidarity. Whether OWS, like the Zapatistas, can create autonomous and alternative institutions is still an open question. On the other hand, there is now no question about the growing resistance to global capital.

Editors' Note: A fully footnoted version will be found on our website, newpol.org

Ireland: Still Up Recession Creek Without a Paddle

LILY MURPHY

ON DECEMBER 6TH 1921 the Anglo-Irish treaty was signed. It was an agreement between Britain and Ireland to end the Irish war of independence and create peace on the war ravaged island of Ireland, but the main clause of the treaty was that six counties of the north of Ireland would remain under British rule while the remaining twenty-six counties could enjoy limited freedom as a self governing dominion of the British empire. That agreement occurred ninety years ago and ninety years to that exact date, Ireland is now a republic, albeit twenty-six counties are a republic; northern Ireland is shared by an assembly of both unionists and nationalists; and peace is finally allowed to make its mark on the island of Ireland. Yet ninety years on and the Irish people are still suffering, this time not from the rule of Britain but rather from the rule of capitalism.

While Michael Collins and the British co-signed an agreement to split the country in two halves back in 1921, ninety years later the government under Taoiseach Enda Kenny is following the orders of the EU and IMF by splitting Irish society in two, a society of the haves and the have nots. The latter is a much more common element in Irish society these days.

Ninety years ago the youth of Ireland took up guns and fought for their freedom, and, even though times were economically harsh back then, it did not deter the many young men and women who volunteered to fight in order to achieve some sort of freedom through nationalism. Although their goal of a unified socialist republic was not achieved, they did gain some freedom, a freedom they had never experienced in their life time, and the revolutionary spirit which they ignited set out a marker for future generations to follow. The sad tale to tell of those future generations is that they have lost the fighting spirit and are void of any revolutionary notions; instead they have become a lost generation.

To compare the youth of 1921 to the youth of 2011 makes ninety years worth of difference. 1921 saw the youth rise up and fight for national freedom from the British empire; 2011 sees the youth accept defeat and not fight for economic freedom from the IMF and an emerging German economic empire. Growing up in the thick of the Celtic tiger years, I and many others of my generation never experienced any economic stress. The word recession never entered my vocabulary and emigration was something we read about only in the history books. But now that we know what recession and emigration is, we know what the consequences of a hard financial depression is, and we know it all too well. It is true to say that the youth are affected quite badly by this recession but we must not forget that those who also bear the burden of harsh times are the parents of the Celtic tiger cubs. The mothers and fathers must also pay the price for the bankers' greed and politicians' corruption by seeing their offspring head off to foreign lands to live new lives, far from the

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recessionary ordeals of 21st century Ireland.

This generation, my generation, is without doubt the new lost generation, created and shaped by extreme austerity measures and economic stagnation. We now must accept a type of poverty we never knew before, never wanted and never thought we would see. Growing up in the boom times we were all guaranteed a top class education, a job for life, a nice house, a big car, and a fat pension to keep us warm in our old age. All of that now seems ridiculously far fetched as hard austerity measures ensure that the Irish education system slumps to below average standards; employment is only for the lucky few; the property market is an extinct element of the economy, the high cost of car tax and petrol causes many to opt for the use of their own legs, and pensions have been eaten up the banks. In the Ireland of 2011 economic growth has been crushed while spending has all but ceased and a generation is slipping away to waste. The human consequences of such harsh economic measures have seen a reverse in population growth in two ways and both are heartbreaking. The first cause of a sharp population decline is emigration and the second is suicide.

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In the first nine months of 2011, some 65,000 people have left Ireland. The Economic and Social Research Institute predicts 120,000 will emigrate in 2012 (*The Telegraph,* 12-9-11).

Since the beginning of the economic crises suicide has steadily and worryingly risen. "Ireland has the fourth highest suicide rate in Europe" (*Irish Times,* 12-2-2011). More and more people, men and women of any age in any county across Ireland are deciding that the better option is to take their own life. Suicide is affecting all classes and without doubt it is linked to the recession. It straddles the class divide. So far this year in Ireland people from all walks of life have taken their own lives. From the well off to the working class, suicide is reaching into all sectors of a desperate society and taking grip on unstable minds rocked by recession. Suicide is a factor plaguing this country ever more under this rotten fiscal climate, and while the loss of a generation to emigration may be lamented as a general perspective of this recession the real tragic cost is the surge in suicide rates among those who are unemployed or face unemployment; they are laden down with debt and face a bleak outlook. Just as everyone in Ireland knows of someone who has emigrated, they also know of someone who has attempted or succeeded in taking his or her own life. So when some may state that austerity may work, the reality is that it is at a high cost to individuals and communities as a whole.

The budget was delivered by the Irish Government over two days, December 5th and December 6th, the ninetieth anniversary of the Anglo-Irish treaty. It was the first time ever in history that it took two days to deliver a budget for a state with a population of just fewer than five million people. Cuts were made to education and health; a fuel allowance for pensioners was cut down; and the cost of college registration fees rose along with the gradual phasing out of maintenance grants for less well off students. Cuts were made to single parents' allowance and disability allowance. Taxes were introduced for almost everything and anything; a water tax was introduced, as was a house tax. The only tax they didn't introduce was a scratch your ass tax. The aim of this budget was to rebuild the Irish economy and strengthen a poor society, but the truth of the matter is that the vicious program of deep cuts and high taxes serves only to weaken society even more.

While Irish society has come crashing back down to earth with an unmerciful bang, I do revel in the thought that at least we are all no longer in a two tiered society created by the Celtic tiger. I may even begrudgingly revel in the fact that the upper classes, which were created from the excesses of the Celtic tiger years, are now merely middle class while the middle class have joined the ranks of the working class and the working class who struggled before now must struggle even harder; and that is where my reveling ends because now the poor get poorer and the rich run away — the bankers who got us into this mess along with the corrupt politicians, they are all gone now but unfortunately they are not gone to jail. They have left a society that created greed, thrived on greed, and now has been utterly and completely consumed by greed. If only we took control of ourselves and managed our good fortune and wealth all those years ago, if we even shared it equally, then maybe we might not be in this mess right now. Those who had control of our purse strings during the boom years got completely drunk on money. It was wasted on projects not needed such as the Luas tram system in Dublin, a city that already had a good bus transport and suburban train system, a city which could fit into London several times over. While money could have been spent on more sensible projects, they were instead sidelined in favor of lavish and almost nonsensical things. In my own city of Cork, a quay wall next to the city hospital collapsed during mass flooding in 2009 and it remains unfixed.

There is a sense protruding through modern Irish society that we have been dragged up and drawn out and are now no more good. That sense of worthlessness hangs heavy over Irish society, a society with no anticipation of hope. This country is now, essentially, a hopeless one. The Cry from the Occupy movement is that if you won't stand for something, you will fall for everything; the truth of the matter is that the Irish fell when the banks fell back in 2008 and we were already on our knees when the International Monetary Fund arrived on our door-step in 2010.

The idea within the Irish government is that it can get the country back on track over the next four years through harsh budgets. In order to meet the financial targets imposed by the IMF-EU-ECB troika, the government set out plans to raise 1.6 billion Euros through taxes while making savings of 2.2 billion through savage spending cuts. The sectors most affected by such cuts included health and education. While suicide rates are soaring, cuts in mental health programs have been made and no longer can we claim to be the island of saints and scholars, as the education system is ultimately crumbling under such harsh austerity measures.

While Ireland is battling with its own domestic issues such as the collapse in social morale, Germany is emerging into the most dynamic economy in Europe and slowly becoming one of the most powerful in the world. Before the budget was delivered to the Irish public, it was firstly given a look over by those in the Bundestag. Our economic sovereignty is gone and so too it seems is our general dignity. While bailouts have been pushed upon countries such as Spain and while Ireland and Greece have already had to induce such a thing, Germans do not moan because they reap the benefits of securing cheap outlets for their goods. As Germany grows, others such as Ireland shrink back in to pre-modern economic standards. The German economic empire is expanding across Europe while hollow talks of trying to re-unify Europe take place. We are living in ironic times indeed.

But the real enemy is not this or that nation-state: it is capitalism. James Connolly, a founder of Irish socialism, knew that very well: "The day has passed for patching up the capitalist system; it must go."

While the wrangles continue in Europe about how to save the Euro currency, high taxes have been piled upon the Irish public, cuts in the health and education sector have been made and Ireland is still in the darkest depths of an economic mire. The good times may not come back for a long time if they will come back at all. That notion is uncertain but what is a certified fact is that as long as harsh austerity measures are made, emigrations will continue among the Irish youth and the rate of suicide will continue to rise. What would those who signed the Anglo-Irish treaty ninety years ago think of their country and people now? Did they ever envision a nation destroyed by banks, a nation consumed by greed, a nation under the thumb of Europe? Never would they have thought that an Irish budget would have to go to Germany first in order to get the okay before it was passed onto the Irish people; and never would they have thought that the prospect of emigration would be as ever prevalent today as it was when our ancestors fled during the great famine.

Emigration started off in the early days of the recession as a sort of taboo word among the youth; now it a word which is widespread, so much so that you cannot stroll down an Irish street in any city in any town without hearing of someone's daughter or son taking flight to a better life in places like Canada or Australia. Who knows where the next five or ten years will bring Ireland, who knows what currency we will be using or indeed what flag we will be flying? But what will be certain is that the majority of this generation will not be there to witness it because they would have emigrated to other lands for a better life and all because right now in Ireland, whatever you do in this country, don't get sick, don't get old, and don't be young as harsh austerity measures will not guarantee you a decent life on the emerald isle.

Infectious Disease

ROBERT JOE STOUT

"ACCORDING TO INFORMATION supplied by members of the military high command in 1994, President Salinas already had given orders for a massive military move into Chiapas to root out and destroy the insurgents, but was dissuaded by the United States Embassy and some of his own governmental advisors because Subcomandante Marcos had become a charismatic figure worldwide and Mexico could not afford the negative publicity that crushing the movement would create. Therefore Salinas and the federal government determined to isolate and contain this 'infectious disease' and curtail popular protests and other indications of allegiance and support that might arise."

—RODOLFO MIGUEL

The same sources asserted that the United States School of the Americas, which taught anti-insurgency tactics to the militaries of numerous Latin American countries, tutored Salinas' forces in low intensity warfare to replace the all-out assault that Salinas had desired. They equipped paramilitary groups that harassed Zapatista communities, burned crops, and apprehended residents for supposed offenses such as theft, assault, and destruction of public property. Using the pretext of drug searches, military incursions evicted householders, destroyed food and water supplies, and manhandled and sometimes sequestered residents.

The depredations have continued for over seventeen years. Despite Mexico's severe economic problems, the takeover of much of northern Mexico by drug corporations, and rampant corruption, Mexico's federal government has maintained an active duty force of several thousand armed troops and supplied well-equipped private "armies" like the *Ejército de Dios,* a militant arm of the *Iglesias Cristianos Evangélicos,* with weapons, training, and the impunity to harass, assault, and burn to prevent the infectious disease from spreading past the quarantine to which the government has subjected the Zapatistas.

THIS MODEL OF REPRESSION isn't confined to Chiapas. Military incursions also repress popular movements in the Estado de Mexico, Guerrero, and Oaxaca. Soldiers, militarized federal police, and paramilitaries arrest, torture, steal, and rape with impunity. I have witnessed their criminality.

I had just returned to my house on a hill perched above the city of Oaxaca's central district on November 25, 2006 when I heard gunshots. Then shouts and sirens. The angry percussion of low flying helicopters. I threw a jacket over my shoulders and scrambled past shops and houses towards an intersection from which I could get a clearer look at what was happening.

Except for distant outskirts, the city was totally dark. A sea of undulating black obscured stars and the moon. As I crossed the intersection, I saw flames flare upwards from burning buildings and heard what I thought were more gunshots. Phantoms that turned out to be people running towards me shouted warnings

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in Spanish that I couldn't decipher until hands grabbed my shoulders, spinning me around, and a face close to mine bleated, "They're kill-killing everyone! Everyone!" As it did I felt a sudden burning in my lungs: Teargas! Flashed remembrances of military experiences.

> Those in power can work out deals with the drug corporations. They're after the same things: money, more money, and much more money.

Cautiously I edged along the sidewalk, keeping close to building fronts. I could hear the shouted pleas of women, incoherent screamed commands, glass shattering. My eyes and lungs burned; I tried to cover my mouth with a handkerchief but the teargas made it impossible to see anything clearly. Around me as I joined scores of people in retreat I heard questions, denouncements, curses. Soldiers…police…surrounded…beatings…snipers… No one seemed to know exactly what had happened. Just that after a protest march had ended, heavily armed and gas-masked soldiers and militarized federal police had swept through the center of the city beating and arresting everyone they could get their hands on.

A lawyer whom I encountered the following week confided that an administration official had answered his complaint that virtually all of the 141 people who'd been arrested and sent to federal prisons for "sedition" and other offenses were innocent of any wrongdoing, even of participating in the protest march:

"All the better. It will make the rest of the people more afraid."

LESS THAN A MONTH AFTER THE ASSAULT, I participated in the first human rights delegation to interview members of the Popular Assembly that had initiated the protest march. Although various witnesses told us they'd seen persons who'd been hit by pistol or rifle fire, we could not verify any gunshot wounds or mortalities. Nevertheless, we corroborated twenty-three deaths at the hands of paramilitaries and non-uniformed police, including the slaying of American video cameraman Bradley Will, during the months preceding the armed assault.

Will was filming an attack on a defensive barricade set up by Popular Assembly members and supporters in the Oaxaca suburb of Santa Lucía del Camino on October 30, less than four weeks before the November 25 purge. U.S. Ambassador Tony Garza tepidly admonished the Mexican government and asked that the crime be investigated; Will's parents and a number of his friends and Indymedia associates formed an NGO to pressure U.S. governmental sources and media to insist that Mexican authorities resolve the assassination.

It took over a year for the "exhaustive investigation" to discount Will's videos of armed attackers charging towards him and incriminate Juan Manuel Martínez, one of his companions at the barricade. To eliminate testimony that could have vindicated Martínez, state prosecutors charged all of those who had been at the barricade with being accessories to the crime, thus nullifying any testimony they might have given.

Efforts by Will's supporters in the United States to reopen the investigations and drop the charges against Martínez muddied the waters. Their insistence that the crime was premeditated and the shooters singled Will out because he had actively supported the strikers and filmed incidents and interviews criticizing the repressive state government overlooked or ignored that Will was only one of three killed and that four Mexican journalists and more than a dozen other *barricadistas* were wounded by gunfire during paramilitary assaults that day.

A few months after Will's murder — and before Martínez was arrested — a Oaxacan who'd helped man the Santa Lucía barricade and I inspected the place Will had been shot. Photographs published the day following his death showed three armed attackers, all identified as current or former Santa Lucía police, charging along the rutted street, weapons raised. Obviously they had no concerns about return fire for they were fully exposed; it's extremely unlikely that anyone at the barricade was armed. Witnesses confirmed at the time that the assailants had been drinking.

Traversing the rough asphalt at a slow trot, hand upraised as though wielding a weapon, I tried to focus on my companion who was standing approximately where Will had stood. From my military experience I knew how difficult it was to hit anything with a .38 while one is running. (I found it difficult to hit anything, period!) The bullet ricocheted; others at the barricade were wounded; if Will's murder was premeditated it was part of a general plan to assault and kill, not to target the American journalist. But all that was wafted aside in the drive to exonerate Martínez and indict the real killer(s).

Mexico's Supreme Court eventually ruled the charges against Martínez lacked sufficient evidence and he was released from prison.

Six years later the crime remained unresolved. But Martinez's conviction and the disputes it generated deflected attention from the overall repression that existed throughout Mexico.

THAT THE ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT has resisted being co-opted and continues to function as a viable entity reflects its tightly organized origins and singularity of purpose. The small coterie around which the movement formed began recruiting and training ten years before they had emerged as an anti-governmental force (unlike Mexico City student strikers in 1999 or the Popular Assembly in Oaxaca in 2006). Although those movements attracted enthusiastic support, they each lacked the core organizational structure that enabled the Zapatistas to stand up against governmental pressure.

Tacitly, if not actively, the government of the United States has supported repressions of dissent. Zapatista spokespersons, principally Subcomandante Marcos, openly opposed capitalism, thus making them (by capitalistic definition) "subversive" and "leftist."

The obsession with curtailing social protest, typical in totalitarian governments, might seem out of place in what ostensibly is a democratic country. But Mexico's "democracy" retains many elements of its centuries-long authoritarian origins. The Spanish kings awarded hundreds of thousands of square kilometers of territory to relatives and supporters despite claims of ownership by *indigena* groups. Even after Mexico gained its independence in 1810, the *hacendero* system of royalty-like elite and dependent workers and *campesinos* continued. In 1910 nearly 90 percent of Mexico's approximately 16 million inhabitants were illiterate and a few dozen families controlled over 90 percent of the country's wealth.

The Constitution of 1917 invested the bulk of power and authority in the executive (the president and in the states the governor), relegating elected assemblies and the judiciary to subservient roles. It included no provisions for citizen recall of governors or the president and granted the executive the power to appoint judges and to control finances. Once elected an executive does whatever he or she pleases, including fortifying his or her party's hold on the government and repressing dissent.

The police and the military have been the primary tools for exercising executive authority, backed by government-paid paramilitaries and/or *porros* (political gang members). Not only have these *porros* subverted legitimate union activities but they have infiltrated student and popular movements and instigated participants to vandalism and criminal attacks that prompted armed police and the military to repress under the guise of restoring law and order.

In *Acteal*: *crimen de estado*, journalist Hermann Bellinghausen asserts that Mexico's federal government planned and carried out — through paid mercenaries — the murder of forty-five Zapatistas, almost all of whom were women and children, at Acteal, Chiapas in December 1997 as part of a deliberate repression of political dissent.

"Here (in Mexico) there is no punishment…for crimes committed by the government…instead the guilty are rewarded," Bellinghausen insisted in a newspaper interview.

Immediately after news of the Acteal massacre spread worldwide, Mexico's federal government attributed the killings to "religious and tribal disagreements" just as it had attributed the slayings of community radio broadcasters in Oaxaca and dissident *campesinos* at Aguas Blancas in Guerrero to land disputes between rival communities.

By officially attributing politically involved slayings to socio-religious confrontations or regional land disputes, the federal government is able to dismiss them as "local concerns" which have nothing to do with government repression. Even when state authorities confirm assaults or intimidations they find ways to derail accusations, as they did when the public prosecutor in Teopisca, Chiapas refused to process charges against three *Ejército de Dios* members who waylaid and beat a teenaged Zapatista. Despite acknowledging that the assault had occurred, the prosecutor claimed that the teenager lacked proper identification and consequently was not authorized to file charges under Mexican law.

Soldiers and armed police, spurred on by *porros,* overreacted to National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) student strikers in 1968 and attacked and killed a still unconfirmed number of protesters at Tlalcoloco in Mexico City on October 2 of that year. An eyewitness fleeing from the assault told me he saw pistol-wielding police fire *tiros de gracia* (coups de grace) at protesters who had fallen or were curled in doorways trying to protect themselves.

President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz and his successor, Luis Echeverría, who was Díaz Ordaz's Government Secretary, were absolved of criminal charges but the protests and their violent aftermath stimulated anti-dissent and anti-public education feelings among the country's political leadership.

THE ASSAULT BY HEAVILY ARMED MILITARY and militarized police in Oaxaca in 2006 broke the back of the People's Popular Assembly that had emerged after government repression of a teachers' union strike in June of that same year. A year and a half earlier, in January 2005, armed Oaxacan state police swept into the town of Santiago Xánica and opened fire on a group of more than eighty *indigena* men, women, and children engaged in a community work project. Members of the Santiago Xánica community had clashed with clear cutters illegally harvesting forest land that the community claimed fell within their jurisdiction. During the skirmish a policeman was killed and over twenty-five *indigenas* badly wounded and placed under arrest.

Mexican law makes no provision for jury trials; a judge determines whether or not the accusations are valid and levies sentences accordingly. The presiding judge sentenced Santiago Xánica community members Abraham Ramírez and two others to prison for homicide, attempted homicide, personal injury, and kidnapping. The judge disregarded evidence that would have vindicated them but did note that all three men were members of the *Defensa de los Derechos Indígenas de Santiago Xánica*, an organization affiliated with the Magonista Zapatista Alliance, the People's Popular Assembly of Oaxaca and the "Other Campaign," the Zapatista's national organization.

"That was the real crime," a Santiago

Xánica resident told me, "that's why the police came."

In September 2009 federal agents arrested Ramsés Villarreal for participating in bank bombings in Mexico City, claiming they had identified him from photographs taken at the scene of the crime. It later was proved that the photos weren't of him, but the federal accusations detailed his role on the student strike council during the 1999-2000 UNAM closure, his participating in FARC solidarity against the military incursions by the army in Colombia and in the Zapatista The Other Campaign. The Mexico City newspaper *La Cronica de Hoy* quoted a federal dossier that linked Villarreal and other former UNAM strikers with discussions about Marxism, opposition to the privatization of the energy industry and the higher educational system, exalting Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez and protesting neoliberalism.

"The government has made it clear that it plans to take advantage of the bombing investigation in order to spy on and hunt down student and social organizations…(that) are allegedly linked to terrorists," journalist Kristin Bricker insisted in her blog.

When citizen protests reach dimensions that the outcry in Ciudad Juárez over drug-related assassinations have done, or that the thousand-mile march from Cuernavaca to the city organized by Javier Sicilia after his son was killed achieved, and the government cannot respond by using repressive force against "lawbreakers," it sponsors "dialogue and negotiation" and assures support, investigations, and legal actions. Publicity photos extol this cooperation, the *abrazos* and attention to widows and orphans and welcomes citizen participation in the war against crime.

Occasionally, as happened after the Tlalcoloco massacre in 1968, it grants concessions to those affronted or victimized. But overall politics don't change. Seldom are restrictions actually lifted. Seldom are those responsible for the violence sanctioned. Seldom do those protesting achieve any of their goals. Seldom do any concessions lessen the stranglehold on power that those in governing elite cling to.

"Social protest," a former federal government official who refused to have his name published for fear of reprisals told me, "is more threatening than the drug corporations to those in power. Those in power can work out deals with the drug corporations. They're after the same things: money, more money, and much more money. It becomes a contest to see who can corrupt each other the most.

"They can´t deal with protesters who want change. Change could destroy what has been built up for over eighty, ninety years. That's why protests have to be repressed."

"So the only way for a protest movement to succeed would be to corrupt those in power?" I asked.

He gave me a knowing wink.

BACK OF THE BOOK

Is Cuba Different?

CHARLES POST

SINCE THE 1930S, most of the international left has defined their "socialism" not as the uncompromising defense of working class self-organization and self-activity, but as the uncritical support of one or another regime that claimed to be "socialist." Whether they idealized the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Albania, or North Korea, most socialists have placed the defense of their particular "socialist fatherland" above the needs of working people at home and abroad. The twists and turns of the Communist movements in response to the changing domestic and diplomatic needs of the bureaucratic rulers of these societies have resulted in the most grotesque distortions of socialist politics: the ultra-left sectarianism of the "Third Period" that led to the surrender of the German workers' movement to Hitler in 1933, the "popular front" derailing of revolutionary upsurges in France and Spain in 1936-37, war-time patriotism and strike breaking in the United States in the early 1940s, undermining of mass strikes across western Europe in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and support for brutal repression of workers' movements in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Poland (1980-81).

Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959:
A Critical Assessment
SAMUEL FARBER
Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2011
378 pp., $24 paper

The collapse or self-transformation of the bureaucratic regimes in the late 1980s and early 1990s profoundly disoriented the international left. The Chinese and Vietnamese bureaucracies' opting to abandon centrally planned command economies for a version of state capitalism that continued single-party rule, and the Soviet and Eastern European ruling elites' embrace of neoliberal capitalism and profoundly limited forms of parliamentary rule fueled the notion that "socialism is dead" not only on the political right and center, but for most of the left. Shocked that the leaders of the "socialist countries" — not pro-Western "dissidents" or imperialist powers — restored capitalism, most of the pro-Communist left was unable to envision any other alternative to capitalism. Since the early 1990s, most of this left has either retreated into politically irrelevant nostalgia for the "socialist past" or embraced attempts to make neoliberal capitalism a bit more "socially responsible."

Opposed to the supporters of what Hal

CHARLES POST *teaches sociology at the Borough of Manhattan Community College-CUNY, is active in his faculty union, and is a member of Solidarity. In the interests of full disclosure, I read and commented on one of the chapters in* Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959: a Critical Assessment *before its publication. I would like to thank Sam Farber and Kit Wainer for comments on an earlier version.*

Draper, a founder of this journal, called "socialism from above" there has always been a minoritarian current of anti-Stalinist advocates of "socialism from below." This political current has long argued that the bureaucratic regimes were in no sense socialist. They not only defended the notion that socialism is the democratic self-rule of working people, but also argued that "socialism from above" was an untenable basis either for an anti-capitalist politics in the West or a viable alternative to capitalism in the east. On the one hand, revolutionary democratic socialists argued that the Communists' counter-revolutionary politics in the capitalist world were rooted in their political and ideological subordination to the ruling bureaucracies in the post-capitalist world. Only currents that rejected both capitalism and Stalinism could hope to renew revolutionary socialism. On the other, the bureaucratic command economies were unviable socially and economically. Without either democratic planning and control of the economy, or the "whip of the market," the post-capitalist economies would stagnate and ultimately implode. Not surprisingly, it was the partisans of "socialism from below" that were able to maintain their revolutionary opposition to capitalism after the collapse of the bureaucratic economies.

Among anti-Stalinist revolutionary socialists, there was one tendency that combined steadfast opposition to the bureaucratic regimes and the Western Communist Parties with the insistence that "Cuba was different." The Fourth International, whose most well known leader was Ernest Mandel, long argued that Cuba was exceptional among post-World War II anti-capitalist revolutions. They claimed that Cuba's was the only revolution, after 1917, led by a non-Stalinist revolutionary organization. The July 26th Movement's roots in Cuban anti-imperialist politics made it different from the Chinese, Yugoslav, or Vietnamese parties. Led by non-Stalinists, the Cuban revolution produced a very different type of post-capitalist regime. While acknowledging the absence of institutions of workers' democracy — multiple, competing political parties, and workers' and community councils with real control over planning and social life — this tradition insisted that Cuba was a non-bureaucratic society. Pointing to the radical, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist

> Repression, from the beginning of the revolution, was not directed solely at right wing, pro-capitalist elements but at dissidents — socialists and democrats — who challenged the consolidation of a single-party dictatorship in Cuba.

pronouncements of Castro and Guevara, these comrades claimed that the Cuban leadership and their supporters in Latin America were revolutionaries, far to the left of the increasingly reformist, pro-Soviet Communist Parties.*

I have identified with the Fourth International for over forty years. For much of that time, I too argued that "Cuba was different." For much of the 1970s and 1980s, I believed that the absence of democratic rights, even for socialist dissidents; the growing alignment of Cuban with Soviet foreign policy (support for the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the repression in Poland in 1981, apologies for the authoritarian PRI regime in Mexico); and the repression of gays and lesbians were "anomalies" — "errors" of an otherwise healthy, revolution-

*See for example, Michael Löwy, *The Politics of Combined and Uneven Development: The Theory of Permanent Revolution* (London: Verso, 1981), pp. 142-159.

ary leadership. By the early 1990s, however, my thinking began to change. I started to question the notion that a post-capitalist regime without workers' control could resist the growth of a privileged, bureaucratic ruling elite for over thirty years. In this process of reevaluating the Cuban revolution, I was fortunate to be able to grapple with the works of a number of anti-Stalinist Marxists. It was the work of Jeanette Habel, in particular her *Cuba: The Revolution in Peril* (1991), that helped me understand how the absence of socialist democracy had produced wide spread alienation, especially among Cuban youth, by the late 1980s. While Habel, one of the Fourth International's experts on Cuba, resisted the conclusion that Cuba had become another Soviet-style bureaucratic society, her analysis forced me to radically reconsider my political assumptions.

Ultimately, it has been nearly thirty years of discussion and debate with Sam Farber that has led me to the conclusion that Cuba was never different. In both numerous and lengthy informal discussions, and reading Sam's essays in *Against the Current, New Politics,* and *International Socialist Review,* and his full-length books *Revolution and Reaction in Cuba,* 1933-1960 (1976) *and Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered* (2006), I was forced to critically reexamine all of my assumptions about the Cuban revolution and the regime it created. Through these exchanges, I came to understand how the Cuban revolution, despite the limited participation of the bulk of urban and rural laborers, could overthrow capitalism and establish a polity and economy modeled on the Soviet Union.

Farber has synthesized, updated, and deepened his analysis into a comprehensive history of the Cuban revolution since 1959. *Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959*: *a Critical Assessment* is an extremely timely book. The Cuban Communist Party, under the leadership of Raul Castro, has announced plans for a radical economic liberalization of the Cuban economy — without any political democratization — including the lay-offs of hundreds of thousands of state employees. Farber traces the roots of the current crisis of the Cuban regime to the absence of socialist democracy from the destruction of capitalism in Cuba in 1960-61. In a work that moves effortlessly from a lucid analysis of the long-term stagnation of the Cuban economy, to the vacillations of Cuban foreign policy, the position of workers, Afro-Cubans, women, and LGBT people, to the repression of dissidents, Farber demolishes both right and left-wing mythology about Cuba.

Beginning with a synthesis of his earlier work on the origins of the Cuban state, Farber restates his thesis that the alienation of all social classes — capitalists, workers, peasants, and professionals and managers — from the Bonapartist Batista government created the conditions for a relatively socially isolated group of déclassé intellectuals and professionals to overthrow capitalism and establish a bureaucratic regime. He delineates how Che Guevara's and Raul Castro's Stalinist sympathies before 1959 facilitated the revolutionary Cuban government's adoption of the Soviet model of bureaucratic "monolithic unity." Repression, from the beginning of the revolution, was not directed solely at right wing, pro-capitalist elements but at dissidents — socialists and democrats — who challenged the consolidation of a single-party dictatorship in Cuba.

The chapter on the Cuban economy recognizes the impact of the criminal U.S. embargo and the end of Soviet aid after 1989 on the Cuban economy. However, Farber convincingly argues that the main cause of the current economic crisis is found in the very structure of the bureaucratic command economy. Farber traces how top-down planning produces "big thumbs and small fingers" — the capacity to effectively carry out mechanical and repetitive operations (mass inoculations, hurricane evacuations), but not operations that require flexibility and innovation (the development and introduction of sophisticated labor-saving techniques). The result has been chronically low levels of labor productivity, enormous waste of resources, and a slow but steady "hollowing-out" of investment in plant and machinery. In response, the Cuban regime's economic policies, since the mid-1960s, display the same "zigs and zags" between hyper-centralized planning and market liberalization that marked the economic history of the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe. Ultimately, workers have borne the costs of economic stagnation in the form of deteriorating standards of living, including in the social provision of health care, housing, and education, over the past three decades.

The heart of *Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959* is Farber's account of the positions of workers, Afro-Cubans, women, and LGBT people in Cuba. While recognizing real improvements in the lives of working and oppressed people in Cuba since the revolution, Farber points to how the absence of self-organization limits these gains and leaves the bulk of the population vulnerable to bureaucratic abuses in the past and the ravishes of market reforms in the future. While workers have enjoyed secure employment until recently, they face the active collaboration of enterprise managers and the state-run unions in attempts to raise productivity through speed-up and deskilling. The absence of independent unions is especially dangerous as the regime moves to introduce market mechanisms — including unemployment and falling real wages — against which workers have no means of collective self-defense. A similar pattern marks the experience of Afro-Cubans, women, and the LGBT community. While gains have been made by all of these traditionally oppressed groups and, in the case of LGBT folks, vicious homophobic repression has ended, this has been the result of top-down decisions made by party-state run "mass organizations." The ban on any and all independent, self-organization of the oppressed not only puts their fate in the hands of "enlightened" bureaucratic despots, but also leaves them vulnerable to new assaults as the economy is liberalized. Already, Afro-Cubans have experienced a de facto exclusion from the best jobs in the tourist industry — the main source of "hard currency" for those without family abroad — because they are viewed as "less presentable" than light-skinned Cubans.

Farber moves to an analysis of the emerging dissident currents that have emerged in Cuba since the 1990s. Pointing out that all open dissent is at the whim of the Cuban party-state machine, Farber argues that most of dissident opinion, including within the Cuban Communist Party, tends to be pro-market. Left-wing criticisms tend to be muted. At best unorthodox members of the Communist party are allowed to describe the problems of Cuban society — growing economic inequality, the double-day for working women, institutional racism against Afro-Cubans — but are clearly forbidden to analyze its roots in the bureaucratic regime, no less advocate radical, democratic reforms. Farber identifies the website *Havana Times* as a possible locus for the emergence of a revolutionary, democratic socialist current. Ultimately, he argues that a revival of "socialism from below" in Cuba requires the reemergence of independent working class struggle and organizations, in particular unions.

Farber also engages various attempts to apologize for the Cuban regime. He effectively dissects claims that despite bureaucratic rule, Cuba is a beacon of "modernity" and "progress" in Latin America, arguing that only working class rule — embedded in institutions of popular democracy — can be a stable and viable alternative to capitalism and imperialism. Finally, Farber analyzes the economic reforms proposed at the 2011 Sixth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party. Demolishing claims that Raul Castro's proposals for a radical liberalization of the Cuban economy, including the reintroduction of mass unemployment, was the result of "popular consultation," Farber demonstrates that these proposals — like similar proposals in the other Stalinist regimes — are the product of the deepening crisis of bureaucratic rule. Farber predicts that Cuba will probably proceed along what he calls the "Sino-Vietnamese road" — where elements of the party-state officialdom (in particular the Army, which has become the largest employer in Cuba through joint ventures with foreign private capital) institute a form of state regulated capitalism while maintaining repressive, single-party rule.

Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959: a Critical Assessment is essential reading for anyone on the left concerned with the history and future of the Cuban revolution in particular, and of socialism in general. Farber's meticulously researched and lucidly argued investigation of over half a century of Cuban "socialism" presents a challenge to supporters and opponents of the Cuban revolution on both the left and right, particularly for those anti-Stalinists who believe that "Cuba is different" from other bureaucratic societies. For those of us who have long argued that only a democratic, revolutionary socialism can pose a viable alternative to capitalism, this book is an essential weapon in our political and theoretical arsenal. My only criticism is that Farber fails to present an explicit theory of the bureaucratic societies. Such a theoretical framework would help establish two key points. First, the social and economic crisis in Cuba is not simply the result of "bad policies" of certain leaders or the criminal U.S. embargo, but is rooted in the bureaucratic character of the planning process. Second, the Cuban leadership's social position makes it impossible for them to "opt" for greater workers' democracy, leaving them the alternatives of presiding over a deepening crisis of the bureaucratic economy or attempting to restore capitalism. In sum, an explicit theory of the bureaucratic societies would have greatly strengthened Farber's claim that Cuba is not different.

Paul Levi: A Luxemburgist Alternative?

PETER DRUCKER

In the Steps of Rosa Luxemburg: Selected Writings of Paul Levi
EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY DAVID FERNBACH
Leiden: Brill, 2011, 350 pp., $136 (less expensive paperback forthcoming from Haymarket)

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE RISE OF Occupy have given fresh urgency to the question: is there an alternative to capitalism? And if so, what? For almost a century now the failure of the Russian Revolution has provided capitalism's defenders with a boogeyman, an argument that any attempt to get rid of the existing system will lead to something even worse. Among the adversaries of capitalism, some have argued that a revolution could have been achieved differently and better in the spirit of Rosa Luxemburg, who wrote a critique of the Bolsheviks' undemocratic policies as early as 1918. Paul Levi, Luxemburg's lawyer, briefly her lover, her follower, and from 1919 to 1921 her successor at the head of German Communism, was the first to defend a Luxemburgist alternative to

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Bolshevism.

Many things make Luxemburg a more appealing figure than Lenin. Both were gifted writers. But while Lenin spent much of his life as an exile, where he could follow politics only from a distance, Luxemburg played from 1898 until her death in 1919 a prominent role on the left wing of the German socialist movement, the biggest in Europe. Her fiery speeches repeatedly landed her in jail for insulting the monarchy or undermining the army. Without seeing herself as a feminist, she was greatly admired (and hated) as a female leader. Without being a principled pacifist, she attracted considerable sympathy with her deeply felt aversion to war and violence. She was a convinced democrat, who wrote, "The Spartacus League will never take over governmental power except in response to the clear, unambiguous will of the great majority of the proletarian mass of Germany." (31) And while Lenin died as the head of the Soviet Russian government, Luxemburg became a martyr in 1919 when she was brutally murdered by counterrevolutionary forerunners of the Nazis.

Leading German Communist Ruth Fischer would later describe Luxemburg's influence as a "syphilis bacillus," and in 1931 Stalin virtually read her out of the revolutionary pantheon. But when the German Marxist left first split off from social democracy at the end of 1918 to establish the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), few in its ranks thought they were choosing Lenin over Luxemburg. As KPD leader in 1919-21 Levi often cited and praised her, sometimes even daring to say that on some points Luxemburg had been right and the Bolsheviks wrong. Yet in those same years Levi worked closely with Lenin and Trotsky. Lenin recognized, in David Fernbach's words, that "the Bolshevik experience had been too Russian to generalize to the countries of advanced capitalism, and recognized the need to build mass revolutionary parties." (11)

Levi had even closer ties with Karl Radek, who had begun his political life as a member of Luxemburg's Polish party (the SDKPiL) and in Levi's time represented the Communist International (Comintern) in Germany. In two years Levi and Radek together built the KPD up from a small, persecuted group to a mass party of hundreds of thousands of workers. As Radek's biographer sums up his role, Radek defended the authority of the Comintern Executive, but he defended a political course developed in collaboration with Levi. Radek himself said when Stuttgart workers gave the united front tactic its first formulation, "If I had been in Moscow, the idea would not even have crossed my mind."[1]

Building the KPD was no easy task. *In the Steps of Rosa Luxemburg*, a collection of Levi's speeches and articles published in the Historical Materialism book series, gives a clear picture of how hard Levi had to fight against the ultra-leftists who believed they could overthrow the new German republic from one day to the next, without dirtying their hands with parliamentary elections or trade union work. Levi argued tirelessly against them for patience and perseverance. He constantly stressed the importance, in Luxemburg's words, of "the unification of the broad popular masses with an aim reaching beyond the whole existing social order." (165) The texts in the collection reveal Levi as an inspired tactician of revolutionary politics in a parliamentary democracy. Socialists in the United States and Europe still have much to learn from him today.

Against Lenin

IN EARLY 1921, nevertheless, Levi and the Bolsheviks came to a parting of the ways. The immediate occasion was a bungled split in Italy, when Comintern representatives alienated the great majority of Italian socialists by attacking a leadership that (whatever its faults) identified with communism. When a majority of the KPD central committee sided with the Comintern leadership against Levi on the issue, Levi resigned in February as chair. Within weeks the new KPD leadership tried to prove itself by organizing an insurrection, the March Action. The result was a crushing defeat and fierce repression.

Inside the party Levi's critical voice was stifled. He chose to publish a brochure attacking the rationale behind the March Action: *Our Path: Against Putschism*. The KPD leadership saw this as an act of betrayal in a time of emergency. Levi was promptly expelled.

Levi's expulsion put Lenin and Trotsky in a difficult position. They largely agreed with the substance of Levi's criticisms. But *Our Path* hit them too in a sensitive spot, making sarcastic remarks about second-rate Communists sent out from Moscow to meddle in the movement in other countries. In June 1921 the Comintern congress rejected the new KPD leadership's "strategy of the offensive," but also rejected Levi's appeal against his expulsion. At the same time Lenin wrote, "We should not lose Levi." (22) He suggested that Levi could eventually return to the KPD if he demonstrated his willingness to respect party discipline.

This was not particularly consistent with the record of Lenin's own party. The Bolsheviks had a long tradition of fierce public debates: even when Zinoviev and Kamenev had publicly attacked the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 they had not been expelled from the party or its leadership. But the Bolsheviks had been a far more open and democratic party in 1917 than they had become by 1921.

In the SPD

LEVI SHOWED NO SIGN of willingness to play by Lenin's rules. Initially he seemed to believe that the Communists needed him and would eventually readmit him on his own terms. Then in 1922, when he realized that that was not going to happen, his group returned to the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), which the KPD had split from in 1918. In late 1922 Levi didn't even oppose the USPD's reunification with the right-wing reformists of the SPD. He remained an SPD member, and even an SPD Reichstag member, until his death in 1930.

In his introduction to *In the Steps of Rosa Luxemburg*, David Fernbach writes that if Luxemburg had still been alive, she "would surely have put up more of a struggle than Levi against a return to the SPD." (32) That is putting it mildly. The SPD that Levi joined was not only reformist but strictly disciplined; its leadership had the means and the will to muzzle revolutionary critics. A recent Ph.D. thesis on Levi comments that he was "practically reduced to silence inside the SPD institutions": banned from its newspaper *Vorwärts*, allowed only minimal speaking time at party congresses, and even then persistently heckled.[2] Although he founded his own journal in 1923, even in its pages he had to be somewhat circumspect in expressing the criticisms that Luxemburg and he had both made of the SPD leadership: of its lack of combativeness, its legal and parliamentary cretinism, and its support for German foreign policy.

> Lenin recognized, in David Fernbach's words, that "the Bolshevik experience had been too Russian to generalize to the countries of advanced capitalism, and recognized the need to build mass revolutionary parties."

Even if entry into the SPD was a defensible tactic, the question is what course Levi followed inside it. Since his activities in 1918-21 were already reasonably well known from Pierre Broué's magisterial history of the German revolution (also published in English as part of the Historical Materialism series), *In the Steps of*

Rosa Luxemburg is valuable mainly for the light it sheds on Levi's last years. Unfortunately the book does not shed terribly much. By Fernbach's account, Levi simply wrote less after 1922. Instead he devoted more time and energy to his work as a lawyer, representing many left-wing defendants victimized under the Weimar republic by reactionary judges inherited from the monarchy.

The writings included in *In the Steps of Rosa Luxemburg* in any event give a mixed picture of Levi's politics in the 1920s. For example, questions are raised by Levi's few writings in 1923, when French military intervention, hyperinflation and mass unemployment brought the republican regime to the verge of collapse. In general, though he wrote that the crisis "would have been an incontestable stroke of luck for the Communists if they really were Communists" (259), he showed little sympathy for Trotsky's assertion in *The Lessons of October* that it had been a great missed opportunity for a German revolution. Levi seems to have believed that the left had been so badly defeated in 1921 that it would be many years before revolution could be put back on the agenda in Germany. He remained a strong critic of the SPD leadership — especially of its participation in coalition governments with bourgeois parties, notably from August to November 1923 — but seems to have been more indulgent with the party's vacillating left wing. He wrote how outrageous the "illegal and unconstitutional act of violence" (330) was by which the government in Berlin deposed the democratically elected coalition government of Communists and left-wing Social Democrats in the state of Saxony in October 1923, but failed to mention that the Saxon Social Democrats' failure to resist doomed a planned Communist uprising and wasted whatever potential there may have been in the situation.

Levi's attitude toward the Weimar republic was in fact contradictory. He wrote that while the republic was bourgeois, the workers had to defend it, "even in the form in which it exists today," against the far right. (288) His warnings of the Nazi danger from 1923 on were prophetic. But he was confusing two different things (as Ernest Mandel defined them): democratic freedoms, which "are an absolute gain that we aim not merely to defend but to consolidate and deepen," and bourgeois democratic state institutions, which often curtail those freedoms when capitalism is threatened.[3]

On Russia

FROM 1922 ON Levi gave up not only on the KPD and short-term revolutionary possibilities, but also on the Russian revolution. By publishing Rosa Luxemburg's 1918 critique of the Bolsheviks, he rightly reaffirmed her intransigent defense of democracy — and anticipated Max Shachtman's insistence that the working class can rule only through some form of workers' democracy. Here too, however, Levi's complete dismissal of the Bolsheviks was in some respects questionable. He failed to appreciate the paradoxical character of Lenin and Trotsky's politics in the pivotal years 1921 and 1922.

The months after the civil war, as the Bolsheviks launched the New Economic Policy (NEP), also saw their elimination of the last remnants of multiparty democracy in the soviets, notably with the final expulsion and suppression of the Menshevik Internationalists and anarchists. Yet Lenin and Trotsky maintained that their political course in Russia, an isolated and overwhelmly peasant country, was the exception in Communist politics, not the rule. In those same months, particularly at the third and fourth Comintern congresses, they insisted that communism could triumph in Western Europe and especially Germany only by winning a majority in the democratic arenas of workers councils and factory committees, which would be the basis of socialist democracy. In the last months of Lenin's conscious life he was increasingly aware of the dangers of bureaucratic rule even in Russia. As for Trotsky, an extreme defender of militaristic and authoritarian measures in 1921, he began by 1923, at first reluctantly and inconsistently, to wage the fight against the bureaucratic dictatorship that would take up the rest of his life.

Yet Levi wanted nothing to do with Trotsky's Left Opposition — partly, curiously enough, because he agreed with and exaggerated one of Trotsky's fatally mistaken analyses. Levi saw the adoption of the NEP and its concessions to smallholders, traders, and petty capitalists as proof that Soviet Russia had become a petty bourgeois dictatorship, where nothing remained of proletarian rule. (249) Trotsky for his part saw the NEP, if not as a return to capitalism, as a breeding ground for the petty bourgeois "Thermidorian reaction" he saw as the greatest threat to the revolution. They were both wrong. By 1929 it was not the kulaks and Nepmen who triumphed — they were slaughtered en masse — but Stalin's bureaucracy. As Stephen Cohen has remarked, the great tragedy of the 1920s was that anti-Stalinist Marxists spent the decade battling each other instead of their main enemy.

Legacy

DESPITE HIS MISTAKES Levi did a great deal, both before and after 1921, to keep democratic Marxism alive. It should have been possible decades ago to read his own account of his positions. Until now very little by him has been available in English. This makes *In The Steps of Rosa Luxemburg* a publication of great value for the international anti-capitalist left. Fernbach (whose grandfather was a member of Luxemburg's Spartacus League) has selected and edited the texts skillfully and introduced the volume with erudition, concision and political acumen.

Fernbach argues convincingly that a "politics of majority-revolution" (1) in Luxemburg's spirit is crucial for anti-capitalist politics today. I would add that there is also much of value to retain in the legacy of Lenin, Trotsky and those who followed their lead. On a crucial democratic principle like the right to national self-determination, for example, we have much more to learn from them than from her. They arguably acted in a more democratic spirit than Luxemburg by dividing Russia's great landed estates among the peasants, rather than nationalizing them as Luxemburg urged — even Levi later admitted that Luxemburg's fear that once the peasant had land he would "crawl behind his stove," deserting the revolution, had been "disproved." (229) And the Bolsheviks' dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in January 1918 reflected their profound appreciation of the grassroots democracy of the soviets, of which Luxemburg seemed more dubious.

Yet none of this detracts from the justice of Luxemburg's sharp-eyed criticism in 1918: "Lenin and Trotsky have laid down the soviets as the only true representation of the laboring masses. But with the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element."[4] As Paul Levi added in his 1921 introduction: "to banish parties as parties, … by police-measures, … was, for Rosa Luxemburg, an impossible idea: not for the sake of the reformists, but for that of the revolution and the revolutionaries themselves, who can also triumph inwardly only if they combat mistakes freely." (252)

Neither Luxemburg nor Levi, any more than Lenin or Trotsky, offered a solution to the conundrum we face today: how to build a democratic movement against capitalism that succumbs neither to the temptation of pasting a human face on neoliberal austerity nor to illusions about anti-capitalist breakthroughs in the short or middle run. But in the prolonged Gramscian "war of position" that lies ahead, Luxemburg and Levi's unwavering commitment to democracy will remain indispensable.

Thanks to Charlie Post for thought-provoking comments on an earlier version of this review.

NOTES

1. Jean-François Fayet, *Karl Radek (1885–1939): Biographie politique* (Bern: P. Lang, 2004); Pierre Broué, *The German Revolution 1917–1923* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 469, both cited in John Riddell, "The Comintern in 1922" (2011), http://johnriddell.wordpress.com/2011/12/04/the-comintern-in-1922-the-periphery-pushes-back/.

2. Frédérique Cyr, *Rebelle devant les extrêmes: Paul Levi, une biographie politique* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Université de Montréal, 2011), pp. 188-9.

3. Ernest Mandel, *Revolutionary Marxism Today* (London: New Left Books, 1979), pp. 14-5.

4. *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), p. 391.

An Intellectual Activist

STEPHEN R. SHALOM

Working for Peace and Justice: Memoirs of an Activist Intellectual
LAWRENCE S. WITTNER
Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012
$29.95, paper; $23.95, Ebook, 268 pp.

VARIOUS REALIST POLITICAL PUNDITS have suggested — only half-jokingly — that the Nobel Peace Prize should be given to the atomic bomb, since in their view it was nuclear deterrence that prevented the Cold War from turning into a world war.[1] But historian Lawrence S. Wittner, in a magisterial and thoroughly-documented three-volume history of the global anti-nuclear movement[2] and a concise one volume summary,[3] has shown that a lot of the credit for our survival through the nuclear age is precisely due to the activities of the thousands of people worldwide who made up the anti-nuclear peace movement.

In his new memoir, Wittner tells us that the first demonstration he ever attended was in the fall of 1961 when he protested outside the White House hoping to prevent a U.S. resumption of nuclear testing. Wittner assumed that his effort was rather pointless, but years later he came across an oral history by Adrian Fisher, who had been the deputy director of Kennedy's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in which Fisher recalled that public pressure, including picketers outside the White House, had caused the Kennedy administration to delay the resumption of testing until the following April. Obviously, the peace movement hadn't been able to prevent testing entirely, and Wittner doesn't try to pretend that anti-nuclear activists were determinative. But they were a force to be reckoned with, even then. Usually this meant that policymakers had to take account of them, sometimes developing elaborate public relations campaigns to try to blunt the movement's pressures, and sometimes having to make some concessions. As Wittner notes, deterrence alone certainly can't explain the non-use of nuclear weapons since 1945, given that Washington would have faced no

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threat of retaliation had it used nukes in Korea or Vietnam. The concern about offending public opinion, which the nuclear disarmament did so much to mobilize, was clearly an independent explanatory variable.

At some points it seems to me that Wittner overstates the successes of the anti-nuke movement. Yes, it was no doubt a wonderful thing that the Cuban Missile crisis was resolved without the resort to war, and there's certainly evidence that policymakers took account of public opinion in their deliberations. Nevertheless, the final terms that were demanded of Moscow were not as conciliatory as Wittner (or many Kennedy administration fans) suggest. Washington offered to later remove its missiles from Turkey, but only if Khrushchev kept the agreement secret. The Soviets knew the Turkish missiles were obsolete, so the reason they had wanted to trade them for their missiles in Cuba was only in order to save face. A private deal, however, couldn't provide any face-saving, and so Kennedy was insisting that Khrushchev accept public humiliation, or risk war. Khrushchev, thankfully, chose the former, but Kennedy's policy was still incredibly reckless.

Overall, however, Wittner's trilogy is an extraordinary contribution to our understanding of and appreciation of the power of social movements. Together with his work on the U.S. peace movement (which overlaps with, but is not the same as, the anti-nuclear movement) and on U.S. policy in Greece in the aftermath of World War II, Wittner is one of the peace movement's most important historians.

What we learn in his memoir, however, is that Wittner combined his significant intellectual and scholarly contributions with a tireless career of political activism. In some cases he held national positions (like the board of Peace Action). But far more importantly, he was involved over many decades in the day-to-day organizing, demonstrating, mobilizing, folk-singing, and myriad other activities on behalf of peace, civil rights, labor rights, opposition to apartheid, and socialism. He was instrumental in setting up local chapters of many political organizations — from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) at Columbia in his undergraduate years to the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) in Albany in the 1980s.

Wittner's account compellingly shows how precarious academic freedom has been in the United States.

Some of Wittner's efforts may have had dramatic impact. For example, in 1973-74 he worked with the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars doing antiwar organizing at a GI coffee house in Yokosuka, Japan, where the U.S. carrier Midway was home-ported. A few months later, many U.S. soldiers refused to board the Midway for a mission to South Korea, where popular protests were challenging the U.S.-backed dictatorship. But most of Wittner's activism — like that of most activists — rarely got this sort of affirmation. He just put in, as countless activists did, the long hours, the hard work, and the dogged engagement that is the lifeblood of popular movements.

Wittner's account compellingly shows how precarious academic freedom has been in the United States. He was fired from university teaching positions and mistreated because of his political views, as were many of his progressive colleagues, and it was only tenure and faculty unions, in which he played an active role, that ultimately protected him from political retaliation. But he was no blind supporter of union officialdom, for he was often battling with them to pursue more activist policies.

Wittner's memoir offers many engaging

anecdotes. Once, walking in New York City with radical pacifist Dave Dellinger, they were stopped by a panhandler and Dellinger gave him some money.

> … I told Dellinger, rather smugly, that I hadn't done the same because I believed in justice rather than in charity. Dellinger replied that over the years he had come around to believing in both. Gradually, so have I.

If Wittner's memoir is an inspirational and entertaining read, it is less satisfying in another respect. Although he often tells us his political views, he doesn't make much of an argument justifying his positions. To be sure, a memoir is not a political tract or a philosophical treatise. But some of his recounting of his positions raises questions that go unanswered.

For example, he tells us that though he worked for and voted for Barry Commoner in 1980, he later decided that the weakness of socialism was its linkage to third parties. Reflecting the DSOC view, he concluded that one had to work through the Democratic Party. One can make an argument for supporting a Democrat where doing so is necessary to defeat a more reactionary Republican (rather than "wasting" one's vote and energy on a doomed third party campaign), but why eschew the educational benefits of a third party effort when the election result is not in doubt? It's not that Wittner ignores the educational benefits of a campaign, as indicated by his enthusiastic efforts on behalf of progressive Democrats running in overwhelmingly Republican districts, where there was no chance of winning. But if educational campaigns with no prospect of electoral victory can sometimes be worthwhile on behalf of Democrats, why not on behalf of Greens or socialists?

Wittner relates that he didn't join Columbia SDS because he went to one meeting where consensus decision-making prevented it from choosing a project. There were many good criticisms one could have made of SDS, but this seems a rather weak one. I'm not criticizing Wittner's decision of four decades ago; I just wish he were a little more self-reflective regarding his decision.

Despite these omissions, there is one question that this memoir answers clearly. Is it possible to be an "activist intellectual"? Indeed it is.

NOTES

1. E.g., Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "The Measure of Diplomacy: What Makes a Strategy Grand?" *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1994, p. 150.

2. Lawrence S. Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (Volume 1: *One World or None: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement Through 1953 [1993*]; Volume 2: *Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970* [1997]; and Volume 3: *Toward Nuclear Abolition: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971 to the Present* [2003]).

3. Lawrence S. Wittner*, Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement,* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.)

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Tradeswomen Tell Their Survival Stories

MICHAEL HIRSCH

> Sisters in the Brotherhood
> JANE LATOUR
> New York, Palgrave Macmillan 2008
> paperback, 236 pp., $26

A SOCIOLOGIST tired of — if not ill-suited for — academic life and one of that generation of proper New Leftists committed to organizing or reorganizing the industrial proletariat as a necessary prelude to the much anticipated Red revolution, I hired in at a Midwestern steel mill in late summer of 1977. Among the first things I noticed as a production worker wasn't the absence of women workers — that fight had been fought and won thanks to civil rights agitation and enabling federal legislation that opened the job sluices to minorities and women — but a practice in which newly hired women in the entry-level labor gangs were assigned on day one to the dirtiest, most physically demanding and discouraging jobs in the mill. The advantage to management was two-fold: weed the women out or, failing that, assign them to lighter duty while consigning men to the brunt of the hump jobs. The game was clever: cull the females while getting men to despise the presence of female coworkers for the ostensible favoritism they seemed to receive.

It wasn't all management's doing. Working on the floor of a blast furnace, an older millwright told me he hated working with women. Why? Because he couldn't urinate over the platform's side anymore. Now he had to walk to the men's toilet 20 yards away. The horror!

That manufactured drama of keeping women out of well-paying but traditionally male occupations and playing on male fancy while using women (and earlier, people of color) as a wedge in fractionalizing a job-site workforce was common enough in the nation's labor market and understood, though the level of insidiousness added to foolishness was eye-opening.

In *Sisters in the Brotherhoods: Working Women Organizing for Equality in New York City*, part of Palgrave Macmillan's excellent Studies in Oral History series, labor writer Jane Latour is no less eye-opening as she lets dozens of women in craft positions in New York's construction trades exhaustively tell their own stories. For them, the jobs were hard enough; the disrespect and the mental pain were worse.

Latour writes that "as women began to compete for 'men's jobs' [statistically in areas where women made up less than 25 percent of the workforce] far outside the cultural norms, they needed to do more than just show up for work. From the start, this effort to find a place for females in the nation's steel plants, coal mines, skilled trades, police forces and fire houses—was conducted on contested terrain. To survive, the women had to organize."

Harassment by fellow workers alone made the workplace toxic. Before organizing, they had to put up with a work environment in which every gesture was a statement that you didn't belong, if not an implicit threat. These ran from the posting of spread-eagled, clinical pornography and barbed jokes—which numerous women

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told Latour was much more than simply men entertaining themselves at work—to threatening encounters and violence.

Even after winning a place in an apprentice program, female trainees were often denied the kind of instruction that would make them work-ready. Once certified as journeymen, these newly minted craft worker women faced job isolation, all tactics used consciously or unconsciously to force women out. A macho work ethic combined with pig ignorance to insist that women were "taking men's jobs" when the women themselves were often single heads of households and the sole providers of their families; they needed the work. Even some unions did nothing to defend these women, when the union leaders themselves were not the instigators of the problem, as was the case with some of New York's uniformed services unions, who vigorously challenged court orders to open up their crafts.

> "From the start, this effort to find a place for females in the nation's steel plants, coal mines, skilled trades, police forces and fire houses—was conducted on contested terrain. To survive, the women had to organize."

By the 1970s, organizations such as United Tradeswomen were formed to offer political and emotional support in advocating for themselves as women in the skilled trades. Latour describes one pioneering publication as "a constant source of information, advice, humor and first-person accounts by women in a huge range of nontraditional jobs. The message was clear—we're doing this work, and you can do it, too."

Picket lines, maintained at trade shows, demanded jobs for women, and caucuses emerged to make the point that women's issues were class issues. As with civil rights, equity in the workplace was a mode for unifying and not dividing.

The trajectory for those resisting was never straightforward. While some worked with dissident men to reform their unions or went to the courts, others focused on survival tactics, though the line between the two was frequently and necessarily blurred when their common condition was isolation on the job.

One of those taking the more overtly political road was electrician Laura Kelber. As she told Latour, "What we were organizing for was the duty of fair representation. If you have a rule about men having a changing shanty, then the extension of that is, if you have women, you should have a changing shanty for women. So it's not about acceptance or recognition, it's about fair is fair. We never tried to bypass the [internal union] process."

For others, as plumber Elaine Ward put it, the need was to "face the fear" and "not take these things personally." Yet of the 60 people completing her four-year apprentice program in 1990 with her, she was the only female graduate.

Less than three weeks later, Ward testified at a hearing of the city's Human Rights Commission that:

> The reason women drop out of this business is not because of the work itself, but because of the harassment. The harassment is a symptom of a greater problem, which is that there are not enough women on the jobs. As long as I'm one woman alone on a job—and I must say that …99.9 percent of the time I have been the only woman on almost every job I have worked on. …. The harassment works. Eventually, the women are timid enough, exhausted enough, and tired of paying for shrinks to keep their sanity. They quit.

Stationary engineer Yvone Maitan told Latour about a conversation she had with a male co-worker who was shocked, shocked about the anger she exhibited from all the pressure she was under just to keep her job. He told her he had endured apprentice school and worked the same as Maitan, but without problems. So what was her beef?

> I told him, "You had a wife to cook, clean and take care of the kids and make your lunch and wash your clothes and make sure the kids didn't disturb you while you were studying. I have to do all that by myself. If I had a wife, I wouldn't feel guilty, either, and school and work would be a cinch. I'd be able to concentrate my extra energy on getting you guys off my back." He responded, "Oh, I hadn't thought of that."

Latour's powerful narrative shares with Barbara Wertheimer's 1977 classic, *We Were There: The Story of Working Women in America*, an appreciation that women's work outside the home and the attendant sexual discrimination and harassment were not peculiar or aberrant incidents but central to working class life. As an ethnography of work culture, with its focus on what these craftswomen have to say in rich detail about their own years-long experiences, Latour's is outstanding. That alone makes it required reading.

It also shares with Wertheimer an absence of any exhaustive or persuasive explanation about gender discrimination that is more than attitudinal. That's not a criticism of either author; their stories and their grasp of the problem's scope stand alone. It is rather an appreciation of what else needs to be understood. Latour's book is replete with examples of just how hard it was — and is — for women working outside the home to receive parity in training and job opportunities and civil treatment from men. The next question is explaining why the problem persists.

As a portrait of gender discrimination limited to one industry in one city, it also needs national and international comparisons to be fully understood. Was the series of heartbreaking experiences and the blindness or culpability of the New York City unions a general problem affecting women everywhere in traditional male-dominated workplaces, or stories peculiar to one city's construction trade? When one worker tells Latour that her ability to travel nationally brought her in contact with a far more inclusive and tolerant workforce, is that because the particular skill required was so rare that a job shortage meant the work ethic was "y'all come" instead of "go away"? Or are construction workers elsewhere simply nicer people?

Latour tends to play up the early National Organization for Women and its proclivities for helping its working class sisters, comparing it to the fight for women's rights waged by upper class matrons who supported the early twentieth century's Women's Trade Union League. The comparison is tricky, given that the WTUL collapsed precisely because of tensions between the class interests of the trade union women and the cultural aspirations of the society dames.

She also mistakenly trivializes the opposition to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, when she writes that arch Virginia segregationist Howard Smith, then Democratic chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, proposed including women in the statute "as a joke." It was no joke, but a savvy attempt to scuttle the whole civil rights bill, said feminist historian Jo Freeman, whom Latour ironically cites as her source.

In *How 'Sex' Got Into Title VII: Persistent Opportunism as a Maker of Public Policy*, Freeman writes that Smith indeed

> rose up and offered a one word amendment to Title VII, which prohibited employment discrimination, [by adding] "sex" to that one title of the bill in order 'to prevent discrimination against another minority group, the women'.... (110 Cong. Rec., February 8, 1964, 2577). This stimulated several hours of humorous debate, later enshrined as "ladies' day in the House," before the amendment was passed by a teller vote of 168 to 133.

Freeman concludes that

> Despite the humor that Smith injected into the "Ladies' Day" debate, what evidence there is does not indicate that he had proposed his amendment as a joke.

For Freeman, it was done to confront unions who — even as late as 1964, were not interested in seeing legislation, including an Equal Rights Amendment that conservatives then counterintuitively supported, allowing a flood of new workers to compete for plum construction and well-paying manufacturing jobs. www.jofreeman.com/lawandpolicy/titlevii.htm

Latour also relays the repeated testament by her workers that, except for the harassment and the borderline violence, many said they "love their job." Here Latour is acting the faithful scribe, but I wish she had gone beyond reportage to ask them even tentatively about the nature of their work under corporate rule. Because finding joy in wage labor is a statement that would shock Paul Lafargue, if not Marx himself. Even intricate craftwork under capitalism is alienating and distorted by the profit motive and capital's plan.

The work is dangerous, too, with Latour citing statistics showing construction site fatalities accounting for 20 percent of all workplace deaths.

It's understandable that women in dead-end, low-paying jobs would attest with brio to the advantages of a skilled and high-paid position, or that the daughters of craft workers would fight for the same privileges, job protections, and the fairer treatment their fathers received. Still "love" is a strong word for work in an industry where construction projects follows market demand for office building, private prison construction, luxury developments, and highways over affordable housing, schools, and mass transit. What's "good" about craft jobs with those outcomes is something skilled trades unions never ask. It's a fair enough question for a new multigendered workforce, especially one chockablock with insurgents out to democratize their unions.

The late Murray Kempton observed in effect that New York's construction trade unions would support the Nazi building of crematoria if it provided union jobs. The thought doesn't improve when hard-pressed working women seem to adopt the same paradigm.

These criticisms aside, Latour's narrative lets her subjects speak eloquently and on point about the travails of work as actually lived and how women in a virtually all-male industry fought back courageously and against terrific odds to humanize their workplaces. If Latour's book did nothing else — and it does much more — it would still deserve the widest reading.

The Lives of Billy Pilgrim, Kilgore Trout, and Eliot Rosewater by Way of Kurt Vonnegut

MICHAEL WRESZIN

And So it Goes:
Kurt Vonnegut: A Life
CHARLES J. SHIELDS
New York, Henry Holt and Company
2011, 513 pp., $ 30.00

Unstuck in Time: A Journey through Kurt Vonnegut's Life and Novels
GREGORY D. SUMNER
New York, Seven Story Press
2011, 355 pp., $24.95

CHARLES J. SHIELD'S BIOGRAPHY offers a detailed life of the writer, his strengths and weaknesses, both as an author and a person. The major thrust of the Shields biography is to present Kurt Vonnegut as two different people, the writer and the private person. A nephew told the biographer:

> There was a definite disconnect between the kind of guy you would imagine Kurt must be from the tone of his books, the kind of guy who would say "God damn it, you got to be kind" and the reality of his behavior on a daily basis. He was a complicated, difficult man. . . . I think he admired the idea of love, community, and family from a distance but couldn't deal with the complicated emotional elements they included. (Shields 213-14)

Tiger Adams was one of the four sons that Vonnegut and his wife Jane adopted after the death of his sister and brother-in-law. In an interview with Shields he recalled that his stepfather, Kurt, "had a cruel side to him, a nasty side that's why it always struck me, the difference from the guy you would imagine from his writing and the guy that is the real guy."(166) As Shields notes, Vonnegut's "public remarks and persona, always circling around humanistic themes, just like his books, created expectations of him." (326)

Kurt Vonnegut's grim Camus-like view of life, living, and the world was part and parcel of a post–World War II sensibility. The old optimism of prewar America was gone. Liberal faith had been undermined by the experience of the Spanish Civil War, the Nazi/Stalin Pact of 1939, World War II, followed by the Holocaust and the droppings of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In many of his works he wonders if life is worth living. He felt that the so-called American Dream had a dark side that led to loneliness, separation, and the denial of community. Americans were living in the age of anxiety. For Vonnegut, community was the only way to support and nourish genuine humanity. He developed a strong belief in communitarianism as much more important than leftist demands for economic collective solutions to social problems and inequality.

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He asked frequently "what are human beings for?" His answer was similar to Albert Camus' stance in his *Myth of Sisyphus.* One must keep struggling for a humane and decent life even with the knowledge that there is little possibility of success. The human predicament was disastrous. In his novel *Jailbird* (1979), a devastating critique of the inequities built into the current capitalist system, he expressed, as Sumner said, " a well earned fatalism about whether the state of affairs would ever change." Sounding as though it were written today, the novel's main character, Walter Starbuck, believed that

> Concentrations of wealth would endure, Ponzi schemes would rise and fall, corporations would continue to treat their employees like disposable machinery through . . . naked brutality . . . or the more bloodless methods of multinationals . . .. The winners would mostly win, through booms and busts, calm seas and typhoons . . . the main dream of a humane "revolution" whether from above or below, might never come to pass.

But the struggle must continue. (Sumner p. 210)

As for foul language, Vonnegut was sure that a handbill of the first Amendment would be quickly burned.

Vonnegut feared most the turning of humans into machines, the thingification of humanity, people becoming nothing more than interchangeable parts in a soul-destroying technology. His first novel *Player Piano* (1952) suggests how machines can simply replace people. By his next novel, The *Sirens of Titan* (1959) he portrays post-World War ll America as a "nightmare of meaninglessness." (Sumner 42) Again, as in all of his writing, the only answer is for human beings to insist on being human, that is, humane and kind. It is the struggle of Sisyphus pushing the rock up the hill only to have it fall down again. Shields makes a point of arguing that Vonnegut was not a knee jerk anti-capitalist. In fact he insists throughout the biography that Vonnegut was in many ways a conservative. He wasn't against capitalism as such. He was against a rigged system.

I have no quarrel with most if not all of Vonnegut's continuous critique of American life and culture. Briefly a pacifist, but then rejected as a philosophical position, "he opposed all wars and insisted they were insane and the participants the listless playthings of enormous forces." (139) In his account of the meaningless brutality of the Dresden bombing, he does not blame the military commanders or the bomber pilots. "One reason they burned down Dresden is that they had already burned down everything else. You know: 'What are we going to do tonight?'" (Sumner p. 141) Sumner argues persuasively that the views expressed in *Slaughterhouse Five* "had a real effect on the consciousness of people questioning our involvement in Vietnam and [the] other foreign crusades," all of which he actively and effectively opposed.

He had awakened to his great fear that members of his high school class were running the country. As he approached his 50th year he became more and more enraged and mystified by "the idiot decisions" made by his countrymen. They did so because they lived by the illusions and myths that were created to give order and meaning to a bizarre and senseless world. He attacked the space probe and said going to the moon before eradicating poverty was morally untenable. He denounced the "savage and stupid and entirely inappropriate American class system." He hated all censorship and particularly the banning of some of his own books. As for foul language, he was sure that a handbill of the first Amendment would be quickly burned. He denounced narrow-mindedness and insisted on personal freedom. He was quick to recognize and denounce the rise of the religious right in the Republican Party and the outrageous claim that the sovereignty exercised by American politicians came directly from God. (Shields, p. 304) *The Barnstable Patriot* complained of his pessimistic personality. "He is a man who has something bad to say about everything."

One could go on, but his biographer takes great pains to stress the difference between the writer and public man and the private person. Vonnegut had created contradictory identities.

> He was a countercultural hero, a guru, and a leftist to his fans; a wealthy investor to his broker; a champion of family and community, and yet a distant father; a man who had left his child-centered home to save his sanity, but again a satirist of American life but feeding at the trough of celebrity up to his ears. (Shields, p. 351)

Shields quotes his long suffering wife: "Kurt doesn't mind being hurtful, really, although he talks a good game to make you think the opposite. He's fooled most of his public now, for a long time. You see, he doesn't really know what he is doing. He's really very innocent." (Shields, 345)

Shields presses the dichotomy persistently and at one point notes Vonnegut's critique of corporations and businesses with lousy labor and environmental records. But Shields points out that Vonnegut and his wife had investments in Dow Chemical, the sole maker of napalm during the Vietnam War. When this charge was mentioned in a review of Shields' biography, Donald Farber, Vonnegut's attorney and agent who had attended to his business affairs for over 40 years, responded that Vonnegut never saw the brokerage firm's statements. Many were upset by this charge and it does seem to this reviewer that Shields may have overworked the negative aspects of the two Vonneguts.

Gregory Sumner built a critical study of Vonnegut's life and work structured on fourteen chapters, each devoted to Vonnegut's 14 novels. People not familiar with Vonnegut's quirky prose style will find this book a tough slog despite its sometimes brilliant analytical interpretations. Sumner, who champions his style, concedes that reading Vonnegut's incomprehensible lurching is like "watching television with another person impulsively changing channels." Sumner's title *Unstuck in Time* is taken from Vonnegut's assault on what he felt were the limitations of time, rhythmic shifts in time and place in the spastic travels of Billy Pilgrim. (Sumner. P. 278) Sumner's analysis of this assault on time is worth citing. His character Billy Pilgrim stands in for Vonnegut on a space trip to another planet and discovers that

> story telling on their planet is not a matter of sequential narrative. There is no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects. The idea is to convey the depths of many marvelous moments seen all at one time.

Here, Sumner writes, "Vonnegut is expressing his renunciation of the simplistic notion of time on Earth that defines and imprisons us." The novel (*Slaughterhouse Five*) marks his "boldest effort to be free of those strictures." This makes some philosophical sense but the actual use of unstuck time hardly makes for a clear grasp of just what is taking place.

On the last page of Sumner's text, prior to his effusive Epilogue, there is a cartoon of the head of Vonnegut made up of some of his most memorable and enduring comments:

> Just because some of us can read and write and do a little math, that doesn't mean we deserve to conquer the universe;
>
> The main business of humanity is to do a good job of being human beings, not to serve as appendages to machines, institutions and systems;
>
> You cannot be a good writer of serious fiction if you are not depressed;

> True terror is to wake up one morning and discover your high school class is running the country.

Many of these comments don't appear in his novels. In Sumner's analysis of *Slaughterhouse Five,* known for its discussion of Dresden, he offers this long quotation:

> It didn't shorten the war, didn't weaken a German defense or attack anywhere, didn't free a single person from a death camp . . . . It was religious. It was Wagnerian. It was theatrical. It should be judged as such.

This came from Vonnegut's anthology *Fates Worse Than Death* (1991) written over twenty years later.

In contrast to Shields, Sumner sees only the overwhelming decency of Vonnegut, who, he writes, believed that heroism is making peace with our tragic limitation, acting with decency and caring for those around us." (40) He does recognize Vonnegut's anxieties as being lonely and isolated. Vonnegut frequently refers to the "great American experiment with rootlessness "and the observation that he "did not think himself very good in life" and suffered from a "perpetual lack of confidence in his creative powers." There were also suicide attempts and nervous breakdowns.

Both of these books present a complicated man, with great strengths and several flaws. For those interested in the life and times of Vonnegut, I recommend them both.

Latin American Marxist: José Carlos Mariátegui

Dan La Botz

> José Carlos Mariátegui: An Anthology
>
> Harry E. Vanden and Marc Becker, editors and translators
>
> New York: Monthly Review, 2011, 480 pp., $21.86

While most English speakers don't know him, the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui ranks as one of the great Marxists of the twentieth century. It was Mariátegui who originally asked the question which seems so relevant today: How does one make socialism in Latin America with Indians? He answered by turning the question around in the other direction: Indians in Latin America will be at the center of the fight for socialism in Latin America. The idea that the native peoples of America would be the subjects of their own history and important actors in world history represented a revolutionary departure for the continent's intellectuals if not for the Indians themselves. The indigenous peoples themselves had already shown in numerous uprisings and revolts — most notably the Tupac Amaru II insurrection of 1780-81 that

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seriously threatened the Spanish Crown's control of Peru — that they were quite capable of being the subjects of their own history. It was Mariátegui who reminded leftist intellectuals of the Indians' potential for revolutionary agency and suggested that it was they who would create revolutionary parties, communes, and soviets in Latin America. This new anthology of Mariátegui's writing is particularly timely today, as Evo Morales heads the Bolivian government, the first indigenous person to do so. (The first indigenous president, we might note, is now facing protests by the indigenous.)

Now, thanks to Harry E. Vanden and Marc Becker, we have once again available in English not only most of Mariátegui's most important writings, but the most complete English language collection of his work ever published. (His name is pronounced *mah-ree-AH-tay-gee*, the last syllable as in gee-up not as in gee-whiz.) Vanden and Becker, however, see Mariátegui very differently from the way I do. Like me, they see Mariátegui as outside the Stalinist tradition, but when they read Mariátegui, they are reminded of Amílcar Cabral, Rabrindanath Tagore, and "even Mao-Tse-tung." They believe that his thought "nourished the early Marxist thought of Che Guevara." I couldn't disagree more with these comparisons. As I read him, Mariátegui has nothing to do with these various nationalist and Communist political thinkers and leaders. The editors like Mariátegui because he is what they see as a "non-dogmatic" and non-doctrinaire leftist — while I like him precisely because he is rather dogmatic and doctrinaire. He is doctrinaire in the sense of being absolutely committed to the Marxist method — but with that method, he showed a remarkable creativity. He took the European Marxist labor movement's experience and understanding of revolutionary socialism and forced it to confront the reality of Peru and its agricultural and indigenous society. That confrontation between workers' revolution, Bolshevism and soviets (workers councils), on the one hand, and Peru's

José Carlos Mariátegui

combination of merchant capitalism and remnants of feudal control over indigenous peoples, on the other, produced the most interesting and insightful Marxist writings on Latin America.

A Revolutionary Life

MARIÁTEGUI WAS BORN in the town of Moquegua in the province of Arequipa, Peru on June 14, 1894. His father was a criollo and a member of the political and economic aristocracy of Peru, while his mother was a *mestiza* or perhaps an Indian. Typical for such cross-caste marriage in Latin America, his parents were never married, and his father abandoned the family while Mariátegui was still an infant, so that he never knew his father and was raised by his mother. After a sickly childhood, at the age of 15 Mariategui was apprenticed to a newspaper print shop, becoming a typesetter in the year 1909. Two years later he began to write for the paper using the pseudonym Juan Croniqueur. While working at the newspaper, Mariátegui organized a guild or union, The Circle of Journalists.

As a journalist Mariátegui soon became much more than a mere *croniqueur*. He wrote literally hundreds of articles on literature, science and the arts, including articles on the psychoanalysis of Freud, the physics of Einstein, and the socialism of Marx. By 1917 Mariategui was writing political articles as well. Under the impact of the Russian Revolution, Mariátegui and a group of young journalists and students launched the critical journal *Nuestra Epoca (Our Era).* He and his associates supported the South American university reform movement, and criticized the participation of the military in politics, for which impertinence Mariátegui was beaten. During this period Mariátegui evolved in a socialist direction and founded another radical publication *La Razón*. By 1918 or so, Mariátegui was on his way to becoming the leader of Peru's socialist movement.

He took the European Marxist labor movement's experience and understanding of revolutionary socialism and forced it to confront the reality of Peru and its agricultural and indigenous society.

But Mariátegui's Peruvian political career was suddenly interrupted. On July 4, 1919 Augusto B. Leguia, the President-elect of Peru, carried out a coup with the support of the military and established a civilian-military dictatorship. Mariátegui at once wrote an article critical of the new regime. The new dictator Leguia, probably influenced by Mariátegui's elite background, responded by giving Mariategui an ultimatum: either accept a "scholarship" to study abroad in Europe, or go to prison. Not surprisingly, Mariategui accepted Leguia's "scholarship" and went off to Europe where he worked as a journalist writing on European events for Peruvian newspapers. The experience in Europe was to have a profound impact upon Mariátegui's thought and life.

On his way to Europe, Mariátegui passed briefly through New York, then went on to Paris, and later to Geneva. He also traveled through Germany, but eventually spent most of his European exile in Italy. As a journalist in Europe Mariátegui interviewed many of the leading intellectual and political figures of the day including authors Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Georges Sorel, Maxim Gorky, and Gabriel D'Annunzio. Living in Italy, Mariategui was in touch with Italian socialist leaders such as Giacinto Serrati, Filipo Turati, and Antonio Gramsci. Mariategui was an avid reader of Gramsci's socialist workers' newspaper *Ordine Nuovo*, through which he followed the political debates of the Italian labor and socialist movement. The Peruvian's idea of socialism grew up in this milieu where revolutionaries debated the relationship between workers' power and socialist politics.

Europe in the period from 1918 to 1924 experienced a revolutionary upheaval as governments fell in Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Everywhere workers engaged in strikes, occupied factories, and formed factory councils. In various countries there were attempts at insurrections. Mariátegui, who spent most of his time in Italy, was present in Turin when workers there occupied the factories and attempted to run them under workers' control. He also attended the Livorno Congress of the Italian Socialist Party and witnessed the split of that organization that created the Italian Communist Party. A year later he witnessed the rise of Benito Mussolini at the head of the Fascist movement that would soon consolidate power over the defeated workers' movement. Through these experiences and his immersion in the European left, Mariátegui became a revolutionary socialist whose Marxism was strongly influenced by Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

At the same time, Mariátegui was strongly influenced by the revolutionary syndicalist movement, which had swept Europe a decade before, and by its French ideologue, Georges Sorel. Sorel, an unorthodox Marxist, had himself been influenced by the vitalism of French philosopher Henri Bergson. Sorel combined Marxism with Bergson's vitalism to produce a Marxist theory that stressed voluntarism, the role of the will. The audacity of Lenin and the Bolshevik party seemed at the time to exemplify the voluntarist spririt which, taking advantage of the objective conditions, pushed through all barriers to revolution. It was in Italy, rather than in his native France, that Sorel's voluntarist Marxism found a following. And among its followers was Mariátegui. If there was something un-doctrinaire about the Peruvian revolutionary it was the emphasis on voluntarism, yet that was something common to the Marxist intellectuals of the early 20s and one finds it too in Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness*.

When Mariátegui returned to Peru in 1923, he found that a new radical movement had developed. The young student leader Victor Raul Haya de la Torre had founded the González Prada Popular University (UPGP), named after Peru's most famous radical writer, and the magazine *Claridad* (*Clarity*). At the same time, the workers and peasants had joined together to create a United Front of Manual and Intellectual Workers. When in 1924 Haya de la Torre was expelled from Peru for his political activities, Mariátegui assumed the editorship of *Claridad*. Still under the political leadership of Haya de la Torre, who remained in exile in Mexico and then Europe, the United Front of Intellectual Workers changed its name to *La Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana* (The American Revolutionary People's Alliance — APRA). Mariátegui became a member of the APRA, then still an alliance or coalition and not yet a political party.

Yet Mariátegui was already moving in his own direction. In 1926 Mariategui founded his magazine *Amauta*, an Inca word meaning "wiseman," with the intention of applying Marxist theory to Peruvian and Latin American problems. Just a year later, on May 1, 1927, he helped to found the Peruvian labor federation, *Confederación General de Trabajadores* (CGT), and on November 10, 1928 began the publication of the workers' newspaper *Trabajo (Labor)*. Mariátegui's socialist orientation and Haya de la Torre's multiclass populist movement were incompatible, and by May of 1928 they had broken off political relations. On September 16, 1928 Mariátegui founded the Socialist Party of Peru, which immediately affiliated with the Communist or Third International. Under Mariátegui's leadership, until his death in 1930, the Socialist Party of Peru represented a critical and independent party within the Communist International, and one that resisted the International's new Stalinist leadership.

Mariátegui's Peru

After he returned from Europe to Peru, Mariátegui turned his Marxist analytical tools to the analysis of his homeland's economic, social, and political conditions. He rejected his contemporaries' arguments that the "Indian problem" was principally a racial or an ethical problem — arguing that it was principally an economic problem. As a Marxist his method was fundamentally historical and structural, tracing in his essays and books — most importantly in his *Seven Essays Interpreting Peruvian Reality* — the economic and social transformation of his homeland. The pre-Colombian Inca communism, he argued, had been a more viable and successful civilization than the Spanish conquerors' feudalism. Inca society had supported a population of ten million in relative prosperity while the Spaniards reduced the country to one million living in misery.

The independence revolutions between 1810 and 1825 had succeeded only in further depredations upon the indigenous peoples, leading to a regime based on the landlord's *latifundios*, the great estates, and the peasants' servitude. In the mid-19th century, Peru became inserted into Britain's economic empire and into world capitalism, producing crops for export. While mining had long been an important industry and petroleum had recently emerged as significant, Peru was above all an agricultural nation. Mariátegui's Peru was fundamentally capitalist, but divided into two regions with very different economic and social systems. Coastal Peru had great modern capitalist farms, agribusiness if you will, with a multi-ethnic — indigenous, mestizo, mulatto, and Chinese — agricultural proletariat. Highland Peru, however, remained feudal, with *gamonales*, landlord-bosses, oppressing and exploiting the bound, indigenous labor force. So Mariátegui saw his nation's history.

His analysis led him to conclude that the Socialist Party of Peru, of which he had taken the lead in founding, would have to fight to overcome feudalism as it struggled for socialism. Unlike Haya de la Torre who admired the Kuo-Min-Tang in China precisely it had formed a "bloc of classes" — peasants, workers, petty-bourgeoisie, and nationalist bourgeoisie — to fight for democracy first and for socialism later, Mariátegui insisted that it would be the working class which would lead the fight for both bourgeois democracy and socialism. His position would have put him at odds with the later Stalinist Communist Party which in Peru and many other developing nations argued that the left should support, ally with or enter capitalist parties to fight feudalism, bringing about capitalist societies before it could fight for socialism. Mariátegui had seen the Italian workers take the factories, and he expected to see the Peruvian workers — miners, agricultural workers — take their workplaces and take power.

How would a socialist party organize in Peru? Mariátegui argued that it would have to be organized by the Indians themselves, speaking their native languages, organizing in the villages and on the plantations. Just as the European bourgeoisie's Enlightenment ideas of nationalism, republican, parliamentary government, and laissez-faire capitalism had penetrated the Creoles permitting them to carry out bourgeois revolutions in Latin America, so too the European ideas of labor unions, socialism, and soviets would penetrate the indigenous laboring masses, making it possible for them to carry out the socialist revolution in Peru and the rest of Indo-America. Nothing could be further from Mao-Tse-Tung's party-as-army and the totalitarian government it created, nor from Che Guevara's guerrilla foco theory of revolution. Mariátegui believed that the Indians, as proletarians and feudal serfs, would be capable of behaving in the same revolutionary manner as Russian workers and peasants had.

When the Stalinist counter-revolution began in Soviet Russia, Mariátegui was far from the action. As between 1924 and the 1930s Joseph Stalin succeeded first in taking control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and then of the Communist International, few Latin Americans were aware of the issues. In the late 1920s, Latin America's Communist parties were few and small and communications with Europe were intermittent. Stalin's men dominated the Communist International and the Trotskyists had difficulty in making their views known in Europe, much less in Peru. As first Georgi Zinoviev and then Stalin tightened up the organization, Mariátegui fought to defend the independence of the Peruvian Socialist Party, in part symbolically by preserving the name Socialist rather than Communist. Mariátegui never took a position in favor of any of the pretenders to the leadership of the Communist movement, neither Bukharin, Zinoviev, Stalin nor Trotsky. While he seemed to try to keep his party's distance from Stalin's International, his few remarks about Trotsky are skeptical. The Peruvian's position has to be inferred from his own writings, which emphasized the unique Indian character of Peru, but at the same time his own commitment to workers' revolution.

Vanden and Becker have produced a very good translation, faithful to the powerful prose of the original and generally graceful in English. The editor translators help the English reader by occasionally making small additions or changes to the Spanish, for example adding Las Casas' first name. The interpolation of Mariátegui's footnotes into the text, on the other hand, was probably a mistake, though not a big one. The anthology, based on the Spanish language edition of Mariátegui's works, brings together the material topically, but at the cost of breaking up the Peruvian's great book, the *Seven Essays*. All of those interested in Marxist theory, Latin American history and politics, and in the role of the indigenous peoples in the social, labor and left movements should read this book. Perhaps you will find Mariátegui interesting not because he is un-doctrinaire, but because he exemplifies the best of the Marxist doctrine and method that is so relevant today.

Seventy Years of Bolivian Radicalism

Michael Löwy

Bolivia's Radical Tradition:
Permanent Revolution in the Andes
S.Sandor John
Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 2009
304 pages, $44.41

This remarkable piece of militant history, based on interviews, as well as leaflets, letters, manifestos, dug out of public archives and private collections, from the heights of La Paz to the outskirts of Paris, deals with the Bolivian labor movement, the most persistent and combative in the Western Hemisphere. Bolivia is one of the very poorest countries of the Americas, and also the most Indian: 2/3 of the population describes itself as indigenous. It is also one of the few countries in the world where the Trotskyist organizations exercised long-lasting effects by producing ideas that helped forge the identity of radical miners, peasants, and intellectuals. Seventy years before Evo Morales, the founders of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) — Worker's Revolutionary Party — proudly proclaimed the Andean, indigenous, pre-Columbian, Inca roots of the Bolivian people.

The POR was founded in 1935 in a meeting of exiled Bolivian revolutionaries in Cordoba. The two leading figures in this historical event were José Aguirre Gainsborg, who discovered Trotskyism during his years of exile in Chile, and Tristan Maroff, the pen name of the writer Gustavo Navarro, an adventurous romantic novelist whose "Manifesto for Inca Justice" called for "the land to the Indians, the mines to the state" — a "magic formula" for many Bolivians. Maroff met the great Peruvian Marxist José Carlos Mariategui in 1927 and began to write in his Journal *Amauta*; both spoke of the Inca Empire's communism, an argument that Sandor John

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rejects as idealization of the pre-Columbian past and as a form of utopian socialism. I beg to disagree: Rosa Luxemburg, who was not a Bolivian or Peruvian romantic dreamer, also spoke of Inca communism in her *Introduction to Political Economy*.

A few years later Aguirre — who will soon die in an accident — and Maroff leave the POR and get mixed in various confused political projects leading nowhere. But two young POR activists, organizers of the first indigenous school in Bolivia, Eduardo Arze and Alipio Valencia attend the First International Indigenist Congress in Mexico (1940) and take the opportunity to visit Leon Trotsky in Coyoacan, a few months before his assassination.

The POR is refounded in 1938 and a new generation of leaders emerges: Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, Oscar Barrientos, Guillermo Lora. In 1946, the POR builds an alliance — which will last many years — with Juan Lechin, an activist of the left wing of the nationalist (bourgeois) party, the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), and the main leader of the FSTMB, the powerful Bolivian miners' union. In November 1946 at a national conference of the FSTMB in the miner's town of Pulacayo, a programmatic document — written by Guillermo Lora with the help of other POR leaders — is approved, directly inspired by Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and the Transitional Program. Known as the "Theses of Pulacayo," this document will inspire the radical wing of the Bolivian labor movement for decades. Enrique Herzog, the President of Bolivia, denounced it in 1947 as "a crime against the social order," and the Stalinist PIR (Party of the Revolutionary Left) complained of the "demagogic maneuvers of the professional Trotskyite agitators."

The Fourth International followed with attention the developments in Bolivia and in 1951, for the first time, a Bolivian delegate, Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, attended a World Congress of the movement. Soon afterwards, Sherry Mangan, an American journalist and SWP (Socialist Worker's Party) cadre, came to Bolivia with his wife and stayed for two years. He began to write a novel called *Catavi, Mountain of Death*, on the heroic, and often defeated, struggle of the Bolivian miners, but after the death of his wife became depressed and abandoned the project.

In May 1951, the MNR won the elections but a military coup prevented it from governing. Less than a year later, in April 1952, a mass upheaval toppled the dictatorship and started the Bolivian National Revolution, a movement that transformed the political landscape, demolished the old regime's military apparatus, carried out an Agrarian Reform, enfranchised the indigenous majority, and, above all, nationalized the largest tin companies — the hated "tin barons" Patiño, Aramayo, and Hochshild, who ruled the country. The miners — armed with dynamite — and factory workers' militias under the leadership of Lechin and with the help of the POR, were the main force in the uprising. Together they created the powerful Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), Central Workers Union, which was invited by the MNR leaders — Victor Paz Estenssoro, Hernan Siles Suazo — to join them in the government. Marcel Niedergang, the French specialist on Latin America, wrote in the daily *Le Monde* an article under the title "Bolivian Revolution between Wall Street and Trotsky." Meanwhile, the POR had developed a large following among the peasantry in the Cochabamba area, who promoted land occupations and expropriations "from below," forcing the government, in August 1953, to proclaim the Agrarian Reform. Guillermo Lora and other POR leaders were worried that there were "too many peasants" in the Party, and that their movement was "disproportionately advanced in relation to the rest of the country."

The main orientation of the POR during those key years of the Bolivian Revolution (1952-54) was to support Lechin and the MNR-Left, while criticizing the MNR right wing for its pro-imperialist policies. Sandor insists, and he is probably right, that this orientation was mistaken, and led the POR into a trap. But the worst was to come: at the XIth Conference of the POR, in April 1954, Guillermo Lora and his followers proposed to join the MNR, while Gonzalez Moscoso and others rejected this as a capitulation. The factional struggle coincided in time with the international split in the FI, but there was no direct connection between both events. A few months later, the POR split and most of Lora's friends — but not himself! — joined the MNR, in a major blow for the Trotskyist movement in Bolivia. The author's scrupulous analysis of these events is a model of historical accuracy, and stands in stark contrast with the various factional narratives, and in particular those of Guillermo Lora, an expert in writing and rewriting the history of the POR. Among other interesting discoveries, Sandor John unearthed the existence of a third current in the POR, the leaders of the peasant movement in Cochabamba — left out in most "official" histories of the Party — who radically opposed any alliance with the MNR, which they defined as the "Bolivian Kuomintang."

The Bolivian Revolution sadly ended with the restoration of the Army by the MNR government — an Army that was able, a few years later, to topple down the elected government and establish a military dictatorship. It is against this dictatorship that Che Guevara organized his ill-fated attempt at guerilla warfare in Bolivia in 1967. Guevara's tactics were mistaken, but I'm afraid I can't agree with the author's somewhat dismissive assessment of his struggle and of the attempts, by both factions of the POR, Moscoso and Lora, to support him — or (for Moscoso and his friends) to link with his followers in the early 1970s.

After other revolutionary attempts — such as the Popular Assembly in May 1971, described by some enthusiasts as "the First Soviet of the Americas" — followed by military dictatorships and, later, reactionary "democratic" neoliberal governments, things began to change once more in Bolivia with the election of Evo Morales as president of Bolivia in 2005. While Sandor is skeptical about Evo Morales and his government, he shows that there is a historical continuity in Bolivian radicalism: after the mines were closed by neoliberal "structural adjustments," many miners went to the Chapare province to grow coca leaves, helping to build the peasant unions whose leader was the young Evo Morales; others established themselves at El Alto, the popular neighborhood at the heights of La Paz, which played such a key role in bringing down various neo-liberal presidents in the years 2000. Not to mention that Evo's political mentor was Filemon Escobar, a former miner unionist and Trotskyist leader — converted to Indianism — who helped to found the new political party, the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). It is too soon to predict what will happen, but this is certainly a new chapter in the history of the Bolivian radical tradition.

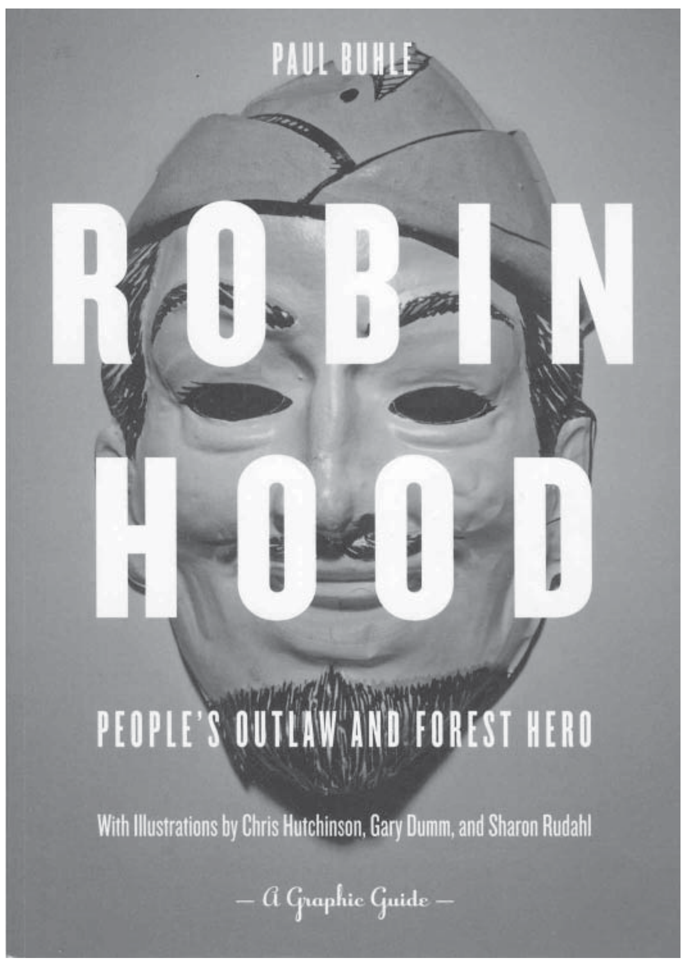
> The miners — armed with dynamite — and factory workers' militias under the leadership of Lechin and with the help of the POR, were the main force in the uprising.

Robin Hood, an Introduction

PAUL BUHLE

THE FOLLOWING PAGES are reprinted from *Robin Hood: People's Outlaw and Forest Hero* (PM Press, 2011) with permission, and reflect the coming together of a long-familiar radical theme, the recovery of the subject for today's global Left, and the emergence of comic art as social commentary. While we don't see here the collages drawn for the book by young socialist Christopher Hutchinson, we can appreciate samples from the work of Gary Dumm, a longtime collaborator with the late Harvey Pekar; and of Sharon Rudahl, a key figure in the Underground Comix scene of the 1960s-70s.

Speaking as the author of the book's prose, I found in the old saga some connections little explored and, for today's world, increasingly significant. There is, of course, women's history, and Maid Marian, frequently seen as courageous and witty, a defector from the privileged classes to the side of the rebels (also, in English village lore, the May Queen, sometimes a fertility goddess-substitute): without women's struggle, no social progress. This connects in various ways to the defense of the village and the forest, the ways in which Robin's original world was threatened, and its inhabitants fought back. They brought with them centuries of culture, their own interpretations of religion, newer skills (the long bow) and gradually increasing literacy. Despite seemingly endless defeats, they struggled on and still do… with Robin by their side, at least mythically, and the real-live forests of the planets to protect.



PAUL BUHLE, *a retired academic, now lives in Wisconsin and devotes himself to the ongoing struggle there . . . and the creation of comics. His latest book, coedited with Mari Jo Buhle, is* It Started in Wisconsin*.*

In search of MAID MARIAN
©SHARON RUDAHL 2011
IN MOVIES & COMICS, MAID MARION IS ROBIN HOOD'S ONE TRUE LOVE...
OFTEN A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS, NEEDING RESCUE FROM THE EVIL SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.
SHE CAME LATE TO THE LEGEND. MEDIEVAL ROBIN HOOD BALLADS PORTRAY AN ALL MALE ROSTER OF GREENWOOD OUTLAWS...
BUT BY THE 17TH CENTURY, MARIAN WAS DEVELOPING A RICH AND VARIED PERSONA:
RISE UP!! RISE UP AGAINST THE OPPRESSORS!
MAY THE STREAMS OF SHERWOOD RUN RED WITH NORMAN BLOOD!
REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVIST, STIRRING UP THE SAXON UNDERCLASS AGAINST A DECADENT NORMAN OCCUPATION...
CROSS-DRESSING PROTO-FEMINIST...
WHO IS THAT SLENDER LAD LEADING THE TOURNAMENT??!
WORSHIPPED IN PLACE OF THE VIRGIN MARY BY A CULT OF HERETICS...
PAGAN GREEN WOMAN, QUEEN OF MAY DAY REVELS...
OR PERHAPS A MOORISH PRINCESS, BACK FROM THE CRUSADES.


HERE IS A SCENE FROM A 17TH CENTURY BALLAD ~ ROBINHOOD, THE EARL OF HUNTINGTON, HAS WON THE HEART AND KISSES OF MAID MARION ~ "A BONNY FINE LASS OF HIGH DEGREE"
FATE FORCED THE LOVERS TO PART... ROBIN, BROKEN-HEARTED, FLED TO THE GREEN WOOD.
FAIR MARIAN DRESSED UP AS A SERVANT BOY...
AND ROAMED THE FOREST SEEKING ROBINHOOD.
SHE WENT ARMED WITH SWORD AND BOW, READY FOR ANY DANGER...
BUT ROBINHOOD WAS ALSO IN DISGUISE - SO THEY MISTOOK EACH OTHER FOR ENEMIES!
THEY FOUGHT AN HOUR OR MORE, TILL BLOOD RAN FROM ROBIN'S FACE
AND MARION COULD BARELY STAND...
O STAY THY HAND, BOLD LAD! THOU SHALL JOIN MY MERRY BAND!!
I'LL RANGE THE WOOD WITH BOLD ROBINHOOD AND HEAR THE SWEET NIGHTINGALE SING!
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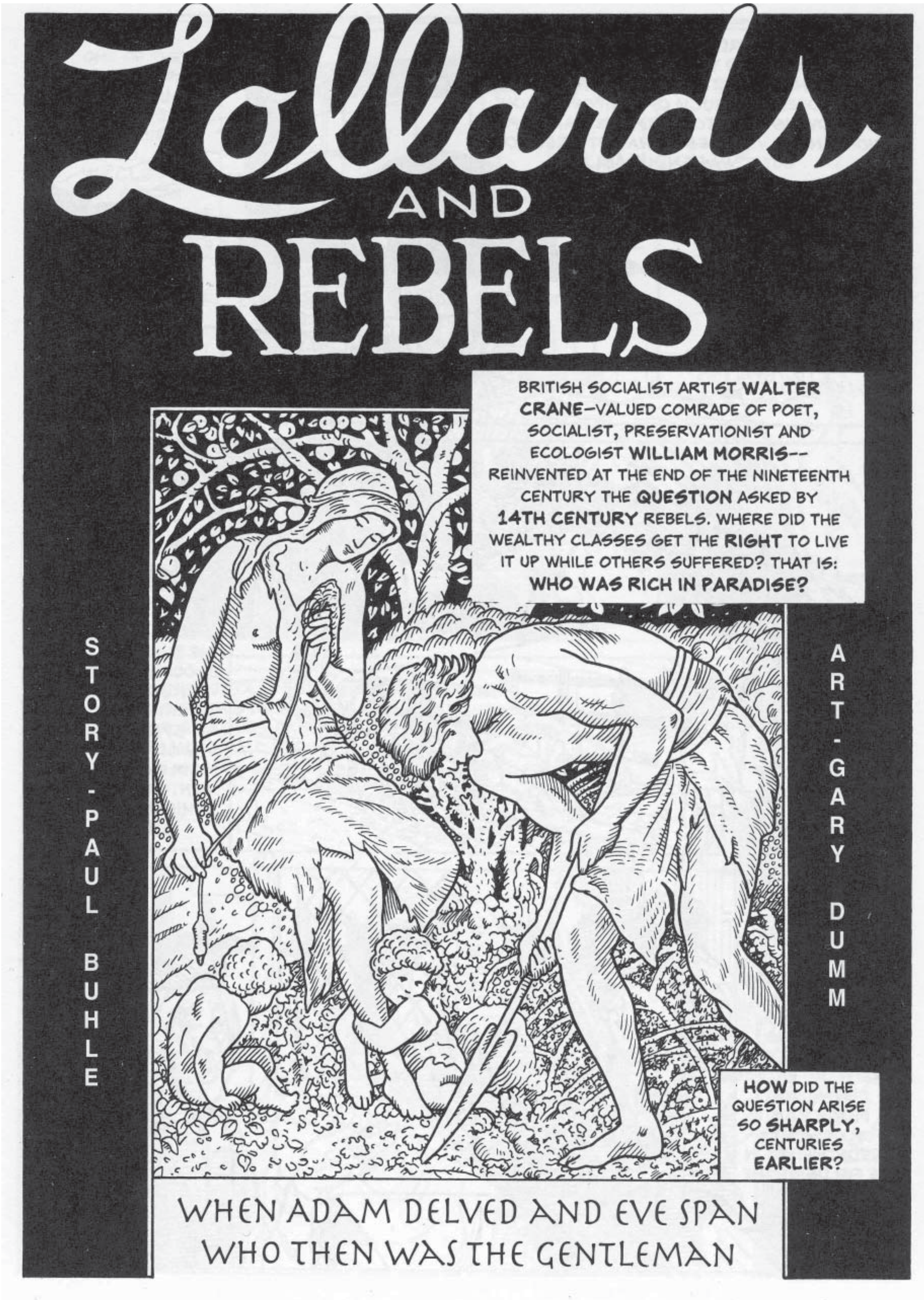
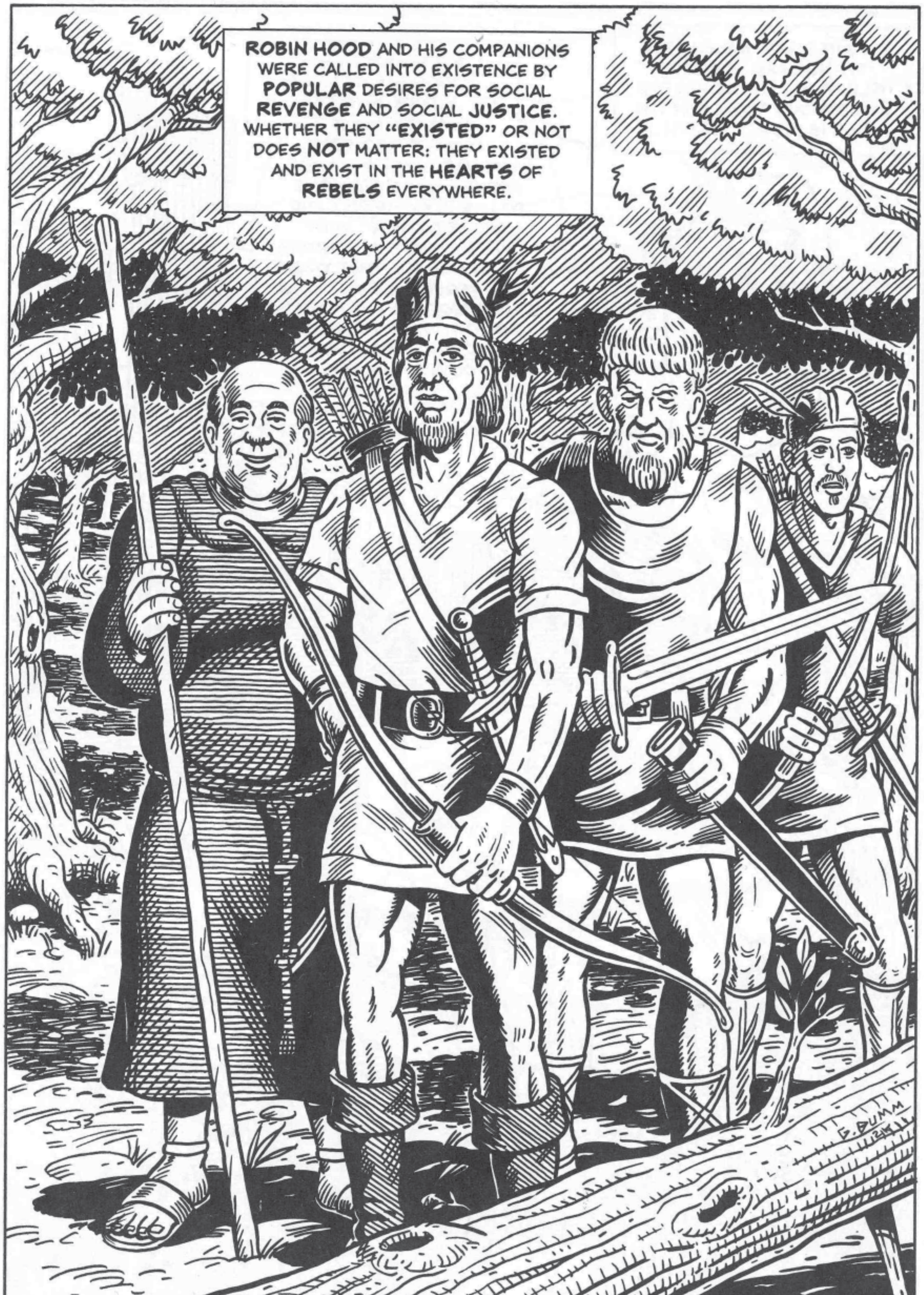

Lollards
AND
REBELS
BRITISH SOCIALIST ARTIST WALTER CRANE—VALUED COMRADE OF POET, SOCIALIST, PRESERVATIONIST AND ECOLOGIST WILLIAM MORRIS-- REINVENTED AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THE QUESTION ASKED BY 14TH CENTURY REBELS. WHERE DID THE WEALTHY CLASSES GET THE RIGHT TO LIVE IT UP WHILE OTHERS SUFFERED? THAT IS: WHO WAS RICH IN PARADISE?
STORY - PAUL BUHLE
ART - GARY DUMM
HOW DID THE QUESTION ARISE SO SHARPLY, CENTURIES EARLIER?
WHEN ADAM DELVED AND EVE SPAN
WHO THEN WAS THE GENTLEMAN


ROBIN HOOD AND HIS COMPANIONS WERE CALLED INTO EXISTENCE BY POPULAR DESIRES FOR SOCIAL REVENGE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. WHETHER THEY "EXISTED" OR NOT DOES NOT MATTER: THEY EXISTED AND EXIST IN THE HEARTS OF REBELS EVERYWHERE.
G. DUMM

THE END

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IN THIS ISSUE

Probably the single most important contributing factor to [SNCC's] demise was violent, as well as secret, repression: by mobs of white Southern citizens, by vigilante gangs (especially the KKK), by local and state police forces, and by the federal government (mainly the FBI).

Martin Oppenheimer

COPS AND FEDS: THE REPRESSION OF SNCC

Many things make Luxemburg a more appealing figure than Lenin. Both were gifted writers. But while Lenin spent much of his life as an exile, where he could follow politics only from a distance, Luxemburg played from 1898 until her death in 1919 a prominent role on the left wing of the German socialist movement, the biggest in Europe.

Peter Drucker

REVIEW, SELECTED WRITINGS OF PAUL LEVI

What if the democratic movements and new governments [of Eastern Europe] had made egalitarian demands on the world's political and economic leaders, rather than acquiescing with no programmatic resistance to the logic of capitalism and the nostrums of the IMF and the World Bank?

Joanne Landy

SOME LESSONS OF 1989'S EAST EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS