FRONT COVER
TK IN A
SEPARATE FILE

new POLITICS

a journal of socialist thought

NEW POLITICS is published by New Politics Associates, 155 West 72 Street, Room 402, New York, NY 10023 USA
e-mail: **newpoliticsjournal@gmail.com**

newpol.org

NEW POLITICS is indexed in The Left Index and in Alternative Press Index, as well as Political Science Abstracts, the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, and International Political Science Abstracts. New Politics is distributed in bookstores and newsstands by Ingram Periodicals and by Ubiquity Distributors. Cover design and illustrations by Lisa Lyons.

Subscriptions: $24 for four issues. Institution rate: $50. Foreign subscriptions (including Canada): $40. Foreign institution rate: $66. All payments from foreign countries must be made by U.S. money orders or checks payable in U.S. currency drawn on U.S. banks. Single copy: $9 (includes postage and handling). Bulk rate postage paid at Peoria, IL. Or subscribe on line at newpol.org.

ISSN (0028-6494)

VOLUME XIV • NUMBER 4 • Winter 2014

New Politics *Vol. XIV, No. 4* *Winter 2014*
Whole Number 56

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(contents continued)

BOOK REVIEWS

WORDS AND PICTURES

From the Editors

Accounts of the great Chicago Teamster strike of 1905 tell us that when the employers attempted to move the wagons driven by non-union workers through the streets of the city, working class women went to their windows and threw garbage, boiling water, and whatever else was available on the heads of the scabs below. A (perhaps apocryphal) story has it that one woman, grabbing in haste whatever was at hand, picked *Das Kapital* off the bookshelf—where it had been sitting next to *Anti-Dühring*—and stepping out on the fire escape flung it down on the head of a scab. A woman from the neighborhood, coming home just after the wagons had passed and finding the book lying in the gutter amidst flatirons and frying pans, picked it up. Seeing her friend's name inside, she took the heavy book back up to her. "Maud," she said, "you had better put this back on the bookshelf; we may be needing it again tomorrow."

We at *New Politics* hope that as the crises deepen and social struggles increase, you will have our journal at hand and will find a way, like Maud, to unite theory and practice. We don't always succeed in bringing the two together, but we try. At times we feel like our efforts have no discernible impact. But at other times our ideas and analyses seem to resonate with new and exciting social movements. Our writers and editors produce a journal with the notion that the theories we debate, the movements and political parties we analyze, the literature, art, and music we critique, and the books we review will in the long run, and in ways that are not always calculable, contribute to movements that are fighting for democracy and social justice and ultimately toward the democratic socialist society to which we aspire.

The task of producing *New Politics* was led for the past eight years by co-editors Marvin and Betty Reid Mandell. We cannot say enough about the excellent job they have done and the respect and appreciation in which we hold their work. We know that as ongoing members of our editorial board, they will continue to keep this project on track. Our last board meeting selected four-coeditors—Dan La Botz, Steve Shalom, Adaner Usmani, and Julia Wrigley—to carry on the work of editing *New Politics*, which will maintain its commitment to the cause of democratic socialism from below and to serving as an independent socialist forum for debate and dialogue on the left. Our board has incorporated some new and talented younger members who bring to bear a variety of experiences in social and political movements and expertise in varied fields, as well as sharing our common political values.

May our readers continue to find that they are needing *New Politics* again tomorrow and in the years to come.

Dan La Botz
Steve Shalom
Adaner Usmani
Julia Wrigley

CRUSADERS FOR JUSTICE

"I can't in good conscience allow the U.S. government to destroy privacy, internet freedom and basic liberties for people around the world with this massive surveillance machine they're secretly building."

"The great fear that I have regarding the outcome for America of these disclosures is that nothing will change. [People] won't be willing to take the risks necessary to stand up and fight to change things… And in the months ahead, the years ahead, it's only going to get worse. [The NSA will] say that… because of the crisis, the dangers that we face in the world, some new and unpredicted threat, we need more authority, we need more power, and there will be nothing the people can do at that point to oppose it. And it will be turnkey tyranny."

"… the U.S. government is not going to be able to cover this up by jailing or murdering me. Truth is coming, and it cannot be stopped. "

— Internet quotes by **Edward Snowden**
National Security Agency whistleblower

Introduction to the Special Section on THE LEFT AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Humanity today faces what may be its greatest crisis—the destruction of our environment threatening the continued existence of life on Earth. The Left began to address this issue over the last two decades, but only in the last few years has it been recognized that coming to grips with the environmental crisis must be a top priority not only of the Left but of all the peoples of the world. The question then becomes how do we as socialists address the environmental issue and what is its relationship to our historic demand for fundamental change in politics, society, and economics to bring about a democratic socialist society?

New Politics *offers here eight left analyses from different perspectives. Four of the articles had their origin in presentations at the Left Forum in June 2013, the principal theme of which was "The Left and the Environment." The articles by Nancy Holmstrom, Jill Stein, and Christian Parenti were originally talks given at the opening plenary, while Brian Tokar's is based on a workshop presentation. The Left Forum has come to be an important occasion for activists on the American Left to come together to discuss, debate, and strategize and we are pleased to be able to demonstrate in this issue our appreciation for the Forum in which* New Politics *editors, authors, and readers also regularly participate. Robin Hahnel's article, an open letter to the environmental justice movement, is a revised version of a talk given at a conference on "The Political Economy of the Environment" held in Brooklyn, New York, in October 2013 co-sponsored by the Union of Radical Political Economy and* New Politics. *The articles by Michael Löwy on ecosocialism, by Natassa Romanou on the environmental crisis in Greece, and by Darryl Lorenzo Wellington on Los Alamos were all written especially for this issue.*

The Left and the Environment

NANCY HOLMSTROM

I AM ESPECIALLY EXCITED about the theme of this year's conference because it represents what I think is a historic advance in left thinking. In all the years of the Left Forum, not to mention the Socialist Scholars Conference before it, plenary speakers have addressed a huge range of left topics from a variety of perspectives. Certainly the ongoing economic crisis has received a great deal of our attention and must continue to. But there have been only two, yes exactly two, plenary speakers who focused on environmental issues: Maude Barlow of Water Watch from Canada and Nnimmo Bassey of Nigeria. Why has it taken us so long?

NANCY HOLMSTROM *is Professor Emeritus and former chair of the Philosophy Department at Rutgers University, and a member of the boards of the Left Forum and the Daniel Singer Millennium Prize Foundation. With Joanna Brenner, she most recently co-authored "Socialist Feminist Strategy Today" in the* Socialist Register 2013.

This article is a revised version of remarks made at the Left Forum in New York City in June 2013.

Partly the reasons are psychological I think—it is so deeply disturbing, sad, and indeed terrifying to think that "almost 2/3 of the natural resources necessary to sustain life on this planet are being degraded or destroyed by human action"—that we have been in denial. But those are the actual words of the UN Ecosystem Millennium Assessment in 2005. Since then the Earth's atmosphere has reached a concentration of 400 parts of CO_2, the highest since the Pliocene Era millions of years ago. Today, when droughts occur in the Midwest, not just North Africa, when sea level rise threatens not only tiny islands in the South Pacific but this very island we are on, it gets harder to deny.

But there are also political reasons for the Left's resistance. The environmental crisis requires a shift from the issues which we have studied and organized around (in which you might say we have sunk intellectual and political capital)—whether they are labor, the economy, anti-war work, feminism or anti-racism, and so on. New issues, new skills, new challenges face us. And the environmental crisis seems particularly difficult to get a handle on just because it's SO big, it can seem overwhelming.

And unlike most left issues, the environmental crisis ultimately affects everyone. Rich as well as poor need clean air and water.... As a speaker at the Washington DC demo against the Keystone pipeline put it—and he was a veteran of the civil rights movement—"that movement was about equality, this one's about existence." But this very universality seems politically problematic to some on the Left. They worry that all the injustices and miseries against which we have struggled so long will get lost in this one huge humanistic, cross-class issue.

But I want to reassure them that this does not have to happen—it all depends on the politics we bring to it. Because in fact the issues are all causally connected. All the injustices, inequalities and horrors we struggle against are exacerbated by the environmental crisis. Though the rich as well as the poor need our planet's resources, they have conflicting interests as they also profit from its depredations—and meanwhile they can insulate themselves: buying water to drink and biofuels for their SUVs while others starve.... So it is particularly the poor and working class around the world, people in the least developed countries, people of color, and women who suffer the most—and who have organized, globally and in our domestic environmental justice movement.

Or consider wars and imperialism: They have always largely been about resources—but now resources are more scarce, there are more people, and more countries are developing—which they should be—but not in an unsustainable capitalist way. The titles of two important new books sum it up: *The Race for What's Left: The Global Scramble for the World's Last Resources,* and *Devouring Dragon*, about the implications for the planet of China's turn to capitalism.

The environmental and economic crises also exacerbate problems of ill-health, of unemployment, and of homelessness, as rural people lose land and water and are forced into cities.

So what is to be done? Can we stop the relentless drive to grow, and consume ever more, and opt for a simpler life? This would certainly be desirable (assuming it were equitable). But what would this do to our economy? What about the all-important issue of jobs...? Of course, there are no jobs on a dead planet.... But can we stop growth and still satisfy people's needs—within a capitalist framework? Some influential people in the environmental movement seem to think so.

Others think that we don't have to limit growth, but that we can transform our economy to a greener form of capitalism, with green jobs, by instituting taxes on pollutants, promoting green technology and businesses, by "de-materializing production" as some have called it... and so on. This too would certainly be preferable, but can we do it, and how? And would it be sufficient if growth continued unchecked?

Or does the environmental crisis show that we need to move to a radically different mode of production oriented to the satisfaction of human needs rather than maximization of profit, in other words, socialism. Only such a system would be ecologically sustainable. But if so, how do we get there?

How do we build the unified movement we need of all who suffer under our present system? What is the role of labor (some of which is on board, others not), of co-ops, of local sustainable economies, in the transition to a sustainable economy? And how do we unify all the many environmental struggles…?

For the good news in all of this is that for every aspect of the environmental crisis there is a movement in opposition: global warming/the climate justice movement; food insecurity/the food sovereignty movement; there are struggles worldwide (both urban and rural) against development and dispossession; around the globe there are struggles against dams, against the privatization of water; against the endless energy demands of our system. There are movements to reduce our dependence on oil, against hydro-fracking, tar sands, coal and mountain top removal, nuclear energy, the Keystone pipeline—and so on….

So there is no need to worry that really facing up to the catastrophic consequences of our current mode of life will so depress people that it will demobilize them. This concern has been expressed in critiques of what some on the Left have called "catastrophism." (Of course, there is no guarantee that the new movements will be successful—they need all the smart political help the Left can bring—but they are our best, and indeed, our only, hope).

Far from being demobilized, these environmental movements exist all over the world, and they include an exciting renewal of indigenous movements like Idle No More in Canada…. Moreover, there is a distinct eco-socialist pole emerging, which certainly understands the connection between the ecological and economic crises. They call themselves System Change, Not Climate Change: check out their table in the book room—as well as all the books….

So there are exciting opportunities opening up for the Left today; some have rightly called this the best argument ever against capitalism, as implicit in all environmental struggles is the fundamental question of who should own the Earth? Should individuals own the Earth? Should corporations? Or perhaps only all of us? Or rather, as Marx wrote, "From the standpoint of a higher socio-economic formation [i.e. socialism or communism], the private property of individuals in the earth will appear just as absurd as the private property of one man in other men. Even…all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not owners of the earth, they are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations...."

Economic & Ecologic Transformation—There Is No Alternative

And we have the power to make it happen

Jill Stein

It's very humbling to be in this room, not to mention on this stage, with all the vision and dedication that's packed within these four walls. Thanks to the board and Seth Adler, the volunteers, and all of you here tonight for making this conference happen.

I was asked to say a few words from my perspective as a medical doctor working in the area of health and the environment. So first I want to explain what that perspective is. Having started out as a clinical doctor in conventional medicine, I discovered I wasn't comfortable giving people pills and sending them back out to things that are making us sick—everything from pollution to poverty, sick food, dirty car-centered transportation, and so on. So I moved upstream to environmental health, and learned pretty quickly there's no way to transform the environment—to make it safe and healthy—without an economic transformation, that is, greening and democratizing the economy. And to do that requires fundamentally challenging power.

So now when people ask me what kind of medicine I practice I say political medicine, because politics is the mother of all illnesses. We've got to fix that sick political system if we want to fix everything else that's killing us. My medical license board was a little puzzled by this—namely why I got arrested three times over the past year in the practice of "political medicine." Thankfully, they have allowed me to keep my license. So far at least.

So I'd like to share some thoughts from that perspective of political medicine—on how we can achieve ecologic and economic transformation. To cut to the chase, we can do that by using the strength of our numbers—as the 99%—and the authority of our agenda that already has majority support. In other words, I'm here to encourage us to use the power we already have, to achieve that transformation we deserve—on which our survival depends.

I want to make three points.

First, I want to point out the obvious—that we are in an incredible, historic moment. And that makes economic and ecologic transformation a very real possibility. Thanks to everyone here for all you've done to bring us to this moment.

Democracy and justice are breaking out all around us—from the democracy revolutions in the middle east, the Occupy and austerity uprisings, the tar sands blockade, the teacher and student protests—from Puerto Rico to Quebec

---

Dr. Jill Stein *was the 2012 Green Party presidential candidate. She co-authored* In Harm's Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development *and* Environmental Threats to Healthy Aging, *which promote green local economies, sustainable agriculture, clean power, and freedom from toxics. Stein is also a mother, housewife, physician, teacher of internal medicine, and pioneering environmental-health advocate.*

This article is an expanded and revised version of remarks made at the Left Forum in New York City in June 2013.

and Cooper Union, in the high schools from Philadelphia to Seattle—to the Wal-Mart and fast food strikes, eviction blockades, the Idle No More campaign, the fights to stop fracking, nuclear power, and the millions—literally—that filled the streets last week to stop that poster child of predatory capitalism—Monsanto—that's poisoning of our food, farms, biosphere, and democracy. People are standing up like we haven't seen in generations.

This movement is long overdue. But it's also just in time for us to make this a powerful tipping point to take back the promise of democracy and the peaceful, just, green future we deserve. And that is why it's now possible to take on economic and ecological transformation.

The more united we are behind a broad agenda of economic and ecologic transformation, the quicker we'll get there. As you know, the 1% cannot rule the 99% without the game of divide and conquer. But our being here today defies that game, and allows us to create a more unified, effective mobilization.

Standing up to power requires not only standing up to the capitalist establishment, but to its political parties as well. Capitalism thrives on the politics of fear, and we've been told for decades to vote our fears rather than our values. But the reality is that the politics of fear has brought us everything we were afraid of—from the off-shoring of our jobs, to the massive Wall Street bailouts, the endless expanding wars, the attack on our civil liberties, and the meltdown of the climate. We must replace the politics of fear with the politics of courage—in the street and in the voting booth. We must lead the way on what we deserve. The political establishment is not going to.

And by the way, this is not a contest between economy and ecology to see which is more important. That's like asking whether your heart or your lungs are more critical to your survival. They are both essential. And they are both so enmeshed with each other, we can't fix one unless we also fix the other.

If you try to fix the economy and let the environment unravel, you won't have water to cool the engines, food to feed our families, or climate security from storms, drought, and floods that allows you to set up shop or even live safely. Conversely, if you try to fix the environment without fixing the economy, people will of necessity take down the trees, over-graze the land, and destroy the environment—in the desperate struggle to survive.

> Piecemeal solutions aren't going to solve this. We've got to fix them all.

In addition, it's not just economy and ecology that are under siege. So are peace and democracy, which are also intimately connected to economy and ecology. The military, for example, is the biggest source of greenhouse gases and conversely, securing/stealing fossil fuels from the third world is the biggest driver of the U.S. war machine. The military is also the biggest drain of U.S. dollars away from human needs, while it's also a major engine of the U.S. economy. And the absence of real democracy is what really prevents us from implementing the solutions the American people already support: bringing the troops home, downsizing the military, greening the economy, and putting people back to work.

Piecemeal solutions aren't going to solve this. We've got to fix them all. And we *can* do that because the solutions are not only compatible, they are profoundly synergistic and interdependent.

The second point I'd like to make is that this transformation is not only possible. It's essential. In fact, there is no alternative (to borrow a phrase from Margaret Thatcher). Climate science makes this clear. So I want to say just a few words about that climate science, and why it compels emergency action now—for the climate and the economy.

In short, climate science tells us that warming triggers more warming. When certain physical conditions are hit—called tipping points—warming accelerates, which triggers more warming. This process will repeat itself until the climate change spirals into unlivable conditions. This is why we must prevent more warming than what we've already got. Here are some of the details of recent climate science that tend to light a fire under your feet.

An estimated 400,000 people are dying every year from climate change, including 1000 children a day, and $1.2 trillion a year is being lost from the global economy. These costs will grow rapidly if we allow the warming to continue.

• We've just had the warmest decade on record. In total, the climate has warmed 1½ degrees F since 1895, but 80 percent of that has occurred just since 1980. In other words, it's accelerating.

• The last two years broke all records for extreme weather.

• We now have established mega-drought in the West and South, which is predicted to be permanent.

• We're now having the second major wildfire of the season in California—the kind of fire

NO CHANGE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

you'd normally see at the end of a long hot dry summer. And now they're starting in the spring.

• The melting of ice sheets is accelerating. Sea level rose 8 inches last century, but is predicted to rise 6 feet in the next. Over five million people live within that amount of sea level rise in the U.S. alone.

• And all of this is caused by less than 1 degree C of warming. But we're predicted to have as much as 4 degrees warming by mid-century. At 4 degrees warming the production of rice and corn is reduced by about 40 percent. Heat waves that would drive the temperature to 105 degrees F under current conditions will drive the thermometer to 117 degrees—which is not survivable for people or livestock that many people rely on for food.

• The melting of the Greenland ice sheet has increased 5 times over in the last two decades. If the Greenland ice sheet were to collapse, sea level could rise 24 feet over a span of decades, not over thousands of years, as previously assumed. And that's only the beginning, because what makes Greenland melt is also making the Antarctic melt—and that would make sea level rise another 190 feet or so.

• And finally, carbon levels in the atmosphere are now at 400 ppm and rising. That's almost 50 percent higher than they were at the start of the industrial era in the 1800s, and higher than at any time over the last several million years. And this has happened in the blink of an eye in geologic time. When you see the graph of what this looks like, it becomes really clear why the climate is so desperately out of kilter, and why we cannot open up new fossil fuel sources—no fracking, no new offshore oil, no drilling in the Arctic or national parks, no tar sands excavation. We must not only stop the development of new fossil fuels. We must phase out existing fossil fuels as quickly as humanly possible.

The president's "all of the above" energy policy is disastrously misleading on this account. You've probably heard him declare his love for pipelines—saying in the debates, for example, "We've built enough pipeline to wrap around the entire earth once. . . *I'm all for pipelines. . . all for oil production. . .*" And then in the 2013 State of the Union address: "...my administration will keep *cutting red tape and speeding up new oil and gas permits.*" Obama justifies his expansion of fossil fuels with his "balanced approach" hype that implies that the harm of increasing fossil fuels is balanced by the growth of renewable energy. This is false. Fossil fuels are toxic to the climate. Period. You wouldn't give your child an "all of the above" diet—with pesticides, lead, and arsenic on one hand, and blueberries, spinach, and lentils on the other. Healthy food doesn't undo the damage of deadly poison. Same is true for energy. Clean renewable energy doesn't in any way prevent fossil fuels emissions from wrecking the climate. That's why we've got to move to a carbon-free economy as quickly as possible.

And fortunately we *can* do that, which is the final point I'd like to make. We can get off lethal fossil fuels at the same time we fix a whole host of economic ills. It does require systemic, transformational change and on an emergency basis. But it's not rocket science.

In the last election, we pulled some of these solutions together into a Green New Deal that has been the focus of Green Party work in the U.S. for years. And we continue to push for it in the Green Shadow Cabinet. With the political mobilization of the 99% for a Green New Deal, we could create 25 million jobs, end unemployment, democratize and green the economy, halt climate change, and make wars for oil obsolete.

With a Green New Deal we could create an Economic Bill of Rights that ensures:

• The right to employment through a nationally funded, locally controlled, direct jobs initiative replacing unemployment offices with employment offices.

• Workers rights for living wages, safe workplaces, and union representation.

• Medicare-for-All.

• Tuition-free, quality, public education from pre-school through college, and an end to student debt.

• The right to decent affordable housing, a halt to foreclosures and evictions, and expansion of rental and public housing.

• The right to accessible and affordable utilities—heat, electricity, phone, internet, and public transportation—through democratically run, publicly owned utilities that operate at cost, not for profit.

• The right to fair taxation in proportion to ability to pay—including a Wall Street transaction tax, taxing capital gains as income, and raising the income tax for the very wealthy to the 70-90 percent level.

Beyond an Economic Bill of Rights, we could create, through a Green New Deal, jobs in sustainable energy, conservation, regional organic food systems, clean manufacturing, and mass transit along with safe sidewalks and bike paths.

We could nationalize the Federal Reserve, break up big banks, and create public owned banks as non-profit utilities.

We could create economic democracy by providing support, education, and direct financing for worker cooperatives.

We could end taxpayer-funded bailouts for banks. We could create reforms for real democracy with full public financing and free and equal access to the airwaves.

We could revoke corporate personhood and restore the vote to ex-offenders; guarantee equal access to the ballot and to the debates for all qualified candidates; abolish the Electoral College and implement instant runoff voting and proportional representation.

We could—and must—also:

• Protect our civil liberties and security by repealing the Patriot Act and key sections of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

• End the president's unconstitutional, imperial war powers, as well as the dictatorial power to assassinate (including U.S. citizens) and imprison without charge or trial.

• Prohibit Homeland Security and FBI from conspiring with police to suppress our freedoms of assembly and speech.

• End the war on the press and whistleblowers including Bradley Manning and Julian Assange.

• End the war on immigrants and the war on drugs.

• Cut military spending by 50 percent and close U.S. military bases around the world.

If there is a catastrophe in the making here, it is not really the climate. The real catastrophe is the myth of powerlessness that restrains us from fixing the eminently fixable climate and economic disasters being engineered by the 1%.

In fact we are powerful. To paraphrase Alice Walker, the biggest way people give up power is by not knowing we have it to start with. We have the support, the solutions, the values shared by the majority of people in this country and around the world. We have the power. We just have to stand up and assert it—in the street and in the voting booth. And we must get organized to do that effectively.

We are facing the breaking point for people, the planet, the economy, and our democracy. It's our job, our privilege, and perhaps our destiny, to turn that breaking point into the tipping point, and take back the peaceful, just, green future we deserve. And we can do that by mobilizing for economic and ecologic transformation, and settling for nothing less. We can go a long way to jump start this process, right here, right now, starting at this conference that brings the forces of economic and ecologic transformation together. Thank you for creating this critical convergence, and for all you are doing to make this transformation possible.

Rethinking the State

Shadow Socialism in the Age of Environmental Crisis

Christian Parenti

I am going to discuss the political implications of climate change as regards the role of the state. The punch line is this: climate change means that the state is coming back. The choice is whether the state's return will be violent and repressive or whether its return can involve a renovation and transformation that enhances the state's progressive and democratic features.

Climate change heralds a return of the state (at least in the near term) because climate change brings more extreme weather and physical disaster, and that means greater social, political, and economic emergencies. In those moments of crisis, who or what steps forward? At a micro level people and communities can come together to try to help each other. We've seen that here in New York in the wake of Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and in Vermont after tropical storm Irene in 2011. But at a macro level and often at a micro level, for better and for worse, it is the state that steps in at moments of crisis. In the face of floods, fires, and drought it's the *public sector* that responds.

This first hit me in New Orleans in 2005 when I was covering Hurricane Katrina for *The Nation*. I got to the city on the third day after the storm, and the place was filling up with cops. Then on the fourth day the 82nd Airborne arrived. From the outside, it looked like the police were there just to repress people. And to be clear, there were some extreme examples of violence, though most of that, like the shootings on the Danzinger Bridge, was done by the infamous New Orleans Police Force and by white vigilantes across the river in Algiers Point.

For the most part when you watched and talked to these visiting cops (and a few firefighters) it was clear they wanted to help. They wanted to get people off of roofs and out of attics in flooded areas, then give them medical attention and food. But they didn't have any spare civil defense or human services capacity to share. Most of the towns sending help don't have healthy public hospitals and clinic systems with extra doctors, orderlies, ambulances, and EMTs. So, they sent what they had and that was drawn from the federally subsidized toolkit of repression: guns, armored personnel carriers, and SWAT teams, etc.—all courtesy of the war on drugs, and neoliberal restructuring in which welfare, public health care, and job training programs were cut, while spending on policing and repression were increased.

Thus, post-Katrina New Orleans showed who or what responds most (the state); and it showed how the state's response to environmental disaster is *pre-structured* by policy choices that, at first glance, seem to have nothing to do with climate change.

Because the increasing centrality of the state in the age of climate crisis cannot be avoided,

Christian Parenti *is a professor at the School for International Training Graduate Institute, a* Nation *contributing editor, and the author of four books, the most recent being* Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence *(New York: Nation Books, June 2011).*

This article is an expanded and revised version of remarks made at the Left Forum in New York City in June 2013.

it is important for the left to rethink the state, and reclaim it. I'll get back to this in a moment, but first, let's get clear on the basic science of climate change.

The Science

We are at 400 parts per million concentration of atmospheric CO_2. The best science in the world thinks that 350 parts per million is the safe cut-off point after which climate change, potentially, becomes self-propelling. So we have to move toward negative net emissions and do so quickly. The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN body established to vet science for policy makers, recommends that just to stabilize CO_2 concentration at 450 ppm (the outermost limits of "safe climate change") and thus limit "temperature increase to 2˚C above pre-industrial levels, developed countries would need to reduce emissions in 2020 by 10–40% below 1990 levels and in 2050 by approximately 40–95%."[1] That is a very daunting task.

> The government has to act and we have to demand that it act in ways that will get our economy off fossil fuels.

If we don't cut emissions, which is to say *mitigate* the problem, then *adaptation*—or dealing with what's coming down the pike—might become impossible. At a certain point the breakdown of natural systems will become self-propelling. For example, if the planet gets warm enough and the arctic permafrost melts and the methane trapped beneath it is released, that would radically accelerate global warming—methane is a heat-trapping gas twenty times more powerful than CO_2.

Right now, the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions are burning fossil fuels, clearing and burning forests, and the use of nitrogen fertilizer, a major source of NO_2, which like methane is an extremely potent greenhouse gas. So the problem is still within our control, but it won't always be if we don't act quickly. Recall that in his last book, *Storms of My Grandchildren*, Dr. James Hansen, formerly of NASA's Goddard Institute, outlines what he calls the "Venus syndrome" in which self-propelling warming over thousands of years eventually wipes out life on Earth.[2]

Because the potential implications of climate change are so global, we can easily confuse climate change with *all other* environmental problems. It is easy to think that we must solve *everything* to be able to solve *this*. But actually, we should see climate change as a *subset* of the larger set of interconnected problems that are "the" environmental crisis. Climate change is the problem that must be dealt with most immediately, because of its compressed timeframe. If we get off of fossil fuels, that does not mean that we have solved all other environmental problems, such as soil erosion, deforestation, over-fishing, or toxicity in the atmosphere.

This is, I hope, a realistic and thus somewhat empowering way to conceive of our task. The fact of the matter is that human civilizations, even global capitalism, have been able to address and remedy specific environmental crises in the past. Regionally, American air and water are much cleaner now than they were forty years ago when I was a child. Why is that? Because state legal power in the form of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act have forced meaningful changes on industry.[3]

Now back to the state. With climate crisis, the state comes back as the tool kit of repression, or it comes back as some sort of progressive, democratic, transformed institution. Unfortunately, even discussing the state (let alone reclaiming it) has fallen out of fashion. The US Left does not really write or think about the state as a theoretical and political object. We criticize its wars and prisons (take for example any of the four books I've written). But we don't thoroughly address ourselves to what the state is, could be, and ought to be.

Neoliberalism, in all its anti-statist rhetoric has been able to almost *disappear* the state as a category in left thought. That is a really big problem. The other side, the right, they still take the state very seriously and invest heavily in controlling it.

The Environmental State

I will suggest an environmental theory of the capitalist state; that is, I will argue that the state is fundamental to capitalist development, and a key part of what it does for capital is to manage nature. An economic and environmental history of the capitalist state is important because it helps us think of how to go forward in the face of the climate crisis.

At the heart of the development of American capitalism lies a kind of "Shadow Socialism"—that is, a pattern of public investment, public consumption, and public subsidies to private production. And central to this Shadow Socialism is *the delivery of nature's use values to the capital accumulation process*.[4] To flesh this out we need to explicitly connect a few pieces of implicitly linked social theory. First, accept that the capitalist state must, whatever else, act to reproduce the conditions for accumulation. Second, acknowledge the importance of non-human nature in the accumulation process. And, third, connect those two ideas by way of thinking about the state's *territoriality*. That the state is territorial is so obvious we too often overlook its meaning.

Marx was very clear—though not all Marxists or economists have been—that nature provides use values to capital. Through production these are converted into exchange values. This is a key point and while we're on that subject, let me give props to people like Michael Perlman, John Bellamy Foster, and Jason W. Moore who have pieced together the disparate references to nature within Marx and from these fragments have created a rather coherent environmental and historical theory of capitalism.[5]

In the *Critique of the Gotha Program* Marx puts it this way,

> Labor is *not the source* of all wealth. *Nature* is just as much the source of use value (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labor, which itself is only a manifestation of a force of nature, human labor power.[6]

Here Marx does two things: first, he places human beings within nature and, second, he notes that non-human nature provides use values to the valorization process, to the accumulation process. In other words, value comes not just from that part of "nature" which is human but also from non-human nature as well. In making a table, part of what provides the value is human labor but another part is the utility of the wood which exists outside the labor process, and exists to some extent autonomously, and the inherent physical qualities, the wood's utilities, are important sources of wealth and thus key to capitalist accumulation.

So then, where do we find the use values of nature? Where are they located? And what exactly delivers them to capital? Ultimately, it is the legal and political framework of the state that provides the context by which both human nature (labor power) and non-human nature (natural use values) are delivered to capital. And, it is the *territoriality* of the state that facilitates this: state legal frameworks and property rights are geographic.[7]

Recall Weber's classic definition—it's a formulation he arrived at on the eve of the uprising in Bavaria in 1919, a revolutionary moment, when he's clearly in dialogue with Leninism. Weber tells his audience: "…we have to say that a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory. Note that 'territory' is one of the characteristics of the state."[8]

What does that actually mean? The answer is best illustrated in the history of the United States.

The Geography of Shadow Socialism

At the birth of the Republic, the federal government had a Constitution, but it did not really have any property. The thirteen colonies had become states, and it was these political units that actually owned the territory of the United States. In 1781 Jefferson described the contours of Virginia as bounded by the Atlantic on the east and "on the West by the Ohio and Mississippi."[9] All the states had similarly expansive western land claims. For example, Massachusetts claimed parts of what are now Wisconsin and Michigan.

But the states were also heavily indebted from the costs of the War of Independence. In this context, and under the guidance of Hamilton, who brokered deals with Madison and Jefferson, the federal government in a sense created itself as a real entity. Step one was creation of the First Bank of the United States. The Bank borrowed internationally and then bought up, at full value, all otherwise worthless state debt. This refloated the state economies. In exchange, the states (with Virginia leading the way) all ceded their enormous western land claims to the federal government.

The federal government then proceeded to use this land—and Hamilton wrote about this quite extensively—to achieve economic development, to bring forth capitalism—though no one referred to it as capitalism. The land and the non-human nature upon it, the natural use values of it, were crucial to what American capitalism came to be.

This was all part of what Henry Clay called "the American System." The idea was to use State power and property to establish a sort of hothouse for economic development: that is, a developmentalist state. The key features of this were:

• a federal bank, which allowed the government to deploy capital in a strategic and organized fashion;

• a high federal tariff on imported goods, which would raise tax money and protect nascent American industries;

• and finally a federal government that would help support the nascent industries by investing its tax revenue in infrastructure projects: i.e., it would build "internal improvements" like roads.

Henry Clay wanted much more, including a national university, a national observatory, a national road system, etc. Hamilton and Clay's developmentalist vision for the United States was only half realized. Their project was, ultimately, defeated by the South, which didn't want a strong federal government. But to the degree that the state-led style of development of the American System did succeed, it laid the basis for the country we now know.

Canals were one of the first "internal improvements" attempted; 4.5 million acres of land were given to canal companies. Whole fortunes and regions were born out of those land grants.[10]

Canals were quickly pushed aside in the 1830s by railroads. Railroads, in turn, received a total of 174 million acres of federal land; another 49 million acres were given to them by states. The federal grants alone equal an area twice the size of California. These lands were full of resources like forests, waterways, and minerals, which these railroad companies sold off and got enormously rich on. Businesses born out of that moment are still with us today, those land grants are still in use, still leaching natural use values into the economy, still supporting capital accumulation. These are the environmental aspects of "Shadow Socialism."

Or, take land grant colleges. How is it that the United States got such an amazing public university system, which itself is the source of vast riches? It was the value of public land granted to colleges that was the basis—the start up capital—of the university system. It was against the land grants that the railroads or the universities could then borrow. The land granted by the state, which guaranteed the property rights of that land, is the key element in all this.

Shadow Socialism goes beyond the management of nature's use values to many other aspects of life. The press—the vibrant press that this country had in the nineteenth century—why did that happen? Because the federal government subsidized it. It bought ads at high rates. It allowed small papers to ship through the mails at very low prices, and that is what helped to build that hey-day of American journalism. Moving forward into industrial technology, you can pick pretty much any industrial technology and there is this history of Shadow Socialism there. Aviation got its start because the government bought up all patents and allowed anyone to use the information. When the first airlines began, the federal government paid them large amounts of money, more than was necessary, to deliver mail. Once they could move the mails, they could take on passengers.

War, of course, is the ugly side of this. War becomes an industrial laboratory where the state steps into the economy, even reorganizing whole industries. During World War I the federal government seized control of the national rail system and completely reorganized it. Aviation, medicine, telecommunications, organizational structure and administration—all get a great boost in times of war. Alas, it would be nice to do industrial planning without going to war.

Then comes the New Deal in which America's Shadow Socialism becomes explicit. The effort to get out of the crisis of the Great Depression relied on the state to jump-start capitalism, to redistribute wealth downward to common people, to create markets by giving poor people jobs and income so they could buy the products of industry and keep the economy turning over. And the state itself purchased (and still purchases) large amounts of technology, invested heavily, and consumed a vast amount of output.

Climate Change and the State

This brings us to the present and to what I think is a realistic solution to this very pressing short-term problem. The government has to act and we have to demand that it act in ways that will get our economy off fossil fuels. The good news is we have the tools we need to cut carbon emissions. We have the money. We have the technology. And we have the enabling legislation.

The great tragedy of the Obama administration in its first two years was that much of the environmental left and others got very involved in trying to pass comprehensive climate legislation. There were a few marginal voices among them, such as the Center for Biological Diversity, saying, we don't need any new powerful law, we have it—the Clean Air Act of 1970.

When President Bill Clinton signed the Kyoto Protocol and the Senate didn't ratify it, Massachusetts and green groups sued the federal government and ten years later eventually won. They said CO_2 emissions endanger human health; therefore, they must be covered under the Clean Air Act of 1970. The Supreme Court in 2007 said, yes that's true.[11] George W. Bush ignored this. And so too did Obama in his pursuit of comprehensive climate legislation.

Now, greens realize that indeed the implications of *Massachusetts v. EPA* are massive. We do not need climate legislation because we already have it. EPA has the power to impose a crippling carbon tax on the fossil fuel sector. (This, by the way, is why the Right hates EPA so passionately.) Out of this came an "endangerment finding" that CO_2 is harmful to human health, and now we await a slew of "tailoring rules." The first such rule pursuant to *Massachusetts v. EPA* was a regulation of emissions from automobiles. Then emission standards for new coal-fired power plants were issued, and those standards were so strict that there *will not* be any new coal-fired power plants in this country. Unfortunately that was merely regulations catching up to the market and thus it was easy for the Administration to do; massive amounts of new shale gas from fracking had lowered energy prices and basically made new coal plants uneconomical.

We are still waiting for numerous rules related to aviation, shipping, oil refineries, cement plants—you name it. We're waiting for rules coming from the EPA, but Obama has kept the EPA on a very tight leash. Nonetheless, the law is there. It is not out of the question politically to start imposing penalties on polluters that would mean that they would essentially have to switch to clean or renewable energy.

Thus, we have the technology: solar, wind, appropriate hydro, all of that exists. So the problem is scaling it up. How do we do that?

Big Green Buy or Public Sector Consumption

That gets back to this history of Shadow Socialism. One of the most important things that government has done for capitalism is not the direct subsidy of production that first comes to mind, but the indirect subsidy embodied in government consumption; government is not only an investor, it is a massive consumer. In any given year, federal and state spending combined constitutes about 39 percent of GDP.[12]

The size of government is a right-wing talking point. They find it too big. But re-think that for a second. The size of government is potentially a huge solution. In other words, one-third of the economy is theoretically accountable to the people. If we could get much of government to get off of fossil fuels we would push the whole economy in that direction.

This is not out of the question. The federal government has huge vehicle fleets and huge numbers of buildings—all of these could be moved to using clean forms of energy. In fact there was an executive order from Obama moving in that direction, but then nothing came of it because there was such push back from the right. If the Post Office were to switch to electric vehicles that would have the effect of helping to lower the cost of electric vehicles so that the private sector could take this on. And there are numerous examples like that.

Let me end with that and an apology or explanation. I know this doesn't sound revolutionary or radical, but what I'm trying to do is to be very, very realistic. Because I don't think it is sufficient to be outraged about this and invoke the righteousness of our cause. We have to come up with credible solutions and stories that will really work and strategies that will work at different time frames. So, okay, what I've suggested here is not the solution to all problems associated with capitalism. It's not even the solution to the environmental crisis. It's just a realistic approach to dealing with climate change so as to buy time, so as to pull back from the brink, so that we can continue struggling.

If we don't take things that seriously and get comfortable with the contradictions implied in that, I think we will not be able to address the climate crisis. But we do have the means to do it economically and technologically, and so it is just a matter of politics. And that as you all know is about movements, movements that have to be strong, and demand a lot, and cause disruptions to business as usual that can only be placated by serious economic and policy change.

NOTES

1. S. Gupta, et al., "Policies, Instruments and Co-operative Arrangements," in *Climate Change 2007: Mitigation. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, ed. B. Metz, O.R. Davidson, P.R. Bosch, R. Dave, L.A. Meyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 748. Online at: www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg3/ar4-wg3-chapter13.pdf. On the science, also see: James Hansen, *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth About the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009); Bill McKibben, *Earth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2010); Tim Flannery, *The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006); Elizabeth Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature and Climate Change* (New

York: Bloomsbury Press, 2006); Eugene Linden, *The Winds of Change: Climate, Weather, and the Destruction of Civilizations* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006); Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance* (New York: Plume, 1993); Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth* (New York: Rodale Books, 2006); George Monbiot, *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning* (New York: Doubleday, 2006). Climate Change 2007: Working Group I: The Physical Science Basis: Human and Natural Drivers of Climate Change, IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (2007): www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg1/en/spmsspm-human-and.html. For latest atmospheric CO_2 concentrations, see www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/.

2. James Hansen's website: www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/.

3. J. R. McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001). See chapter 4 for examples of post-1970 improvements in air quality. For the EPA's view of progress, see: www.epa.gov/40th/achieve.html.

4. These are ideas coming from a book that I'm currently working on.

5. Michael Perelman, "Marx and Resources," *Environment, Technology and Society,* No. 51 (Winter 1988); Michael Perelman, "Marx and Resource Scarcity," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1993), 65-84; John Bellamy Foster, "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (Sept. 1999), 366-405. Also see Jason W. Moore, "Transcending the Metabolic Rift: A Theory of Crises in the Capitalist World-Ecology," *Journal of Peasant Studies,* vol. 38, no. 1 (Jan. 2011), 1–46.

6. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), vol. II, 9-30.

7. One of the few essays to ever point this out came to my attention recently. Jody Emel, Matthew T. Huber, and Madoshi H. Makene, "Extracting Sovereignty: Capital, Territory, and Gold Mining in Tanzania," *Political Geography*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Feb. 2011), 70 -79.

8. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Galaxy Books, 1958), "Politics as a Vocation," 77-128, quotation found on page 78.

9. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 1781-82, Query 1, http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/JefVirg.html.

10. John Bell Rae "Federal Land Grants in Aid of Canals," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Nov. 1944), 167-77.

11. Summary, arguments and decision of Mass. *v.* EPA: www.oyez.org/cases/2000-2009/2006/2006_05_1120.

12. Christian Parenti "The Big Green Buy: How Obama can use the government's purchasing power to spark the clean-energy revolution," *The Nation*, August 2-9, 2010. Or for more recent calculations, see Nate Silver, "What Is Driving Growth in Government Spending?" *New York Times* Blog FiveThirtyEight, Jan. 16, 2013, fivethirtyeight.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/01/16/what-is-driving-growth-in-government-spending/.

The Myths of "Green Capitalism"

Brian Tokar

Today environmental politics in the U.S. appears hopelessly polarized. Liberals and progressives try to sustain and occasionally strengthen environmental legislation, while those on the right are inalterably opposed, even seeking to defund core institutions such as the EPA. This extreme polarization, where anti-environmentalism has become part of the cultural as well as the political apparatus of the right, is a recent, and hopefully short-lived, phenomenon.[1]

In the early years of the environmental movement Republican politicians, allied with outdoor enthusiasts and some in the corporate world, often supported the passage of environmental laws. For some it was mainly because they preferred a predictable and relatively malleable set of uniform rules to what in the late 1960s was a trend toward increasingly stringent regulations and punishing lawsuits at the state and local levels. But for others on the right end of the spectrum, something simply had to be done about out-of-control pollution that made it unhealthy to breathe the air, drink the water, or live downstream from polluting industries.[2]

The backlash began almost as soon as the various environmental agencies and laws became established, and continued under the influence of both political parties. In the late 1970s Jimmy Carter established a Regulatory Council, aimed at "streamlining" federal regulations at the behest of affected parties. But it was the administration of Ronald Reagan that first attempted to dismantle environmental regulations. His EPA administrator became notorious for backroom deals with industry officials and ultimately resigned, facing charges of contempt of Congress. Reagan's Interior Secretary, the notorious James Watt, sought a massive transfer of federal lands into the control of private interests.

By the time the elder George Bush took office in 1988, the reaction to Reagan's anti-environmental excesses had nearly reached a fever pitch. Concern for the environment was at a long-time high; the annual budget of the ten largest U.S. environmental groups had increased more than 50-fold during the 1980s, from less than \$10 million to \$514 million.[3] Pollsters reported that Americans by large margins supported more environmental protection, even if it meant higher taxes or local job losses.[4] By 1990, as environmentalists were gathering to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the first Earth Day, a new kind of environmental politics was emerging from America's boardrooms, an overtly corporate environmentalism that extolled the virtues of the capitalist "free market" and suggested that adjustments in personal lifestyles through "green" consumerism were a better way to curtail pollution and further environmental

Brian Tokar *is an activist and author, director of the Institute for Social Ecology, and a lecturer in Environmental Studies at the University of Vermont. He is the author of* The Green Alternative, Earth for Sale, and Toward Climate Justice*, edited two books on the politics of biotechnology,* Redesigning Life? *and* Gene Traders*, and co-edited the recent collection,* Agriculture and Food in Crisis: Conflict, Resistance and Renewal *(with Fred Magdoff).*

This article is an expanded and revised version of remarks made at the Left Forum in New York City in June 2013.

goals while simultaneously increasing profits. If this seems familiar, it is because these same approaches continue to shape today's environmental policy discussions.

Early "free market" interpretations of environmentalism were advanced by corporate executives such as DuPont CEO Edgar Wollard and Jim Rogers of Duke Power, as well as neoliberal economists such as Julian Simon, who advised the right-libertarian Cato Institute. Paraphrasing Simon, Terry Anderson of Stanford's Hoover Institution described "free market environmentalism" as a way to show how "human ingenuity stimulated by market forces finds ways to cope with natural resource constraints."[5] He continued:

> In general, free market environmentalism emphasizes the positive incentives associated with prices, profits and entrepreneurship, as opposed to political environmentalism, which emphasizes negative incentives associated with regulation and taxes.[6]

Bush, Senior's environmental agenda was crafted by a team headed by Harvard economist Robert Stavins, who directed a think-tank called Project 88 with the goal of proposing new environmental initiatives that featured market incentives as a supplement to regulation. Project 88 joined environmentalists, academics, and government officials with representatives of Chevron, Monsanto, ARCO, and other major corporations, and its signature policy accomplishment was the 1990 overhaul of the Clean Air Act, a measure that introduced into U.S. law for the very first time the practice of allowing companies to buy and sell the "right" to pollute.[7]

The issue of the day was acid rain, largely caused by emissions of sulfur dioxide from Midwestern power plants that drift eastward and create conditions that render soils, rivers, and lakes too acidic to sustain life. Bush's Clean Air Act amendments allowed companies that reduced emissions of sulfur dioxide at one facility to receive credits redeemable against higher emissions elsewhere. Those credits could be sold at a profit to other companies that were out of compliance with emissions standards or wished to build new power plants. It was the first attempt to introduce emissions trading at the national level, the first to establish allowances that could be traded freely as a commodity, and the first time this approach was codified into law as the centerpiece of a major regulatory program.

> While the prospects for meaningful climate legislation have faded for now, market-oriented approaches continue to thrive, both in the corporate world as well as in more progressive circles.

To this day, market enthusiasts extol the EPA's acid rain program as a successful example of how emissions trading can help lower the costs of environmental compliance. But in practice, it demonstrated some predictable features of an essentially artificial new commodity market, including overwhelming dominance by major players and distorting trade-offs between market behavior and regulatory compliance. In the end it confirmed that regulation remains a far more efficient means of achieving environmental goals. State utility regulators, in this instance, played a far more crucial role in the successes of the acid rain program than the permit trading system, as did unrelated incentives that reduced the cost of low-sulfur coal. Several European countries achieved much faster reductions in sulfur emissions without a trading program. But for the program's advocates, most notably Fred Krupp, the entreprenurial and adamantly pro-business executive director of the Environmental Defense Fund, its main accomplishment was to set the stage for a far more ambitious trading program: a system of global, tradable allowances for emissions of greenhouse gases that eventually became enshrined in the UN's Kyoto Protocol.[8]

Origins of Emissions Trading

When then-Vice President Al Gore addressed the United Nations climate conference in Kyoto in 1997, he proposed that the U.S. would sign on to a new agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under two conditions: that the mandated reductions be roughly half of those originally proposed, and that they be implemented through the market-based trading of emissions allowances among various companies and between countries. Under what came to be known as the "cap-and-trade" model, companies that fail to meet their quota for emission reductions can readily purchase the difference from another permit holder that reduced its emissions faster, or invest in nominally emissions-reducing projects overseas. While the U.S. never adopted the Protocol, the rest of the world has had to live with the consequences of Gore's intervention in Kyoto, which created what journalist George Monbiot has aptly termed "an exuberant market in fake emissions cuts."[9] The European Union's Emissions Trading System, for example, has resulted in huge new subsidies for polluting corporations, with only modest reductions in emissions and a market price that now hovers in the range of just 2-3 euros per ton of carbon dioxide.[10]

An attempt to introduce carbon trading into U.S. law during 2009-10 largely fell victim to right-wing tax-phobia. Ironically, those opposed to any form of climate legislation chose to depict this market-oriented alternative as simply another variant of a carbon tax—precisely the approach that many economists view as more likely to achieve genuine reductions, but was dismissed by pundits as politically unfeasible. Many aspects of the proposed U.S. trading scheme contributed to its demise, as we will see, including increasing skepticism on the part of many environmentalists. But first, it is necessary to examine the intellectual roots of this approach.

The theoretical origins of carbon trading go back to the early 1960s, when corporate managers were just beginning to consider the consequences of pollution and resource depletion. Since the work of Arthur Pigou at the University of Cambridge in the 1920s, economists were aware of environmental pollution as an economic "externality" that could be addressed through a variety of taxes and fees. Chicago School economist Ronald Coase published a paper in 1960 that directly challenged this view and instead suggested a direct equivalence between the harm caused by pollution and the loss of business that could result from regulating pollution. "The right to do something which has a harmful effect," argued Coase, "is also a factor of production."[11] He proposed that measures to regulate production be evaluated on par with the value of the market transactions that those regulations aim to alter, arguing that the market should always determine the optimal allocation of resources.

The Canadian economist J.H. Dales, widely acknowledged as the founder of pollution trading, took the discussion two steps further. On one hand, he reinforced the Pigovian view that charging for pollution via a disposal fee or tax is more efficient than either regulation or subsidizing alternative technologies. But then, as an extension of this argument, Dales proposed a "market in pollution rights" as an administratively simpler and less costly means of implementing pollution charges. "The pollution rights scheme, it seems clear, would require far less policing than any of the others we have discussed," Dales suggested—a proposition strikingly at odds with the world's experience since Kyoto.[12] In 1972, California Institute of Technology economist David Montgomery presented a detailed mathematical model, purporting to show that a market in licenses to pollute indeed reaches a point of equilibrium at which desired levels of environmental quality are achieved at the lowest possible cost.[13]

By the mid-1970s, the new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was actively experimenting with pollution trading, initially through brokered deals where the agency would allow companies to offset pollution from new industrial facilities by reducing existing emissions elsewhere or negotiating with another company to do so. But it appears that the real breakthrough was a 1979 *Harvard Law Review* article by Stephen Breyer, now considered the dean of the liberal wing of the U.S. Supreme Court. Embracing the view of the most adamant free-marketeers, Breyer proposed that regulation is only appropriate insofar as it helps replicate the market conditions of a "hypothetically competitive world." Addressing a range of problems from pollution control to airline regulation, Breyer introduced a broader array of policymakers to the concept of "marketable rights to pollute," as a feasible substitute for regulation.[14]

By the mid-1980s, the well-known Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) was in the midst of an identity crisis. Competitors such as Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club's legal fund (now Earth Justice) were proving more successful in the area of environmental litigation, where EDF had also been a pioneer. Economists on the staff of EDF began to take the reins, and recruited Fred Krupp, the organization's newly appointed executive director, to their side.[15] Krupp's opening salvo was a 1986 op-ed in the *Wall St. Journal* advocating a solutions-oriented "third wave" of environmentalism.

Before long, EDF was working closely with corporations from 3M to McDonald's to help reform some of their most wasteful practices, and proposing market substitutes for regulation in areas from air pollution and fisheries preservation to federal mining and grazing policies.[16] These were all pitched as possible extensions of the "success" of the acid rain program. During the Clinton years, EDF supported the environmental side agreements to NAFTA and proposed a cost-benefit approach to endangered species listings. In 2006, they were the main initiator of an alliance, the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP) that joined environmental groups with some of the largest, most polluting corporations in an attempt to influence federal climate policy.[17]

Trading Carbon

The limitations of the EPA's acid rain program didn't stop EDF's senior economist, Daniel Dudek, from proposing early on that the limited trading of acid rain emissions in the U.S. was an appropriate "scale model" for a far more ambitious plan to trade global emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.[18] Al Gore endorsed the idea in his best-selling 1992 book, *Earth in the Balance*, and Richard Sandor, then the director of the Chicago Board of Trade, North America's largest commodities market, co-authored a study for the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) that endorsed international emissions trading.[19] Sandor went on to found the now-defunct Chicago Climate Exchange, which at its peak of activity engaged nearly 400 international companies and public agencies in a wholly voluntary U.S. carbon market. Neoliberal economists like Sandor, Stavins, and Dudek all significantly shaped the eventual framework for Kyoto's carbon reductions to be implemented through emissions trading and offsets.

Ever since Kyoto, carbon offsets—mainly overseas purchases of anticipated future emissions reductions—have become a central element of the "market" approach to global warming. Larry Lohmann of the UK's CornerHouse research group has demonstrated in detail how such efforts to drive investments in nominally emissions-reducing projects in other parts of the world have been plagued by a virtual tsunami of unintended consequences. For example carbon offsets have subsidized the conversion of native forests into monoculture tree plantations, and lengthened the lifespan of polluting industrial facilities and toxic landfills in Asia and Africa in exchange for only incremental changes in their operations.[20]

Offsets often perpetuate the very inequalities that stand in the way of a more just and sustainable world. A 2007 German study of UN-approved carbon offset projects reported that at least 40 percent, and as many as 86 percent, of all offset-funded projects would likely have been carried out anyway, a challenge to the claim of "additionality" that is supposed to determine which projects are eligible for certified offset credits.[21] Even if they do occasionally support beneficial projects, carbon offsets allow corporations to postpone investments in necessary emissions reductions at home, and ultimately represent a gaping hole in any mandated "cap" in carbon dioxide emissions. They are a means for polluting industries to continue business as usual while contributing, marginally at best, to overall emissions reductions.

In 2007 USCAP, the EDF-initiated alliance of corporate-friendly environmental groups with corporations such as Alcoa, BP, Dow and DuPont, Duke Energy, and the "big three" U.S. automakers, began their campaign to shape the Obama administration's climate policies. The group's core principles became central features of the climate bill that passed the U.S. House two years later: an emphasis on long-range vs. near-term goals; trading of emissions allowances; free distribution of allowances to polluting corporations; and a generous offset provision allowing companies to defer domestic emissions reductions well into the future.[22]

By the time the House passed its cap-and-trade climate bill in June of 2009, it contained billions of dollars in special-interest favors, prohibited the EPA from using the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, and would have allowed companies to meet their obligations to reduce carbon pollution entirely through the purchase of offsets for at least 20 years.[23] The version of the bill that eventually died in the Senate, initially developed by Senators John Kerry, Joe Lieberman, and Lindsey Graham, featured even more blatant giveaways to the oil, coal, and nuclear industries.[24] An in-depth study of the entire debacle by Harvard sociologist Theda Skocpol correctly placed much of the blame for the demise of the climate bills on the entire USCAP approach, which ultimately led to a bill that hardly anyone could enthusiastically support.[25]

While the prospects for meaningful climate legislation in the U.S. have faded for now, market-oriented approaches to the environment continue to thrive, both in the corporate world as well as in more progressive circles. In the 1990s, green business pioneer Paul Hawken likened businesses to living organisms and embraced Pigovian taxes as a "pathway to innovation."[26] He suggested that the proper mix of pollution taxes, new technologies, and improved measures of economic well-being could help make business a real force for social and environmental progress. Hawken himself has since become more critical of the market, placing his hopes instead on a new constellation of social and environmental movements.[27] But many others still follow in his original footsteps, arguing that socially responsible investing and "triple bottom lines" (monetary, social, and environmental) can sufficiently transform the business world. Environmental economists have come up with far more sophisticated measures of social and environmental costs and benefits, seeking to substitute more nuanced measures of "genuine progress" for conventional GDP calculations.

All these approaches, however, serve to obscure the inherently anti-ecological character of capitalism. A system that concentrates political and economic power in the hands of those who pursue the accumulation of capital without restraint is going to continue to demand expansion and growth, however skilled we may become at measuring our ecological footprint. The imperative to grow and accumulate in turn redoubles the economy's impacts on the earth's threatened ecosystems. While environmentalists continue to work toward feasible near-term solutions to pollution, biodiversity loss, and the destabilization of the climate, it is also essential to look forward toward a genuinely ecological and democratic alternative both in economics and politics.

NOTES

1. Gary Bryner, "Failure and opportunity: Environmental groups in U.S. climate change policy," *Environmental Politics* Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 2008), 319-336.

2. The origins of U.S. environmental laws and shifting politics of regulation are described in Brian Tokar, *Earth for Sale: Reclaiming Ecology in the Age of Corporate Greenwash* (Boston: South End Press, 1997), 55-71.

3. Mark Dowie, *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 41.

4. Richard Berke, "Oratory of Environmentalism Becomes the Sound of Politics," *New York Times*, April 17, 1990.

5. T. L. Anderson and D. R. Leal, *Free Market Environmentalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 3.

6. Anderson and Leal, 4.

7. *Project 88: Harnessing Market Forces to Protect Our Environment*, Washington, DC (1988). For a fuller account for the emergence and consequences of the Clean Air Act amendments, see Tokar, *Earth for Sale*, 35-41.

8. That this was an explicit goal of the acid rain program is demonstrated by trading advocate and *Business Week* deputy editor Eric Pooley in *The Climate War: True Believers, Power Brokers, and the Fight to Save the Earth* (New York: Hyperion, 2010), 77-8. For an outline of the views of market advocates in the 1990s, see Tokar, *Earth for Sale*, 41-5.

9. George Monbiot, "We've Been Suckered Again by the U.S. So Far the Bali Deal is Worse than Kyoto," *The Guardian*, December 17, 2007.

10. Patrick Bond, "Carbon trading nearly died in Europe this week," January 26, 2013 (via email). For background, see Joshua Chaffin "Emissions trading: Cheap and dirty," *Financial Times*, February 13, 2012.

11. R.H. Coase, "The Problem of Social Cost," *Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol. 3 (1960), 44.

12. J.H. Dales, *Pollution, Property & Prices* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 97.

13. W. David Montgomery, "Markets in Licenses and Efficient Pollution Control Programs," *Journal of Economic Theory*, Vol. 5 (1972), 395–418.

14. Stephen Breyer, "Analyzing Regulatory Failure, Mismatches, Less Restrictive Alternatives and Reform," *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (1979), 547–609.

15. The story of Krupp's recruitment to the ranks of market enthusiasts is recounted in Pooley, *The Climate War*, 62-71.

16. Frederic D. Krupp, "New Environmentalism Factors In Economic Needs," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 20, 1986.

17. On EDF's increasingly corporate-friendly outlook, see Tokar, *Earth for Sale* and Pooley, *The Climate War*.

18. Daniel Dudek, "Creating Self-Financing Environmental Markets," *Environmental Finance*, Winter 1991-2, 512.

19. Cited in T. Gilbertson and O. Reyes, *Carbon Trading: How it works and why it fails* (Uppsala: Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 2009) 22.

20. Larry Lohmann, *Carbon Trading: A Critical Conversation on Climate Change, Privatization and Power* (Uppsala: Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, 2006).

21. Lambert Schneider, "Is the CDM fulfilling its environmental and sustainable development objectives? An evaluation of the CDM and options for improvement" (Berlin: Öko-Institut, 2007).

22. For example, "Summary Overview: USCAP Blueprint for Legislative Action," accessed from www.us-caorg/blueprint, January 16, 2009.

23. These provisions are detailed in Brian Tokar, *Toward Climate Justice: Perspectives on the Climate Crisis and Social Change* (Porsgrunn, Norway: New Compass, 2010), 36-44.

24. For an account of the U.S. Senate negotiations on the climate bill, see Ryan Lizza, "As the World Burns: How the Senate and the White House missed their best chance to deal with climate change," *New Yorker*, October 11, 2010.

25. Theda Skocpol, "Naming the Problem: What It Will Take to Counter Extremism and Engage Americans in the Fight against Global Warming" (Cambridge: Harvard University, January 2013).

26. Paul Hawken, *The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability* (New York: Harper Business, 1993), 83.

27. Paul Hawken, *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement In the World Came Into Being and No One Saw it Coming* (Viking Press, New York, 2007).

Ecosocialism: Putting on the Brakes Before Going Over the Cliff

Michael Löwy

Ecosocialism is an attempt to provide a radical, civilizational alternative to capitalism, rooted in the basic arguments of the ecological movement, and in the Marxist critique of political economy. It opposes to capitalism's *destructive progress* (Marx) an economic policy founded on non-monetary and extra-economic criteria: social needs and ecological equilibrium. This dialectical synthesis, attempted by a broad spectrum of authors, from James O'Connor to Joel Kovel and John Bellamy Foster, and from André Gorz (in his early writings) to Elmar Altvater, is at the same time a critique of "market ecology," which does not challenge the capitalist system, as well as of "productivist socialism," which ignores the issue of natural limits.

Marx and Engels themselves were not unaware of the environmental-destructive consequences of the capitalist mode of production: there are several passages in *Capital* and other writings that point to this understanding.[1] Moreover, they believed that the aim of socialism was not to produce more and more commodities, but to give human beings free time to fully develop their potentialities. They have little in common with "productivism," i.e. with the idea that the unlimited expansion of production is an aim in itself.

However, there are some passages in their writings which seem to suggest that socialism will permit the development of productive forces beyond the limits imposed on them by the capitalist system. According to this approach, the socialist transformation concerns only the capitalist relations of production, which have become an obstacle—"chains" is the term often used—to the free development of the existing productive forces; socialism would mean above all the *social appropriation* of these productive capacities, putting them at the service of the workers. To quote a passage from *Anti-Dühring*, a canonical work for many generations of Marxists, under socialism "society takes possession openly and without detours of the productive forces that have become too large" for the existing system.[2]

The experience of the Soviet Union illustrates the problems that result from a collectivist appropriation of the capitalist productive apparatus: from the beginning, the thesis of the socialization of the existing productive forces predominated. It is true that during the first years after the October Revolution an ecological current was able to develop, and certain (limited) measures to protect the environment were taken by the Soviet authorities. However, with the process of Stalinist bureaucratization, the productivist tendencies, both in industry and agriculture, were imposed with totalitarian methods, while the ecologists were marginalized or eliminated. The catastrophe of Chernobyl is an extreme example of the disastrous consequences of this imitation of Western productive technologies. A change in the forms of property that is not accompanied by democratic manage-

---

Michael Löwy *was born in Brazil and lives in Paris. He is the Emeritus Research Director of the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). His most recent book is* On Changing the World. Essays in Political Philosophy from Karl Marx to Walter Benjamin *published by Haymarket Press in 2012.*

ment and a reorganization of the productive system can only lead to a dead end.

Marxists can take their inspiration from Marx' remarks on the Paris Commune: workers cannot take possession of the capitalist state apparatus and put it to function at their service. They have to "break it" and replace it by a radically different, democratic, and non-statist form of political power.

The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the productive apparatus; by its nature, its structure, it is not neutral, but at the service of capital accumulation and the unlimited expansion of the market. It is in contradiction with the need to protect the environment and the health of the population. One must therefore "revolutionize" it through a process of radical transformation. This may mean, for certain branches of production, to discontinue them altogether: for instance, nuclear plants, certain methods of industrial fishing (already responsible for the extermination of several species in the seas), the destructive logging of tropical forests, and so on—the list is very long! In any case the productive forces, and not only the relations of production, have to be deeply changed to begin with, by a revolution in the energy system, with the replacement of the present sources—essentially fossil fuels—responsible for the pollution and poisoning of the environment, by renewable ones: water, wind, and sun. Of course, many scientific and technological achievements of modernity are precious, but the whole productive system must be transformed, and this can be done only by ecosocialist methods, i.e. through a democratic planning of the economy that takes into account the preservation of the ecological equilibrium.

Society itself, and not a small oligarchy of property-owners—nor an elite of techno-bureaucrats—will be able to choose, democratically, which productive lines are to be privileged, and how much of the natural and social resources are to be invested in education, health, or culture. The prices of goods themselves would not be left to the "laws of supply and demand" but, to some extent, determined according to social and political options, as well as ecological criteria, leading to taxes on certain products and subsidized prices for others. Ideally, as the transition to socialism moves forward, more and more products and services would be distributed free of charge, according to the will of the citizens. Far from being by nature "despotic," planning is the exercise by a whole society of its freedom: the freedom to make decisions. Democratic planning also means liberation from the alienated and reified "economic laws" of the capitalist system that determined the individuals' lives and deaths and enclosed them in an economic "iron cage" (Max Weber). Planning and the reduction of labor time are the two decisive steps of humanity towards what Marx called "the kingdom of freedom." A significant increase in free time is in fact a condition for the democratic participation of working people in democratic discussion and management of the economy and of society.

> The socialist and ecological utopia is only an objective possibility, not the inevitable result of the contradictions of capitalism or of the "iron laws of history."

While under capitalism use-value is only a means—often a trick—at the service of exchange-value and profit—which explains, by the way, why so many products in the present society are substantially useless—in a planned socialist economy the use-value is the only criterion for the production of goods and services, with far reaching economic, social, and ecological consequences. As Joel Kovel observed, "The enhancement of use-values and the corresponding restructuring of needs becomes now the social regulator of technology rather than, as under capital, the conversion of time into surplus value and money."[3] Ecosocialist planning is based on the principle of a democratic and pluralist debate on all the levels where decisions are to be taken: different propositions are submitted to the concerned people by parties, platforms, or any other political movement, and delegates elected accordingly. Representative democracy, however, must be completed—and corrected—by direct democracy where people directly choose—at the local, national and, later, global level—between major social and ecological options.

What guarantee is there that the people will make the correct ecological choices, even at the price of giving up some of their habits of consumption? There is no such "guarantee," other than the wager on the rationality of democratic decisions, once the power of commodity fetishism is broken. Of course, with popular choices, errors will be committed, but who believes that the experts themselves do not make errors? One cannot imagine the establishment of such a new society without the majority of the population having achieved—through their struggles, their self-education, and their social experience—a high level of socialist and ecological consciousness, and this makes it reasonable to suppose that errors—including decisions that are inconsistent with environmental needs—will be corrected. In any case, are not the proposed alternatives—the blind market or an ecological dictatorship of "experts"—much more dangerous than the democratic process with all its contradictions?

The passage from capitalist "destructive progress" to ecosocialism is an historical process, a permanent revolutionary transformation of society, culture, and mentalities. This transition would lead not only to a new mode of production and an egalitarian and democratic society, but also to an alternative *mode of life*, a new ecosocialist *civilization*, beyond the reign of money, beyond consumption habits artificially produced by advertising, and beyond the unlimited production of commodities that are useless or harmful to the environment. It is important to emphasize that such a process cannot begin without a revolutionary transformation of social and political structures, and the active support by the vast majority of the population of an ecosocialist program. The development of socialist consciousness and ecological awareness is a process where the decisive factor is peoples' own collective experience of struggle, from local and partial confrontations to the radical change of society as a whole.

This does not mean that conflicts will not arise, particularly during the transitional process, between the requirements of protecting the environment and social needs, between the ecological imperatives and the necessity of developing basic infra-structures, particularly in the poor countries, between popular consumer habits and the scarcity of resources. A classless society is not a society without contradictions and conflicts! These are inevitable: it will be the task of democratic planning in an ecosocialist perspective, liberated from the imperatives of capital and profit-making, to solve them, through a pluralist and open discussion, leading to decision-making by society itself. Such a grassroots and participative democracy is the only way, not to avoid errors, but to permit the self-correction by the social collectivity of its own mistakes. Is this Utopia? In its etymological sense—"something that exists nowhere"—certainly. But are not utopias, i.e. visions of an alternative future, wish-images of a different society, a necessary feature of any movement that wants to challenge the established order? As Daniel Singer explained in his literary and political testament, *Whose Millenium?*, in a powerful chapter entitled "Realistic Utopia,"

> If the establishment now looks so solid, despite the circumstances, and if the labor movement or the broader left are so crippled, so paralyzed, it is because of the failure to offer a radical al-

> ternative. (…) The basic principle of the game is that you question neither the fundamentals of the argument nor the foundations of society. Only a global alternative, breaking with these rules of resignation and surrender, can give the movement of emancipation genuine scope.[4]

The socialist and ecological utopia is only an objective possibility, not the inevitable result of the contradictions of capitalism or of the "iron laws of history." One cannot predict the future, except in conditional terms: in the absence of an ecosocialist transformation, of a radical change in the civilizational paradigm, the logic of capitalism will lead the planet to dramatic ecological disasters, threatening the health and the life of billions of human beings, and perhaps even the survival of our species.

To dream, and to struggle, for a new civilization does not mean that one does not fight for concrete and urgent reforms. Without any illusions in a "clean capitalism," one must try to win time and to impose on the powers-that-be some elementary changes: the banning of the HCFCs (hydrochlorofluorocarbons) that are destroying the ozone layer, a general moratorium on genetically modified organisms, a drastic reduction in the emission of the greenhouse gases, the development of public transportation, the taxation of polluting cars, the progressive replacement of trucks by trains, a severe regulation of the fishing industry, as well as of the use of pesticides and chemicals in the agro-industrial production. These urgent eco-social demands can lead to a process of radicalization on the condition that one does not accept to limit one's aims according to the requirements of "the [capitalist] market" or of "competition." According to the logic of what Marxists call "a transitional program," each small victory, each partial advance can immediately lead to a higher demand, to a more radical aim. These, and similar issues, are at the heart of the agenda of the Global Justice movement and the World Social Forums that have permitted the convergence of social and environmental movements in a common struggle against the system. The another-world-is-possible movement is without a doubt the most important phenomenon of anti-systemic resistance of the beginning of the twenty-first century. One could say that this movement was born with the "Battle of Seattle" that took place at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999. The most striking aspect of this movement was the surprising convergence between turtles and Teamsters, that is, ecologists dressed as turtles and the truck drivers and dock workers of the trucking industry. The ecological issue was present then at the beginning and at the center of the mobilizations against neo-liberal capitalist globalization. The movement's slogan was "the world is not a commodity," meaning, obviously, that the air, the water, the earth, in a word, the natural environment which has increasingly been subject to capital's stranglehold. One can say that the another-world-is-possible movement is made up of three elements: 1) a radical protest against the existing order of things and its sinister institutions: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and the G-8 group; 2) a number of concrete measures, of proposals that could be immediately implemented: a tax on finance capital, the suppression of the debt of the developing countries, an end to imperialist wars; 3) the utopia of "another possible world" founded on common values such as freedom, participatory democracy, social justice, the defense of the environment.

The ecological dimension is present in each of these three moments: it inspires both the revolt against a system that has led humanity to a tragic impasse and a collection of specific proposals—monitoring of genetically modified organisms, development of collective transportation—together with the utopia of a society living in harmony with the ecosystems, as sketched out in the documents of the movement.

This doesn't mean that there are not

contradictions resulting from the resistance of some sections of the labor union movement to ecological demands that are perceived as a threat to jobs as well as the limited nature and lack of social awareness of some ecological organizations. But one of the most positive features of the Social Forums, and of the another-world-is-possible movement as a whole, is the possibility of meetings, debate, dialogue, and of mutual education among the movements.

It is important to emphasize that the presence of ecology in the broader movements is not limited to ecological organizations—Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund, among others. It becomes more and more a dimension to be taken into account—in action and reflection—in the different social movements of peasants, of the indigenous, of feminists, and of the religious (the Theology of Liberation).

A striking example of this "organic" integration of ecological questions by other social movements is the Movement of the Landless (MST) in Brazil, part of the Via Campesina network, both of which have been pillars of the World Social Movement and the another-world-is-possible movement. Since it was founded the MST has been hostile to capitalism and to its rural expression, agro-business; it has increasingly integrated an ecological dimension into its fight for a radical agrarian reform and for another model of agriculture. Since the twentieth anniversary celebration of the movement in Río de Janeiro (2005) the document of the organizers stated: our dream is "an egalitarian world that socializes the material and cultural wealth," a new path for society "founded on equality between human beings and ecological principles." This translates into action by the MST against the GMOs—action often on the margins of legality—which is at the same time a fight against the attempt of the multinationals such as Monsanto and Syngenta to completely control seeds and thus dominate farmers and peasants, as well as a struggle against the pollution and uncontrollable contamination of their fields.

So, thanks to a "savage" occupation, in 2006 the MST won the expropriation of a transgenic corn and soy field grown from Syngenta Seeds in the State of Paraná which has since become the peasant camp "Free Land." We should also mention their confrontations with multinational paper pulp mills that have multiplied, affecting hundreds of thousands of acres turning them into veritable "green deserts" comprised of forests of eucalyptus trees that suck up all sources of water and destroy biodiversity. For the MST leaders and activists, these various fights are inseparable from a radical, anti-capitalist perspective.

Peasant and indigenous movements of Latin America are at the center of the struggle for the environment. This is true not only through their local actions in defense of rivers or forests against petroleum and mining multinationals, but also in that they propose an alternative way of life to that of neo-liberal globalized capitalism. Indigenous peoples in particular may be the ones undertaking these struggles, but they quite often do so in alliance with landless peasants, ecologists, socialists, and Christian base communities, with support from unions, left parties, the Pastoral Land Commission, and the Indigenous Pastoral Ministry. The dynamics of capital require the transformation of all commonly held goods into commodities, which sooner or later leads to destruction of the environment. The petroleum zones of Latin America, abandoned by the multinationals after years of exploitation, are poisoned and destroyed, leaving behind a dismal legacy of illness among the inhabitants. It is thus completely understandable that the populations that live in the most direct contact with the environment are the first victims of this ecocide and attempt to oppose the destructive expansion of capital, sometimes successfully.

Resistance by indigenous peoples, then, has very concrete and immediate motivations—to save their forests or water resources—in their battle for survival. However, it also corresponds to a deep antagonism between the culture, the way of life, the spirituality and the values of these communities, and the "spirit of capitalism" as Max Weber defined it: the subjection of all activity to profit calculations, profitability as sole criterion and the quantification and reification, the *Versachlichung*, of all social relations. There is a sort of "negative affinity" between indigenous ethics and the spirit of capitalism—the converse of the elective affinity between the Protestant ethic and capitalism—, that is, a profound socio-cultural opposition. Certainly, there are indigenous or *metis* communities that adapt to the system and try to gain from it. Further, indigenous struggles involve extremely complex processes, including identity recomposition, transcoding of discourses, and political instrumentalizations, all of which deserve to be closely studied. Yet we can clearly see that a continuous series of conflicts characterizes the relations between indigenous populations and modern capitalist agricultural or mining corporations. This conflict has a long history. It is admirably described in one of the Mexican novels of the anarchist writer B. Traven, *The White Rose* (1929) which narrates how a large North American oil company seized the lands of an indigenous community after having murdered its leader.[5] The conflict, however, has intensified during the last few decades because of both the intensity and extensiveness of capital's exploitation of the environment, and also because of the rise of the another-world-is-possible movement—which took on this struggle—and the indigenous movements of the continent.

Such struggles around concrete issues are important, not only because partial victories are welcome in themselves, but also because they contribute to raising ecological and socialist consciousness, and because they promote activity and self-organization from below: both are decisive and necessary pre-conditions for a radical, i.e. revolutionary, transformation of the world.

These, and similar issues, are at the heart of the agenda of the Global Justice movement and the World Social Forums that since Seattle 1999 have permitted the convergence of social and environmental movements in a common struggle against the system.

There is no reason for optimism: the entrenched ruling elites of the system are incredibly powerful, and the forces of radical opposition are still small. But they are the only hope that the catastrophic course of capitalist "growth" will be halted. Walter Benjamin defined revolutions as being not the locomotive of history, but rather humanity reaching for the emergency brake on the train before it goes over into the abyss…

NOTES

1. See John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology. Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000).

2. F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Paris, Ed. Sociales, 1950), 318.

3. Joel Kovel, *Enemy of Nature* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2002), 215.

4. Daniel Singer, *Whose Millennium? Theirs or Ours?* (New York:, Monthly Review Press, 1999) 259-260.

5. B. Traven, *The White Rose* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill, 1979).

An Open Letter to the Climate Justice Movement

ROBIN HAHNEL

November 4, 2013

Dear fellow fighters in
the Climate Justice Movement:

I AM A LONG-TIME ADVOCATE of both climate justice and fundamental system change. I am writing to you with whom I share these central political commitments because I believe you are making a serious strategic mistake by categorically rejecting international carbon trading.

Recently your organization, together with over sixty other environmental justice organizations, sent a letter to the president of the AFL-CIO "imploring labor to join us in the fight against climate change," explaining what labor must do differently if it expects to advance its cause. You obviously understand why we must sometimes reach out with advice to allies in struggle who we believe are making serious mistakes. That is the spirit in which I write you this letter.

I urge your organization to join together with much larger environmental organizations which may not endorse "system change" and declare your support for the only international program with any chance of averting catastrophic climate change in an equitable way before it is too late: *Serious mandatory caps on national emissions set according to differential responsibility and capability accompanied by international carbon trading*. If climate justice organizations continue to categorically dismiss cap-and-trade policies and carbon markets as "false solutions," I am afraid they will further alienate those joining our desperate fight to prevent climate change in the here and now.[1]

Denouncing cap and trade and carbon markets as "false solutions" has become ubiquitous divide in the climate justice movement. It was featured in the Durban Declaration in 2004, the Copenhagen Klimaforum09 Declaration in 2009, and the Cochabamba Peoples' Agreement on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Nature in 2010. Ill-informed denunciations of cap and trade and carbon markets are featured in numerous books and videos by prominent spokespersons for the movement.[2] Just last month Naomi Klein charged that "green groups may be more dangerous than climate change deniers" in an interview published in *Salon Magazine*, and Patrick Bond criticized President Correa of Ecuador and President Morales of Bolivia as "Pink Petro Keynesians" in an interview on the Real News Network.

The sad reality is that the very policies climate justice organizations condemn are the only way in the relevant timeframe to force the advanced economies to bear the burden of necessary emission reductions; they are the only way in the relevant timeframe to secure significant transfers of income from more developed countries to less developed countries; and they are the only way to protect indigenous ways of life in jungle forests. Fortunately the climate justice movement need not change any other part of its message and program in order to correct this tragic mistake and become an important part of broader efforts to avoid climate change. Nuclear

ROBIN HAHNEL *is Professor Emeritus, Department of Economics, American University, Washington DC, robinhahnel@comcast.net.*

power *is* a false solution. Geo-engineering *is* a false solution. Natural gas is *not* a bridge transition fuel. Governments *are* doing nothing—playing Nero's fiddle while greenhouse gas concentrations approach levels that will make climate change unavoidable. Public outrage *is* what is called for. Massive demonstrations and civil disobedience *are* desperately needed to overcome lethargy and catalyze needed political action. And yes, economic "system change"—replacing the capitalist global market system with some form of eco-socialism—*is* the only way to adequately protect the environment in the long run. The climate justice movement has got all these important things right. Unfortunately, by insisting on rejecting carbon trading in any form, the radical wing of the environmental movement is undermining its credibility and treating as enemies those who should be allies.

The Necessity of International Carbon Markets

The conclusion that international carbon markets are necessary seems to me unavoidable. It follows from several incontrovertible facts.

Fact 1, Political reality: While global capitalism must eventually be replaced by eco-socialism if we are to fully protect the environment, this is not going to happen in the next ten years because eco-socialism requires massive political support that cannot be won overnight. It is true that the forces fighting against the fossil fuel industry and its allies have suffered setbacks over the past five years. But the movement to replace capitalism with eco-socialism is weaker still. There is simply no realistic possibility that majoritarian support for global eco-socialism can be won in fewer than ten years.

Fact 2, Scientific reality: Science tells us that we cannot afford to fail to reduce global emissions dramatically over the next decade. A business-as-usual emissions scenario over the next ten years will generate massive damage and run an unacceptable risk of triggering changes that are truly cataclysmic.

Conclusion 1: Facts 1 and 2 together imply that we must reduce global emissions dramatically even while global capitalism persists. There is nothing wrong with calling for system change—which I do at every opportunity. But it is irresponsible to preach that system change alone can prevent catastrophic climate change because, regrettably, system change cannot occur soon enough. *Something effective must be done now even while the global market system persists.*

> International carbon trading dramatically reduces the overall global cost of preventing climate change while forcing the advanced economies to pay for those costs.

Fact 3, The free rider dilemma: Voluntary commitments by national governments to reduce emissions will not work. Theory predicts it and history has proved it: under voluntary reductions the UK, for example, would pay for 100 percent of its own emission reductions but enjoy less than 1 percent of the benefits from its reductions since the UK has less than 1 percent of the world's population. On the other hand, under the Kyoto Protocol, which *required* all developed economies to reduce emissions, while the UK still pays for 100 percent of its own reductions it enjoys the benefits of a global reduction that is 20 times greater than its own reduction. At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 governments of advanced economies all promised to voluntarily reduce emissions significantly. But when governments reconvened in Kyoto five years later not a single one had reduced emissions. In short, without a treaty that sets mandatory reductions on national emissions through mutual agreement we will fail to prevent climate change.

Fact 4, Environmental justice: Unless very different caps are set on national emissions for countries that bear different "responsibilities" for causing the problem and have different "capabilities" for solving the problem, poor developing nations will be treated unfairly.

Fact 5, Cost differentials: Many of the cheapest ways to reduce carbon emissions are to be found in less developed countries.

Conclusion 2: Facts 3 and 4 together imply that for an effective treaty to also be fair it must hold wealthy countries accountable for the bulk of global emissions reductions. Once this is done, fact 5 implies that *international carbon trading dramatically reduces the overall global cost of preventing climate change while forcing the advanced economies to pay for those costs.*

Why? Because sources in wealthy countries with low caps and high reduction costs will find it in their interest to purchase emission reduction credits from sources in poor countries with high caps and low reduction costs. In other words, *carbon trading locates reductions where they are cheapest, largely in poorer countries, but ensures that wealthy countries pay for them.* Unlike Larry Summers' infamous suggestion that it is "efficient" to deposit even more toxic wastes in countries where life expectancy is low, having wealthy countries pay for carbon reductions in poor countries has the additional benefit—since reducing carbon emissions also reduces other pollutants as well—of lowering citizens' of poor countries exposure to toxic wastes.

Why is it important to locate reductions where they are cheapest? If the global cap is low enough to be effective—that is, to reduce global emissions by at least 80 percent by 2050—and if different national caps are set fairly, then carbon trading can cut the overall cost of preventing climate change by as much as 50 percent. This is important for two reasons: it will reduce political resistance in wealthier countries to cutting emissions by enough to avoid disastrous climate change. And it will generate a large flow of payments from sources in wealthy countries to sources in poor countries. Payments for carbon credits from the global North to the global South under a fair and effective treaty would dwarf the size of any climate "reparation payments" Northern governments would ever agree to pay because carbon credits are based on self-interest rather than charity motivated by guilt.

The recent break down in efforts to secure enough money from wealthy countries to pay Ecuador to ban oil exploration in Yasuni National Park is a perfect example of why the "guilt money" strategy will not work. Ecuador was willing to forego an estimated US$22 billion in oil revenues in exchange for a US$3.6 billion payment, but governments of wealthy countries could not even raise half that amount.

Where Does the Climate Justice Movement Go Wrong?

Spokespersons for the climate justice movement and I share basic values. So why do I think they've gotten the carbon trading issue so wrong?

People in the climate justice movement do not like turning nature into a commodity.

And rightly so! This is one reason I have long advocated replacing capitalism with eco-socialism. But there is one thing worse than making nature into a commodity, and that is to allow the most powerful and least socially responsible actors among us to appropriate and abuse nature at will precisely because it belongs to nobody and is there for the taking. And that is exactly what happens to nature in a global market economy. In such an economy the choice is whether to allow those emitting greenhouse gases to continue to do so free of charge, or to charge them for the privilege of doing so. In a market economy failure to charge people for using nature by emitting carbon into the upper atmosphere is tantamount to allowing them to appropriate mother nature as their own private commodity to abuse as they will, free of charge. Until capitalism is replaced by eco-socialism we are far better off putting a price on using nature than allowing the price to be zero by default.

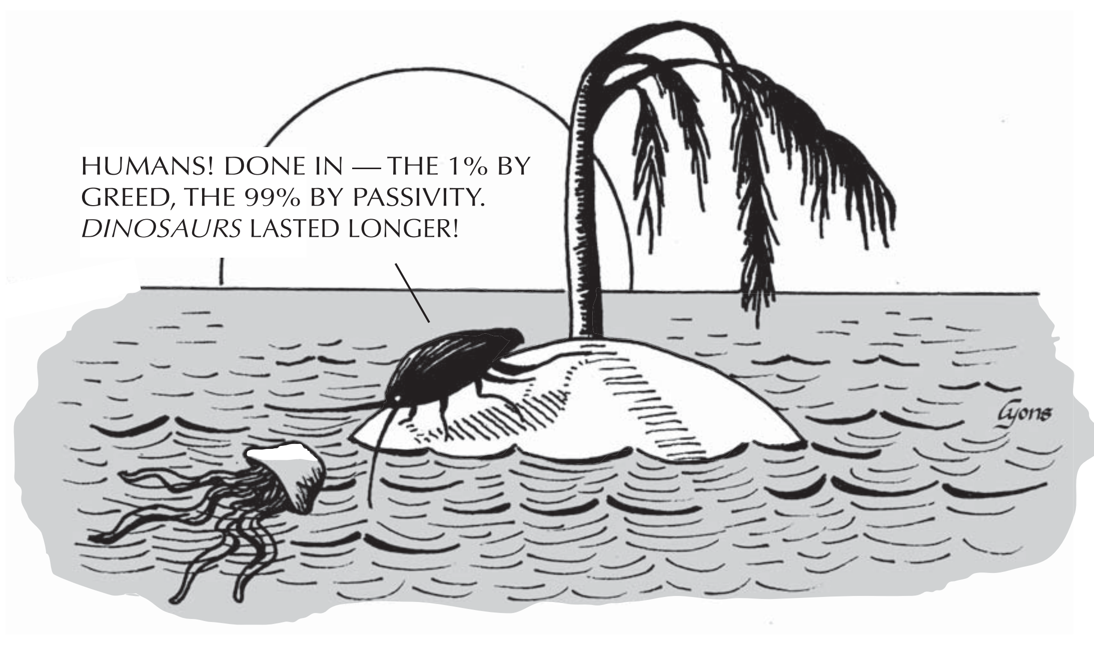
People in the climate justice movement are fearful that Wall Street will take advantage of and destroy the carbon market.

Nobody has been more outspoken in criticism of the financial industry than I have. Nobody has preached louder than I have that free market finance is an accident waiting to happen. But Wall Street greed is not a reason to refrain from creating a carbon market.

There are only two ways to prevent the financial industry from ripping off sizable chunks of economic output while creating conditions that give rise to financial crises. The best way is to replace private with public finance. The only other way to protect the rest of us from Wall Street excesses is to restructure the financial industry and subject it to regulations that are appropriate and competent.

In either case—if we replace private with public finance, or if we subject private finance to effective regulation—we need not fear that carbon allowances will become part of the next toxic financial cocktail. Moreover, if we fail to reform finance in one of these two ways, it is almost certain there will be more financial cocktail crises, whether or not carbon allowances are one of their ingredients. In other words, we cannot prevent future financial crises by refusing to create certified carbon emission reduction credits. Future financial crises can only be prevented by successful financial reform.

However, consider a worst-case scenario. Suppose Wall Street mixes carbon allowances into a terrible, toxic, financial potion, and suppose this new asset bubble does burst with a vengeance. In this case Wall Street would siphon off a big chunk of world product—first by trading in toxic assets that include carbon



THE FUTURE— UNLESS WE PREVENT IT

SYSTEM CHANGE, NOT CLIMATE CHANGE!

allowances as the bubble builds, and then by shifting the cost of the financial cleanup onto the rest of us when the bubble bursts. But this has nothing to do with the number of carbon permits in existence, and therefore nothing to do with how much carbon can be emitted. Moreover, such a financial crisis would not be the fault of the carbon market. This tragedy would be due entirely to the failure to either nationalize the financial sector or subject it to effective regulation. Denying Wall Street access to one new commodity, carbon allowances, will not prevent future crises if the financial industry remains free from effective regulation.

Critics of cap and trade worry that sellers of emission reduction credits will be awarded more credits than they deserve, which will puncture a hole in the cap on global emissions and thereby undermine the effectiveness of the treaty—turning it into a "false solution."

Suppose a source sells credits for 100 metric tons of emissions reductions but in truth does not reduce emissions by a single ton. In other words, suppose a source is somehow certified to sell credits that are entirely "bogus." This is the scenario many in the climate justice movement obsess over. The fact is this cannot reduce global reductions one iota *provided the source selling the bogus credits is located in a country whose national emissions are capped*. This fact is well known among progressive environmental economists who work on the issue of climate change. And since it is a source of great confusion in the climate justice movement I have explained why it is the case at length in articles published in the *Review of Radical Political Economics* and in *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism.*[3] But to make a long story short, the cap on national emissions forces someone else inside the country from which a bogus credit is sold to make up the difference. This is certainly unfair and objectionable. But it does not undermine the effectiveness of the treaty with regard to reaching its global reduction target.

It is perfectly possible to cap emissions in all countries in an equitable way—which should be the principle focus of climate justice organizations since the great danger is that even if we succeed in reducing global emissions sufficiently it will be done unfairly. It would mean, for example, setting a cap for a very poor country like the Republic of the Congo above its current emissions level while setting a cap for the United States considerably below its current emissions. When emissions are not capped for some countries, as was the case under the Kyoto Protocol, corrupt practices can undercut global reductions. But *once all countries are capped fairly, even if bogus credits are sold global reductions cannot be undermined.*

A Five Point Program to Unite Us All

In the next few years when I am marching in the streets and engaging in civil disobedience I will be chanting: "Leave the Oil in the Soil! Leave the Coal in the Hole! Leave the Tar Sand in the Land! Leave the Fracking Shale Gas under the Grass!" But unlike some in the climate justice movement I will not confuse good slogans and chants with a political program to prevent climate change. A program is a set of policies that will achieve these results even while capitalism persists, such as the one outlined below. It is a program that climate justice activists who believe in system change, and climate reformers who may not, should be able to agree on.

1. Let Science Set the Global Emission Cap

Insist that scientists who study the climate—not economists—are the experts best suited to advise us about how much reduction in global net emissions is necessary. Climate scientists have proved to be the best negotiators for an aggressive response to the danger of climate change. The power of their testimony has now moved reductions of 80 percent, or more, by 2050, or sooner, smack into the middle of the bargaining table, and fixed discussion on the necessity of stabilizing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at 350 parts per million, or less.

2. Caps for All Countries

Under Kyoto, trading bogus carbon credits could only puncture holes in the global emissions cap when projects in less developed countries (so-called non-Annex-1 countries) where national emissions were not capped sold bogus emission reduction credits to governments or sources in more developed countries (Annex-1 countries) with national emission caps. The obvious solution to this problem is to cap emissions in all countries—that is, eliminate the distinction between Annex-1 and non-Annex-1 countries in the Kyoto framework altogether.

3. Equitable Caps: Greenhouse Development Rights Framework

One excellent proposal for determining equitable caps for developed and developing countries alike is the Greenhouse Development Rights Framework.[4] The authors have created a practical formula using readily available data to assign differential caps to all countries on a continuum that considers only a country's residents who have enjoyed economic development, combining those residents' "responsibility" and "capacity." Climate justice advocates should be waving copies of the GDRF pamphlet—like others once waved Mao's Little Red Book—when demonstrating in the streets at international climate conferences.

4. Cap Net Emissions

It is extremely important to eliminate perverse incentives to destroy existing forests and provide positive incentives for forest conservation. Even if we do not take other environmental benefits from forest conservation into account, destroying existing forests is very counterproductive simply from the perspective of net carbon emissions. The international treaty should cap national *net* emissions rather than emissions. In that case, governments would have an incentive to discourage activities that increase net emissions, like deforestation, even when followed by replanting. The international treaty need not dictate to governments how they go about this.

While not as exciting as denouncing global capitalism and calling for system change, most in the climate justice movement find nothing concrete to object to in these first four proposals. It is only the last proposal that has proved controversial: once these four improvements in the Kyoto framework are made, countries and sources should be allowed to trade certified emission reduction credits if they wish.

5. International Carbon Markets with a New Sheriff

As already explained, when national net emissions are capped equitably carbon trading (a) lowers the global costs of preventing climate change considerably, thereby reducing political opposition to an effective treaty in wealthy countries, and (b) generates a large flow of payments from the global North to the global South. Moreover, once net emissions are capped in all countries the international treaty organization has nothing at stake with regard to the legitimacy of carbon trading because planned global reductions would be secure even if bogus credits were traded. Furthermore, the governments of all countries would have a powerful incentive to prevent private parties within their borders from selling bogus credits in the international carbon market. If country governments whose net emissions are capped fail to prevent bogus sales, either those governments or their citizens would suffer the adverse consequences of having to cover the shortfall by reducing net emissions or buying more credits than they would have had to otherwise. So not only can the treaty safely permit carbon trading, it can relieve itself of the burden of certifying emission reductions for sale and leave that to national governments.

No doubt governments of poor counties will appreciate all the assistance they can get from the professional staff of an agency of the international climate treaty with expertise in establishing baselines to measure "additionality" and detect "leakage" when certifying credits for sale. But it is national governments that should be put in charge of final approval for projects within their own borders seeking to sell credits in international carbon markets. Any government that simply chose not to certify emission reduction credits for sale would of course be free to do so.

All too many critiques of carbon trading stem in part from confusion about what is easy and what is difficult to measure. It is relatively easy to measure national annual net emissions and count up certified emission reduction credits bought and sold by sources within countries. And this is all that is necessary for the treaty organization to determine if signatories have met, or failed to meet, their treaty obligations. It is far more difficult to measure how much any project reduces net emissions compared to what would have happened otherwise. This means it is sometimes difficult to know how many credits to certify for sale in the international carbon market. The above proposal guarantees that mistakes in certification do not undermine the effectiveness of the treaty, and shifts the difficult task of certification from the treaty organization to national governments since mistakes merely create inequities among their own citizens.

I urge the climate justice movement to rethink its dismissal of cap and trade and carbon markets. These policies are, of course, not ultimate solutions. But they offer us a margin of hope to forestall cataclysmic climate change.

NOTES

1. I have devoted much of my forty-year professional career to writing about the negative consequences of markets and how we can, and should, replace them with a system of participatory planning that is efficient, fair, and environmentally sustainable. I began criticizing markets in *Unorthodox Marxism* published in 1979. My latest book on this subject is *Economic Justice and Democracy: From Competition to Cooperation* published in 2005. More recently I published "The Case Against Markets" in the *Journal of Economic Issues* in 2007, and "Against the Market Economy: Advice to Venezuelan Friends" in *Monthly Review* in 2008. I have also taught environmental economics for decades and published widely on the subject of international climate policy, including *Green Economics: Confronting the Ecological Crisis*, published in 2011.

2. For example: Brian Tokar, *Toward Climate Justice* (2010), Patrick Bond, *Politics of Climate Justice* (2012), and the video *The Story of Cap and Trade* by Annie Leonard.

3. "Left Clouds Over Climate Change Policy," *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (June 2012); "Desperately Seeking Left Unity on Climate Change Policy," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism.* Vol. 23, No. 4 (Dec. 2012); and "Response to Patrick Bond on Climate Policy," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (June 2013).

4. Paul Baer, Tom Athanasiou, and Sivan Kartha, *The Right to Development in a Climate Constrained World: The Greenhouse Development Rights Framework* (Berlin: Heinrich Boll Foundation, 2007).

Economic and Ecological Crisis in Greece

The Global Context and Syriza's Solution

Natassa Romanou

Many misconceptions still exist in the mainstream about the ongoing economic crisis in Southern Europe. First, the crisis is often considered a direct result of the 2008 banking sector collapse in the United States, but it is becoming abundantly clear that it is a by-product, an expected outcome, of the current economic system, capitalism, which relies on continuing growth and competition, profit maximization, power and wealth accumulation by the oligarchy, commodification of public goods and resources, and the voracious exploitation of the environment. In the late 2000s the system reached a serious downturn, a situation that persists in Southern Europe in particular.

A second misconception has to do with the impact of the crisis on our societies. Discourse and response typically focus on the economic impacts alone, where the most immediate emergency is created by rising unemployment, severe wage cuts, and deteriorating conditions and benefits for the working class. Other attributes of this crisis, however, receive less urgent attention. The societal crisis manifests itself with growing, uncontrolled consumerism, which leads to overconsumption of natural resources, but also to the emergence of hyper-nationalism and eventually racism as competition for resources becomes tighter. The political crisis reflects a democratic deficit, when growing public discontent and resistance cause abuse of authority, police brutality, and state repression.

Another major side effect of the crisis, however, is the ecological contingency, the frantic race to extract ever more natural resources (oil and gas, but also gold and other precious metals), using increasingly more dangerous methods such as the extraction of oil from tar sands, the search for deep ocean oil and increased gas drilling, and the development of fracking. Massive land grabs and resource privatizations also lead to increasing environmental degradation. Above all, however, climate change due to greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere appears to be the ultimate triumph of capitalist greed over nature. Human activities such as fossil fuel burning, unsustainable transportation systems, rapacious deforestation driven by overconsumption, unrestrained resource exploitation, and the desire for profit maximization have led to unprecedented levels and rates of global warming that threaten life as we know it on our planet. Capitalism is responsible for climate change and is waging a war against rationalism and science to avoid dealing with it.

The impacts of climate change—perhaps better known as "global warming"—are expected to be huge, particularly in areas such as Southern Europe. Projections show desertification of subtropical zones following significant annual rainfall decreases of 10%–20% and temperature increases of about 3 degrees Celsius. More

Natassa Romanou *is a research scientist at NASA-Goddard Institute for Space Studies at Columbia University specifically interested in carbon cycle science. She has written many scientific papers and is a contributing author to the 2013 Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change Assessment Report. She is an active member of Syriza-New York.*

droughts, water shortages, heat waves, and flash floods will become the norm. Economies, like those of Greece and other coastal countries in Southern Europe, which rely mainly on tourism and fisheries as well as shipping, will be heavily impacted by the projected sea level rise, the changes in the ocean's chemical balances (acidification), and droughts leading to soil erosion and forest fires. Given the magnitude of these impacts, which threaten the survival of the system itself, one would expect that societies would readily address global warming and seek mitigation strategies to combat it.

Climate change is not the first ecological challenge that capitalism ever had to face. Smog-related deterioration of air quality became a serious threat to human health in London, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, as it is in today's Chinese metropolitan and industrial complexes. The stratospheric ozone depletion in the 1970s and 1980s was attributed to the man-made introduction into the atmosphere of chlorofluorocarbons, artificial substances that were used in refrigerants, aerosol sprays, and chemical solvents. Acid rain is a third example of man-made pollution, resulting from emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide during electricity generation from coal, factories, and motor vehicles; it has caused widespread ecological damage.

Unlike global warming, these previous occurrences of more localized climate change were addressed quickly and effectively. Legislation such as the Clean Air Act was designed to restrict airborne particle pollution in the United States and succeeded in doing so through a series of amendments that spanned the period from the 1960s to the 1990s. The Montreal Protocol, a UN treaty that aimed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of substances responsible for ozone depletion, was signed in the late 1980s by numerous countries as well as polluting industries, in what is an example of exceptional international cooperation. With regard to acid rain, several regional treaties and protocols were agreed upon to force the polluting industries (mostly coal-fired power plants) to seek and enforce technical solutions that remove sulfur-containing gases from their emissions.

All these measures, and the international cooperation they required, were achieved because the problems (smog, ozone hole, acid rain) were occurring in real time and were local to the sources of production, endangering business and profits and, coincidentally, the people who lived, worked, and voted in the areas that were polluted. Capitalists were essentially protecting their own businesses by seeking solutions. By contrast, global warming is a more complicated issue. It is a problem created by the greenhouse gases emitted by industrialized countries which are typically northern, developed, and affluent, but it harms most countries in the tropical and subtropical regions (the global South) that make comparatively little contribution to the problem. Moreover, the impacts of global warming, such as desertification, sea level change, water cycle changes, and extreme events such as heat waves, take time to manifest themselves in everyday life, and the most serious impacts are expected in the upcoming decades. There is therefore no local or temporal urgency for the problem to be addressed by those who cause it, primarily the rich countries.

The Greek Reality

As global warming mostly impacts the low-latitude (Global South) regions of the world, Greece, located at the tropical-subtropical boundary, is one of the few industrialized countries that has the most to lose from climate change; it also relies heavily on coal for the production of its electricity. So Greece should be at the forefront of climate change mitigation efforts.

Such efforts have to involve energy solutions. Greece imports about 64 percent of the energy it consumes, while the European average is 46 percent. Furthermore, 91 percent of the energy Greece uses comes from fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas), which are among the most damaging energy sources for the environment, and Greece has higher releases of carbon dioxide per capita (8.4 tons) than any other country in the EU and significantly greater than the EU average (7.2 tons). The current government in Greece, serving the neoliberal directives of the Troika (the IMF, the EU Commission, and the European Central Bank) instead of turning towards renewable energy sources, is planning for more fossil fuel exploitation in the eastern Mediterranean, south of Crete and in the Ionian Sea, through large-scale, privately funded projects and further privatization of existing national energy companies. There are also plans for "green energy" production (solar or wind) on a massive scale, but again under the neoliberal directives: private funding and ownership, and no public control. Such mitigation strategies, together with highly unsuccessful market-based approaches such as carbon emission trading, carbon credits, and carbon markets, or geo-engineering solutions, essentially represent the efforts of the capitalist system to reinvent and save itself. This so-called "Green Capitalism" is a false systemic solution that will eventually lead to the same problems and crises inherent in capitalism today.

A Radical Left Solution

At the same time, one very encouraging prospect emerges: the spontaneous but powerful environmental movements against extractionism and privatization of natural resources. These movements are based on grass-roots activism with little political affiliation and guidance, self-organized along the frontlines of capitalist expansionism.

New and old lignite-fired power plants have been strenuously opposed in several regions of the country with some success, particularly before the onset of the recent crisis. Privatized waste management plans and new landfills such as in Keratea, a small town 40 kilometers west of Athens, were finally disrupted after the local community united against them, despite an extreme display of state authoritarianism. Other flashpoints of opposition were the privatization of the public water supply company in Thessaloniki and perhaps most notably the anti-gold-mining movements in Skouries, a village in northern Greece, as well as in Milos, a picturesque island in the Aegean Sea. Similar social movements opposing state or private plans to downgrade the environment, public spaces, and natural resources have occurred globally: in South America, the United States, Canada, and perhaps most powerfully in the massive anti-government demonstrations that spread across Turkey in 2013, ignited by an initially small protest against erecting a shopping mall in a historic park in the heart of Istanbul.

The rise of environmental activism is very encouraging, because it focuses on the degradation of the natural environment, opposes private interests and state oppression, and empowers people to fight for a better quality of life. These movements, however, are not politically conscious and mature, in that they do not frame or even seek the deeper causes that lead to the systemic degradation of the quality of the environment and ultimately of life. They are regional and fragmented both in scope and in regional extent, they lack political leadership and political awareness, and they do not establish connections among themselves on a larger scale—i.e., they do not articulate explicitly the fact that effective global environmental activism and climate change mitigation require limiting overconsumption and abandoning fossil fuels and the associated lifestyles, all of which are in the end threatening capitalism itself.

Unlike other examples worldwide, in Greece a new political power of the progressive left has taken heed of the urgency of the situation and the message of the grass-roots movements. Syriza, a coalition of radical left parties, has been present and an ally in the struggles of local communities against the neoliberal demands for land and resources. Syriza in its programmatic plan advocates ending austerity and reversing the policies that led to more taxes for the middle and lower classes, layoffs, privatizations, and reductions in worker rights and benefits. Syriza has pledged to rebuild and radically transform the economy in a way that is both societally and environmentally balanced and fair.

A decentralized, small-scale, local, community-controlled renewable energy model could then be at the heart of Syriza's energy proposal. The state's role would be to coordinate regional, municipal, and worker-owned energy cooperatives; to rebuild and maintain a modernized energy distribution grid; and to oversee price and export regulation. Syriza must commit to phasing out fossil fuels by a certain date, say 2025, which is consistent both with European and international protocols already adopted by Greece and, more importantly, with the ideology of the left and the fight against the exploitation of nature and the degradation of the environment. Syriza must pledge to develop and promote solar, wind, and perhaps geothermal as the primary energy sources, support energy diversification, and aim to achieve energy self-sufficiency for the country. Natural resource exploitation must be carried out judiciously, with public consent and control, while minimizing the impact on the environment. All fast-track decisions made by the present government must be reviewed and reversed, and any regional alliances (for example, those with Russia, Turkey, the United States, and Israel) must be reviewed and appraised against geopolitical gains and costs. The sale of public property and spaces to private interests must be blocked, forests and natural reserves must be protected, and tourism cannot be used any longer as an excuse for ever-expanding development, construction, and privatization of public land. Public dialogue and transparency must be institutionalized, and control should be handed over to the people, the workers, the consumers. Such a model would motivate public participation and provide jobs and a new vision for the country. Greece, given the small extent of its energy requirements compared to other countries in the region and its lack of significant fossil fuel reserves other than coal, could and should try to make this plan work.

In conclusion, the left worldwide, and in particular in Greece, has to make ecology central to its discourse and struggles. Climate change is a global problem but requires local solutions. Syriza must continue to add to the momentum of the activist movements in Greece, gain from them, and help them grow into a resistance movement and a political force. As more people participate and connect the pieces of the puzzle, i.e., local ecological catastrophes, to the larger picture, i.e. climate change and capitalism, the political awareness of these ecological movements will be awakened and will be successfully expressed through the left.

In the Shadow of the Manhattan Project

DARRYL LORENZO WELLINGTON

EACH AUGUST 6 IN Hiroshima, speakers reiterate familiar statistics, such as how the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombs tragically slaughtered 140,000 people. Many evoke J. Robert Oppenheimer's sense of dread which led him to quote the line from the Bhagavad-Gita: "I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." Remembrance bells will ring in the cities whose destruction has become synonymous with atomic nightmare; bells chime synchronously worldwide.

Another city deserving a place in this narrative of nuclear victimhood is Los Alamos, New Mexico. The tiny town with a population of twelve thousand was where the first atomic bomb was developed by the Manhattan Project, under Oppenheimer's lead.

The Manhattan Project decades hence burgeoned into Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL) a massive facility, easily 27,000 acres embedded in a New Mexico mountain plateau. LANL reigned, the "crown jewel" nuclear weapons facility, America's premier "nuclear weapons campus" throughout the Cold War, and remains responsible for the preponderance of the caretaking and upgrading of the American nuclear stockpile.

New Mexico is a mostly agricultural, mountainous state, listed among the poorest in the nation, still characterized (as it was at the time of the Manhattan Project) by a certain ethnically condescending aura of "foreignness" due to being the state with the highest percentage of Hispanics, alongside the second highest percentage of indigenous peoples. Los Alamos, New Mexico, is a government town—a vital community of schools and civic associations, but an oasis. The miniscule town boasts one of the highest per capita incomes in the United States, and is almost 80 percent white. It is surrounded by swathes of ethnic poverty.

LANL is today New Mexico's premier employer of construction and service workers, leveraging a weak economy towards stability, although a discrimination lawsuit filed against LANL in 1999 revealed that few Hispanics, Native American, or native New Mexicans at the facility earned above 60 thousand dollars a year. Its seventy-year existence (Los Alamos was a "secret city" started under the umbrella of the code-named Manhattan Project in 1942) has made New Mexico a site of ongoing conflict over nuclear environmental hazards. Every other month another newspaper article appears featuring oppositional quotes between a LANL spokesman, and a representative of a nuclear watchdog group, often debating nuclear waste. Hiroshima and Nagasaki represent the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons used abroad, while Los Alamos emblematizes the stateside impact of the nuclear weapons complex. It is both the case that in New Mexico nuclear issues have become a seemingly day-to-day affair, while LANL's seventy-year footprint has left behind a substantial "buried history" shadowing the streams of cars of thousands of service workers winding from "the valley" (surrounding northern New Mexico ethnic communities) to earn a living "up on the hill."

DARRYL LORENZO WELLINGTON *is a poet and journalist living in Santa Fe, New Mexico.*

Every August 6 a few hundred anti-nuclear activists gather in Los Alamos' Ashley Pond Park, a popular location for concerts and summer entertainments. The same park displays Los Alamos' 50th anniversary of "the bomb" memorial, a plaque embedded in a large stone. A memorial was initially conceived and proposed by an elementary school in Albuquerque, New Mexico, whose children raised $20,000 in donations to erect a "Peace Globe" but "peace" is a contentious, possibly an accusatory word in Los Alamos, whose town leaders rejected the overture. The city responded by erecting the present plaque which reads, "This monument honors those people gathered here at Los Alamos and its neighboring communities whose work on the Manhattan Project ended World War II and who later helped develop the nuclear forces that deterred global conflict for the past fifty years." The irony epitomizes an ongoing battle of narratives which may begin for many visitors as they drive into city limits to be greeted by a sign reading "Los Alamos—Where Discoveries are Made" both a coy reference to its major historical accomplishment, and a reminder that the locality remains a bedroom community of weapons scientists, overwhelmingly white relocatees.

Even in New Mexico too much emphasis on Hiroshima diverts the conversation away from the sociological and environmental impact of LANL's seventy-odd-year shadow. To use a metaphor in keeping with Manhattan Project scientists' tendency to personify the bomb sentimentally, "fat boy and little man" grew Goliathan. The behemoth is so entrenched that LANL's absence would devastate many New Mexico communities economically.

"We're not friends, and LANL doesn't like us," forthrightly admits the executive director at Nuclear Watch of New Mexico, Jay Coghlan. Coghlan describes his work as a cat-and-mouse game in which he assumes essential information may be withheld: "We spend a lot of time going over official government reports, trying to piece information together, and reading between the lines." LANL's presence is counterbalanced by several watchdog groups (Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, Nuclear Watch of New Mexico) which engage in by now par-for-the-course legal disputes with LANL over environmental safety issues, and support organizations (the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, Las Mujeres Hablan) devoted to excavating New Mexican nuclear history, while pursuing restitution for nuclear crimes dating as far back as 1942.

"Reading between the lines" is a pertinent phrase. The Manhattan Project operated under complete veils of inscrutability, priority privilege, and secrecy, while today LANL is a semi-privatized government operation primarily answerable to the Department of Energy. That watchdog groups feel that the information they gather, disseminate, and often build lawsuits from must be culled by "reading between the lines" reflects an ongoing and unresolved tension between national security and the public trust. Still today, the most basic information regarding LANL operations is often *not* easily accessible. (For example: how much plutonium is kept at the facility?)

The crux of the ongoing conflict is—as it has been since the Manhattan Project—both *what constitutes* public safety and what information related to public and environmental safety LANL is obliged to reveal under the auspices of "national security." "Reading between the lines" is also symptomatic of a legacy of dependence and suspicion, particularly entrenched between LANL and Native American communities, which entails the Manhattan Project's "dark side" of cavalier subterfuges, as in the case of the New Mexico downwinders.

MANY-GENERATIONAL LABORERS among the stream of cars winding towards LANL each morning migrate from the largely Hispanic Tularosa Basin, or Native American settlements of the Pajarito Plateau. These places were among the first detrimentally marked by stateside nuclear testing, and unpackaging their legacy shows that the Manhattan Project's "invasion" into New Mexico stamped a prototype. Rural New Mexicans were the first American *downwinders.*

Downwinder is still a word shrouded in an otherworldly mystique, a word which carries insinuations of apocryphal rumor. It is a synonym for illness in extremis. Or perhaps as much a synonym for the rumor of illnesses which initially seem mere cursed luck set upon populations left naively uninformed and unaware of immediate risks, much less that decades may pass between initial radiation exposure and its bodily effects, typically leukemia, cancer, and abnormally high incidences of stillbirths.

More specifically *downwinder* is a general name for people and places which received the radioactive fall-out of nuclear test blasts conducted by the United States, Great Britain, France, China, and the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War era. The Soviet and U.S. tests included blasts conducted in the Marshall Islands from 1946-58, contaminating aboriginal island peoples; the French conducted blasts in the South Pacific—including over exotic Tahiti—which cavalierly poisoned indigenous peoples, as well as in the Sahara, and Algeria. The most numerous stateside blasts were developed at Los Alamos and conducted at the Nevada Test Site, from 1951-62, which spread radioactive fall-out to areas of Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Idaho, and Utah.

While a patina of rumor has been enhanced by lengthy court battles establishing the link between radiation exposure and symptoms, the legitimacy of many downwinder claims has been conceded, if individual claimants meet rigorous medical burdens of proof. A path toward monetary compensation was streamlined by belated congressional action. Only in 1990 did Congress enact a Radiation Exposure and Compensation law, which should have—though still has not—clarified fact and fiction, and legitimized rural New Mexico's counter narrative, often comparable to a story widely told from the vantage point of the colonizer, never the colonized.

It is still not sufficiently appreciated that the blast at Hiroshima was *not* the first atomic explosion. In the weeks leading up to Hiroshima, the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos detonated the first nuclear test blast, codenamed "Trinity" which occurred 250 miles south, near Alamogordo, New Mexico, in the Tularosa Basin, and in local lore remains an event which still leaves the living survivors and their descendants, at best, befuddled, with feelings veering between confusion, frustration, and indignation bordering on anti-patriotism against the perpetuators of "a stateside nuclear attack."

In *Now It Can Be Told,* originally published in 1962, by General Leslie M. Groves, the ranking military officer and Oppenheimer's primary non-scientific partner at the Manhattan Project, General Groves describes the Trinity blast as a "fairly sized nuclear explosion" occurring in a "generally nonpopulated area" and concedes the virgin test was full of unknown variables, and supremely lacking in safety controls.

The scientists conducting the blast naively intended for the Trinity detonation to avoid attention by occurring at an hour when "everyone would be asleep." The objective was to contain panic. But the Trinity test was delayed until 5:30 am, late enough that fear in the wake of the flash was not the privilege of the Manhattan Project personnel. The sight permanently etched terror into the memory of many observers. "[The detonation] was the biggest thing I had ever seen in my life. It was rolling, getting fatter and bigger and taller. My mother said: 'The sun is coming close. The world is coming to an end.' She told me to drop to my knees, but I kept looking. If it was the end of the world, I wanted to see it. I was waiting for God to come out from around the ball of fire," reads an exemplary account of the scene witnessed by a shocked eight year old, living at the time in a farming settlement near

Alamogordo.

Groves' memoir, *Now It Can Be Told,* is an unintentionally revealing master narrative in which the writer's contradictions and shady omissions when narrating the Trinity blast expose the Manhattan Project's skewed priorities. After describing the tremendous Trinity flash and fireball, he writes his "greatest concern was over radioactive fall-out and the possibility it might concentrate on a populated area or even an isolated ranch." He claims that the Trinity Site was chosen with special caution; it "had no Indian population at all" which he uses as a justification for not providing pre-blast information to a representative of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. (This makes little sense: the Bureau undoubtedly would have been concerned by a Native American *presence,* but comforted by an absence.) "Generally nonpopulated area" is left undefined. Nevertheless "the city about which we were most concerned was Amarillo, TX, some three hundred miles away." It was for *their* benefit, presumably (not the benefit of the Native Americans whom Groves has "generally," or altogether, erased from the scene, or the farming settlements near Alamogordo that he never specifically mentions) that after Trinity he sanctioned a press release falsely stating the macabre fireball witnessed in outlying areas was the result of a large ammunition magazine detonation. Groves' awkward underscoring of a large, urban, and white population in Amarillo three hundred miles away (at the expense of pocket New Mexico communities which dotted the area) reveals a general concern for *secrecy,* not safety. When population estimations include farmers, farming communities, and Native Americans, some 38,000 Americans lived within a closer radius than Amarillo, Texas.

The secret Trinity blast left such a scarred impact on New Mexico downwinders that it is often spoken of symbolically to represent the Manhattan Project/LANL's history of secrets. 'Trinity' has become a kind of palliative shorthand for nuclear waste, ruin, and human rights abuses. In fact, Trinity was not the last occasion LANL conducted undisclosed blasts. For the next two decades (until 1962) LANL conducted less monumental canyon detonations known as RaLa (Radioactive Lanthanum) experiments, which were not plutonium tests, but nonetheless were highly radioactive. RaLa tests were airborne experiments conducted only on blustery days when high winds picked up fall-out. The fall-out was directed away from the residences of LANL scientists towards communities (still in LANL reports called "generally nonpopulated areas") of Native Americans.

Furthermore Native Americans were later employed cleaning up debris from the experiments, without having been informed of the wisdom of radioactive protective gear. The shock of having been kept ignorant of the blasts—whose acknowledgement only occurred as late as 1994—caused considerable bad blood, enhancing feelings among Native Americans of institutionalized paternalism *vis-à-vis* LANL.

The scientists at LANL initiated and oversaw many Cold War plutonium tests and data collection studies conducted across America on unwitting subjects. *The Plutonium Files,* by Eileen Welsome (1999) records many incidents of Manhattan Project data collection studies at various hospitals across the United States in which subjects received doses of radioactive iron. Easily thousands of Americans were test subjects. In one study at Vanderbilt University (1945-49) 829 pregnant women were given radioactive drinks. From 1946-53, students at a Massachusetts school for retarded boys were given daily doses of radiation mixed into breakfast foods. President Clinton released documents detailing the tests in 1993.

From 1959 to 1980, LANL operated an undisclosed tissue analysis program throughout New Mexico hospitals. Tissue samples useful for the purpose of tracking radioactive exposure were extracted from corpses during hospital autopsies without informing or receiving the informed consent of relatives. LANL settled claims with relatives in 2001. A LANL statement acknowledged wrongdoing, but extemporized "the program was conducted with the best of intentions, and within the legal and ethical standards of the time."

Representatives of *Las Mujeres Hablan* (The Women Speak), a coalition of New Mexican women seeking global disarmament, would add to the list by underscoring that the Manhattan Project acquired New Mexico lands by wielding an act of eminent domain against tribal peoples and Hispanic villagers. The Manhattan Project "stole" lands, called the appropriated territories, "generally nonpopulated," and (even LANL acknowledges) contaminated the plant, water, and livestock supplies. The New Mexican Native Americans communities surrounded by unremediated nuclear waste since the Manhattan Project are today cancer ridden—by some estimations demonstrating cancer at seven times the national average. Ironically, cancer was unheard of amongst New Mexico Native American populations before 1945.

Work at nuclear facilities was egregiously health hazardous throughout the 1950s and 1960s, leading Congress to pair the Radiation Compensation Exposure Act (1990) with an Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Act in 2000. Certain hazardous worker conditions at LANL and elsewhere may have been the result of scientific ignorance; but the *alpha* nuclear facility's culpability is both symbolic and direct. LANL both "birthed" the bomb, and provided the world with a model for parental manipulation—hence ever since the Manhattan Project nuclear facilities have been located in poor areas in which they can paper over environmental hazards by incrementally making nuclear work an economic necessity. It is also worth noting that since Trinity the destructive capacity of the nuclear project has been a cross weightily borne by indigenous populations over the globe.[1] A preponderance of *all* America's nuclear crimes or mishaps resulting from weapons testing have involved studies at LANL and LANL-trained scientists, and the mendacity involved in the land appropriations, the Trinity blast, and covert test blasts throughout the 1950s involving massive radioactive releases fueled a crisis of belief in the possibility of respecting citizen's rights and the machinations of national defense, which burgeoned into the worldwide anti-nuclear movement.

The early 1990s proved watershed years for the American nuclear weapons complex. The Cold War ended; America signed the START I and START II nuclear arms reduction treaties; Congress belatedly recognized stateside nuclear crimes or indiscretions; President Clinton authorized the release of documents regarding Manhattan Project abuses. The crimes and indiscretions reported in this article were generally supported by early 1990s document releases. For a brief, passing moment, nuclear crimes occupied center-stage; the surreal "nuclear uncanny" was certified reality. Despite protracted (or ongoing) court fights, Native Americans, land owners, nuclear workers, downwinders, uranium miners (employed mining uranium needed to produce plutonium) and others have received limited compensation.[2]

Over a billion dollars have been paid to various claimants, yet few claimants have ever felt "satisfied" when contemplating the human tally. LANL, conveniently, keeps limited statistics on employee health and illnesses, but the Department of Energy reports that approximately 285 million dollars has been paid out specifically to LANL workers in health claims. Those payments may be no more significant than that a door remains open for future health claims.

The 1990s beleaguered New Mexicans with many questions, as revelations cascaded regarding the Cold War abuses. After releasing the incriminating documents President Clinton provided pacification by expressing his commitment to a Comprehensive Nuclear Testing ban, signaling the end of an era of such abuses. The future would be free of large stateside radiation releases and new downwinders—perhaps.[3] Did the stories of the past belong to the past? Or should the sigh of relief which accompanied lessened tensions only sharpen the point that LANL's guarantees of present-day safety were built upon foundations of buried history? Narratives of Trinity, Nevada, and high-level radiation exposure suffered by 1950s and 1960s LANL employees were accompanied by (seemingly) less urgent articles on conflicts between LANL and environmental groups over plutonium transportation, waste emission, and such, a comparison which provided an odd sense of relative security. The psychodynamics of pent up tension, relief, the conceptual unfathomability of nuclear fall-out or certain Cold War excesses, compounded by a sense of inevitability in the face of LANL's economic clout collaborated to render historical abuses less meaningful.

LANL's 1990s mission diversified in the sense that its programs expanded to include nuclear energy research and practical applications in medicine. Nuclear weapons caretaking (for the stockpile) and production (meaning the upgrading of Cold War weapons with new warheads and plutonium triggers) consolidated at LANL, during the same decade.[4] While other programs shut down, LANL became the primary U.S. site of plutonium production. The Cold War's demise suggested a safer New Mexico, yet the amounts of hazardous materials immediately held at the facility increased.

There is more than one way to draw lines from the past to the present, the situation *as is* in the light of pernicious revelations. One line follows along a technological route, and settles on the conclusion given enhanced experiential knowledge that the nuclear weapons-energy complex is clearly less hazardous than it was. Environmental legal disputes indeed prove this point, showing how flaws will be soon corrected. The anti-nuclear movement, however, argues that nuclear production whether of weapons or energy can never be truly "safe."

Dishearteningly many conflicts with LANL hinge on a pair of quotation marks. The past and the present continually collide in disputes over a definition. "Safety" has become a post-Cold War legal conundrum. The official explanation promulgated by LANL for the extraordinary cancer rates among New Mexico Native Americans is that radiation effects have been benign, while enhanced reliance on processed food among the tribes since World War II has led to diabetes and cancer. Environmentalists point out that LANL's measurements on the harmful radiation effects are based on crude and outmoded 1950s studies of white men, while for decades LANL has intentionally eschewed updating its studies by performing analyses which would provide information on radiation exposure when experienced by women, other races (such as the majority of the estimated 38,000 Trinity downwinders), and given variables of genetic predisposition and body types. New Mexico activists won a Pyrrhic victory in 2004 when after many lawsuits the Department of Energy issued an order for LANL to complete nuclear waste remediation of decades of rural New Mexican waste by 2014. LANL has (by its own admission) lagged behind the 2014 deadline, now pleading lack of funds to undertake a major land remediation program.

Cases of blatant mismanagement throw doubt upon the seriousness of the nuclear weapons-energy complex's definition of safety. A major 1994 environmental lawsuit was clinched by a LANL *whistleblower.* An environmentalist group filed suit for extreme violation of radioactive air pollution regulations. The suit prevailed with considerable assistance from an internal LANL engineer who provided evidence detailing LANL's arbitrary or willful lack of compliance. The whistleblower later stated the primary fault laid in "a human behavior problem," a culture of "intellectual arrogance" on the part of "division directors, some of whom had been at the Lab since the Manhattan Project, and they weren't going to allow any external entities to control the future of the program."

Another major lawsuit over water pollution—levels of chromium in New Mexico groundwater—was resolved in 2007 both by fines and a court order that LANL supply the necessary information for an independent manager to establish a public-access database. This judgment was enthusiastically hailed by Native Americans who envisioned independent analysis of LANL environmental data. The court-ordered database soon collapsed. Five years later the foundation that was acting as database manager issued a statement protesting it "received considerable blowback from LANL," noncooperation which "jeopardized our ability to be a neutral third-party, as well as maintain our independence from LANL directives."

Contemporary LANL is rarely featured in the news media, an exception being the 1999 scandal involving Win Ho Lee, a LANL scientist accused of espionage. Lee was eventually exonerated, but the implication of an overwhelmingly white institution's in-house racism and inherent suspicions of a Chinese employee shadowed the case. In the late 1990s, LANL lost a "glass ceiling" discrimination lawsuit brought by Hispanic workers. In 2005, LANL suffered another whistleblower scandal when an auditor revealed rampant discrepancies in its contracts with the Department of Energy. The auditor, Chuck Montaño states, "The lab didn't want auditors exposing costs that were unreliable or excessive. Or questionable." Montaño's findings of multimillions of excessive contract expenses were corroborated by an independent investigation by the Department of Energy. Montaño views LANL as "a cash cow. There has never been the downsizing of the nuclear complex there should have been in 1992 after the end of the arms race. LANL no longer has its Cold War mission." Montaño uses a word often associated with the nuclear weapons complex, *hubris,* when he describes decisions affecting public safety such the 1990s increases in plutonium production. "The waste will be greater, the chances of accidents are going to be greater," but LANL will evade post-Cold War irrelevance.

The Los Alamos prototype "birthplace of the bomb" also gave birth to the nagging contradictions entailed in stateside proximity to such destructive powers. LANL maintains "national security" yet its relationship with New Mexico environmental groups is essentially adversarial. LANL employs thousands, yet every week newspapers feature advertisements informing former employees (up to as recently as 1994) of their right to file illness compensation claims. Employment at LANL—an inevitability in poor communities including the afflicted Native American tribes which regard LANL as a historical culprit—is a two-edged sword. Generational family and factory yarns soften the edges, yet necessity shackles workers to a relationship of fear of compromised personal safety akin to slavery.

Joseph Masco in the nuclear ethnographic study *The Nuclear Borderlands* defines "the nuclear uncanny" which is "a dulling effect," a state of suspended tensions "produced by inhabiting an environmental space threatened by military-industrial radiation." In folklore the uncanny was under the sway of the supernatural; today the nuclear uncanny is adjudicated by lawsuits. Many Americans falsely believe the United States has ratified a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban. Rural New Mexicans routinely hear window-shaking explosions (conversationally known as "bombs") resounding near LANL property. These are legal detonations of nuclear waste, not "bombs." Still, each detonation evokes the "buried past" of Trinity, of RaLa downwinders, and of unknown toxins. New Mexico is fire country; summer fires have blazed dangerously near the plutonium tanks and waste sites. In 2011, a massive blaze required every man, woman, and child in Los Alamos to evacuate, leaving New Mexicans wedged between psychological denial and apocalyptic time.

NOTES

1. The indigenous of the Rongelap in the Marshall Islands, where the United States conducted blasts, today suffer generational immune system vulnerabilities; cataracts; cancers and leukemia; miscarriages, congenital defects, and infertility. Testing conducted by France blanketed French Polynesia and Tahiti. The largest single stateside radioactive toxin release in U.S. history occurred in 1979 in Church Rock, New Mexico, a Navajo town, when a waste disposal pond breached its dam, releasing tons of radioactive water.

2. Many have been disappointed by the complicated route toward compensation. Downwinders, in particular, have felt shortchanged by a patriotic reluctance to sanction their claims. The Radiation Exposure and Compensation Act of 1990 prioritized veterans and worker-related claims. It restricted downwinder eligibility claims to the directly impacted, although many downwind areas appear to suffer inherited susceptibility to cancer. Spouses, children, and grandchildren can sue on behalf of deceased relatives. It furthermore restricted downwinder claims to very specific locales. Perhaps the Act represented a grudging admission by Congress that the 1950s Cold War tests were morally tainted, while safeguarding the dignity of the original enterprise. The surviving Trinity downwinders, and descendants, as well as all downwinders in Idaho have so far been denied eligibility.

3. The UN ratified a comprehensive nuclear testing ban in the 1990s and President Clinton expressed his support in 1996. Nevertheless, the U.S. Congress has never ratified the ban. Several attempts to have the U.S. join the UN ban have been stymied in Congress.

4. The production of replacement nuclear warheads for existent weapons has often been questioned, yet appears to still be permissible under nuclear arsenal reduction treaties, such as the START treaties.

EUROPE: WOMEN, AUSTERITY, AND POLITICS

Introduction

The economic crisis of 2008 has had deep effects everywhere. In Europe, the consequences have been dramatic, bringing disturbing political changes to some countries, social turmoil to others, and economic hardship to many. Women have been especially hard hit during these past few years. In this section, we look at three different countries to see how their history and politics have shaped the impact of the crisis and the responses to it. Özlem İlyas Tolunay examines the recent policies of the Erdoğan government in Turkey and how these have affected women. Susan Pashkoff offers an analysis of austerity measures in Britain, and the particular burden on women. Stefanie Prezioso surveys the situation in Italy as Berlusconi leaves the scene.

Women in Erdoğan's Turkey

Özlem İlyas Tolunay

During the last ten years, a new Turkey has been created. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has begun the establishment of an authoritarian regime built upon Sunni Islamic principles and neoliberal economics. We are in an era where the two have combined to create the worst of all worlds for women.

We can divide the period of AKP rule into three parts as Erdoğan himself has done. The first period was from 2002 to 2007, when the AKP was trying to convince the peoples of Turkey and Europeans of its commitment to democracy. During the second period, from 2007 to 2012, Erdoğan's government came to dominate the key arms of the state. The third period began with the 2012 elections and the Gezi Park Revolt.

During the first period between 2002 and 2007, the AKP's policies and practices were focused on achieving Turkish integration with the European Union. The government took the necessary steps to improve democracy and a so-called "freedom and democracy atmosphere" was created in the country. The AKP convinced a wide section of society that it would not create a society based on religious references. The government, helped by the economic boom, established the social legitimacy necessary to put its plans and projects into operation in the very near future. Having consolidated its political power in the first period, AKP won a landslide victory in the 2007 elections. It increased its votes from 34.63 percent in the 2002 elections to 46.58 percent in 2007.

During the second period, between

Özlem İlyas Tolunay *graduated from Translation and Interpreting Department of Bosphorus University and works as freelance translator and editor in Istanbul, Turkey. She is a member of Freedom and Solidarity Party and contributes articles and translations to Birgün newspaper.*

2007 and 2012, the AKP and its principal partner "The Community" (the Fethullah Gülen Movement), a conservative religious movement, took control of all state agencies, intimidated those who resisted, and cowed all the dissenting voices into submission one by one. Towards the end of this period, legislative, executive, and judicial powers were gathered in the hands of AKP. The Ergenekon and Balyoz police operations involving the arrests of scores of military officers accused of planning a coup were carried out in the name of overcoming the military domination and eliminating the deep state. Suddenly everyone opposing the government in one way or another was labeled a "terrorist."

Nor was that all. Nearly two thousand people were arrested under the KCK (Kurdish Democratic Confederation) operations to suppress the Kurdish political movement. Media groups that criticized the government were also silenced by various methods, such as the imposition of fines almost equal to their assets. Dissenting journalists, academics, students, and intellectuals were imprisoned. Even journalists such as Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener, who always took a stand against military domination and the deep state, were imprisoned for a year. Journalists and executive editors who were ardent supporters of the AKP were assigned to important positions in the mainstream media and the government intervened directly in the editorial policies of newspapers and television.

Erdoğan's achievement was remarkable. No other conservative government had succeeded in coordinating its efforts with a network of religious communities and sects in order to undermine the secular basis of the state. The AKP completed this process during the second period and proceeded to redesign the social and cultural life of the nation with reference to religion. The 2012 elections initiated its third period, and then Gezi Park exploded.

Women in the Religious, Neoliberal State

What has been going on in Turkey for almost a decade is also in full compliance with the economic and political interests of the capitalist world, the new cultural climate encouraged by the neoliberal system, and the American government's Greater Middle East Initiative, albeit sometimes increasing tensions between Turkey and the United States due to Erdoğan's expansionist desires in the Middle East. To grasp the relation between Sunni Islam and the political and economic components, we could look at many areas from the foreign policy of Turkey to the Kurdish issue; however, what will clearly and dramatically show us how the society is being transformed is an examination of the condition of women.

Nowhere in the world, including Turkey, have women received their rightful share of the country's wealth or been fully represented in the political process; nor have they benefited equally from the education and health systems. Nothing has changed fundamentally for women in the latest statistics published by the United Nations. Patriarchy and neoliberal capitalism have found their most brutal practice in the hands of the AKP which is in a mad rush to integrate Turkey more fully into the global market. As a result, Turkey has retreated from being 105th in 2006 to being 124th in 2013 according to the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum and won first place in the category of women's murder rate.

While the countries of the world have been brought into a single global market formed in compliance with neoliberal criteria, their integration forces the participants towards a compulsory division of labor. What Turkey can supply to the global market is cheap labor, a capacity to assume environmental risks and dangers, and a vast terrain and natural resources waiting for the arrival of multinational agricultural and mining companies, for tourism, and for construction. All these items, except the first one, have their own capacities and limits. However, as all the statistics show, Turkey is a capitalist paradise of cheap labor. The AKP government has created several neoliberal mechanisms to expand this paradise both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Turkey has to maintain this cheap labor system as long as possible because it has no other alternative. The AKP government is not capable of envisioning real economic development that would mean moving to a higher value-added economy—that is, moving away from the low-wage economy—because the AKP government is not able to introduce and pursue genuinely independent policies. From the very beginning, the AKP government has been a project of the United States, backed by the European Union and the organizations of the neoliberal order such as the WTO, the World Bank, and the G8. Erdoğan has no choice but to submit to the rules of the global market and the division of labor determined by these prominent actors and to assume his role as a cheap labor supplier.

Let's see what a neoliberal paradise looks like. First of all, before turning to women in particular, let's look at the state of the Turkish working class as reflected in the figures for the labor market. "Persons not in the labor force" comprised 50.1 percent of the working age population, the highest rate in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The main sub-groups of persons not in the labor force were those who were busy with household chores (44.2%), students (15.7%), the disabled (12.7%), and retired persons (13.5%). Needless to say, the persons "busy with household chores" are overwhelmingly women. Therefore, the unemployment rate of 9.4 percent as of 2013 July should be reconsidered carefully with due regard to "persons not in the labor force."

As of February 2012, some 8.7 million out of 24.8 million people—or about one-third of the economically active population—were working informally. Turkey has the highest agricultural employment and the lowest employment in the service sector among the OECD countries. The youth unemployment rate is 18.3 percent as of 2012. According to 2011 data from the Ministry of Labor, only 682,000 workers out of a total of roughly twelve million benefit from collective bargaining agreements. Turkey has the lowest rate of unionization (5.9%) among the OECD countries and unionization fell by 38 percent between 2002 and 2011 during the AKP government. In short Turkey brings up the rear in unionization among the OECD countries but wins first place for deunionization. Each day in Turkey, four workers die in labor accidents due to unsafe working conditions.

Now, let us look at the figures for women in the labor market. Turkey has the lowest rate of female employment (28.7 percent) among all OECD countries, behind Mexico, Italy, and Chile (which have female employment rates of 45.3, 47.8, and 52.2 percent respectively, figures that are more than 50 percent greater than those of Turkey). Some 11.9 million of Turkey's nearly 27 million women who are over age 15 are defined as "housewives" and three million of the employed women are working in the agricultural sector, with women in both categories essentially working as "unpaid family workers." When we add to these numbers the unemployed, sick, and disabled women and those who have given up the hope of ever finding a job, we can see that more than half of the women living in Turkey don't have any independent income. The rest of the country's working women are mostly employed in low-wage jobs due to their limited education and are not able to support themselves.

The underground economy is smaller and the wages are higher in services than in agriculture, but women have trouble securing more jobs in the service sector due to their lack of education. Curiously enough, the highest female unemployment rate in Turkey is among those with higher education. The unemployment rate among women with higher education is double that of men with higher education (15.2% and 7.6%). All in all, there is no way out for an independent and honorable life for most women in Turkey.

What do the statistics presented here tell us about the economic and socio-cultural position of women in Turkey? 1) The primary task of women in Turkey, as mother, wife, or sister in the home, is to reproduce the cheap male labor force supplied to the global markets. 2) The large numbers of unemployed women represent a competitive threat to unemployed men and function to keep the price of men's labor low. This is so because even though they have limited access to the labor market, they contribute to the general unemployment rate, which in turn leads to lower wages. 3) Similarly, the high numbers of unemployed men keep the price of women's labor low, especially in flexible and informal production, and function to incarcerate women in their own houses where every day they are charged with the reproduction of men as cheap labor. 3) Violence against women and murders of women have risen sharply. The patriarchal mindset and the neo-conservative policies that mesh so well with it leave women unprotected against domestic violence. 4) By means of flexible or informal production which has been integrated into our lives together with the neoliberal economy, the division between home and work largely disappears for many women. Relatively recently women have started to do piecework in their homes for the garment industry, a practice that has become widespread, and the chance to escape from the house and be visible in the public sphere fades away; and despite the doubling workload there is not a similar increase in income that might lift them out of poverty.

In order for Turkey to sustain its role as a cheap labor supplier, it is imperative to maintain or even worsen the position of women, because there are many cheap labor suppliers in the world and the competition is sharp. And it is exactly at that point that the neoliberal model and the conservative Islamic mindset come together. In most places the neoliberal model encourages greater female participation in the labor market, leads to lower birthrates, and to a tendency to break up traditional forms of marriage and childrearing. However, that's not always the case in a conservative and religious country that has been designated by the capitalists' international financial organizations to be a cheap labor supplier to the global market. In a country in which more than half of the women over age 15 don't have an independent income, this impoverished population of women incarcerated in their own homes becomes a very favorable apparatus for the permanence and maintenance of these cheap labor reserves.

The state has responded to falling marriage and birth rates due to urbanization by encouraging marriage and pregnancy through incentives such as giving a 10,000 Turkish Lira interest-free loan to the young married couples between 18 and 24 years of age, postponing the repayment if the woman gets pregnant during the first year of marriage, writing off the education credit debts of the university students and providing free dormitory rooms if they get married while studying at the university. Just after the government announced these incentives, however, Erdoğan stated that they wouldn't allow male and female university students to stay in the same house because that was "against society's" values. (Since there are not enough dormitory rooms in Turkey for every university student, several students often get together and rent an apartment while studying at the university. The day after that statement, the police forces raided an apartment in Manisa and imposed fines for "disturbing the environment" on five university students (three women who rented the apartment together and two men who were guests there).

Within this context, however, AKP policies will downgrade women's rights even more.

The "4+4+4" Education System

In March 2012, the Grand National Assembly passed new legislation on primary and secondary education usually called "4+4+4": four years for first-level primary education between ages 5-8, four years for second-level primary education between the ages of 9-12, and four years for secondary education (high school) between the ages of 13-16. The legislation divides primary education, which had been a single block of eight years since the 1997 reforms, into two levels and allows the children to attend religious vocational schools or other vocational schools after the first four-year period, that is, from the age of nine. Also, under these regulations, if the parents approve, students will be able to continue their schooling through informal education outside of a standard school setting after the second fourth year, namely at the age of 12. (This was after the first fourth year, at the age of 8, in the law draft, but changed because of the reactions of civil society, especially the protests of women's organizations.) The new legislation includes the reopening of religious schools, the so-called Imam Hatip schools, for the second-level primary education, which was banned in 1997 and had only provided high school education since then. The number of the Imam Hatip schools (both middle and high schools) increased to 2,074 in 2013 from 537 in 2012.

This educational system is a fundamentalist and reactionary model—put into practice without any negotiations with labor unions or associations—that will have a devastating impact on the country. With this system, the road from the ghettos to the universities of the country for both girls and boys is blocked, because regular high schools that prepare youth for the university are rapidly being transformed into vocational schools or Imam Hatip schools.

Under these circumstances, what awaits the girls living in the ghettos is an early marriage, becoming a wife or a second wife to a man (according to a study, the rate of polygamy is already 10 percent in some Eastern cities), and an unpaid family worker, living under constant economic pressure and exposed to domestic violence. In this way, the AKP has paved the way on the one hand for confining women in their families to child-birth and child-care activities, and on the other for using them as unskilled labor for insecure, informal, and precarious jobs. Boys will either go to the vocational schools, whose numbers have increased dramatically, to be trained to become part of the low-wage labor force as apprentices or they will attend Imam Hatip schools and receive an education intended to create the "religious and revengeful generations" personally demanded by Prime Minister Erdoğan.

Domination over Women's Bodies

Over the last several years the Erdoğan government has launched an ideological campaign, accompanied by decrees and laws intended to take greater control of women's bodies. The prime minister himself, as well as members of his cabinet, judges, and prosecutors have made shockingly arrogant and insensitive statements about how many children women should have and under what circumstances, as well as about caesarean sections and abortions. Prime Minister Erdoğan announced in March of 2008, "Each woman should give birth to at least three children," with no concern for the women's earning capacity, career goals, or other family responsibilities.

Government officials' statements on women's right to abortion in the event of rape have been outrageous. The Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors suggested in September of 2011 that, "Women who are rape victims can marry their rapists." On May 30, 2012, Health Minister Recep Akdağ stated, "The state can look after the babies of the raped women if necessary." The very next day, Ayhan Sefer Üstün, Chairperson of the National Assembly's Commission of Human Rights and AKP legislator, claimed that abortion was a crime worse than the rape itself and suggested that women who had been raped should just give birth to their children. A permit from the state prosecutor allowing an abortion is often demanded from rape victims, even though it is not legally necessary for the doctor to perform the procedure. Due to the elongation of the bureaucratic process, there are cases in which the twenty-week legal abortion period since the rape was committed is exceeded and so the abortion cannot be performed. (In many countries this period is 24 weeks.)

Abortion in any case is restricted in practice. Most public hospitals appear to restrict abortions to the first eight weeks, though the law states that abortions can be performed up to the tenth week. Doctors prefer not to use general anesthesia during the abortion procedure, despite the patients' demands for it. The law allows single women above the age of eighteen to decide for themselves if they want an abortion. However, doctors working on a bonus system don't want to perform abortions because the bonus is smaller than that for other operations. So, to avoid performing abortions, they may even demand a marriage license from single women. Women demanding abortions are sent home to think about the operation for a full two or three days. They are also made listen to the heartbeat of the baby. Doctors try to convince women to abandon abortion, even though the Turkish Doctors' Union states that this practice is unethical and represents psychological violence affecting the mental health of the women.

The Turkish government and Erdoğan personally are opposed to caesarean section deliveries. Speaking on May 26, 2012, Erdoğan made the incredibly bizarre and paranoid statement that "Caesarean delivery is an operation intended to prevent population increase and to earn money. There is no difference between killing a new born baby and terminating the pregnancy with an abortion; both of them are homicides. Abortion and caesarean delivery are parts of the big plan targeting the elimination of this nation from the earth." The Caesarean Law dated July 2012 represented a de facto ban on caesarean delivery. A massive and successful women's movement stopped the banning of abortion; nevertheless de facto practices in the public hospitals have tended to restrict c-sections and abortions.

Finally, the state does all it can to reinforce patriarchy when dealing with women's reproductive rights. The Ministry of Health sends circulars to all laboratories providing pregnancy tests demanding the names and mobile phone numbers of the women whose test is positive. They give the contact information to family doctors and want them to get in touch with the pregnant woman and her family. If the pregnant woman is married, then her husband is informed of the positive result of the pregnancy test; if the woman is not married, then her father is informed. This practice threatens the woman's personal security and violates her human rights as well. Above all, it is an open invitation to violence or honor killings in a conservative society like that of Turkey. Taken together, the Turkish state's positions on women's reproductive rights—control of natality, caesarian sections, abortion, and privacy—constitute a reactionary, atavistic attempt to control and to subjugate women's bodies to the state and to their fathers and husbands. While Turkey may be undergoing modernization in some areas of infrastructure, industry, and technology, in the area of women's rights it remains antiquated, pre-modern, and, one could even say, barbaric.

Violence Against Women

The number of women murdered in Turkey skyrocketed from 66 in 2002 to 847 in the first nine months of 2013. Between 2008 and 2011, 47 percent of murdered women were killed by their husbands or ex-husbands; this rate is now 69 percent. Some 39 percent of women living in Turkey experienced physical violence at least once during their lives. Child brides are also often victims of domestic violence and experience maternal health issues. According to International Strategic Research Organization, an Ankara centered liberal think tank, the highest child bride rates in Europe are in Georgia with 17 percent and Turkey with 14 percent. A few months ago, the Union of Turkish Bar Associations stated that one in four brides in the country is a child bride.

The AKP named the law enacted to protect women against violence the "Law for the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women." Under this law, the women who have experienced domestic violence must engage in persuasion and reconciliation, rather than pursuing justice by legal means. With this law, the privacy of the women's shelters has been removed, violence against women is not defined as a violation of human rights, and the women experiencing violence are expected to prove the violence. As the name of the law suggests, for the AKP the protection of the family comes before the protection of women.

Family and Social Policies Minister Fatma Şahin states that there is a dimension of psychological transformation with regard to the solution to the violence against women. To bring about this transformation the Ministry will carry out an "enlightenment project" together with other agencies including the Directorate of Religious Affairs.

The AKP government and its courts have not only concealed the rapes and violence against women but tacitly encouraged these human rights violations. This takes place in a number of ways. In July 2009 after a woman named Münevver Karabulut was premeditatedly and savagely murdered by being cut up with a saw while she was alive, Erdoğan said, "If a girl is left unattended by her family, she will run away either to a drummer or a trumpeter." Regarding the same murder, Istanbul Police Commissioner Celalettin Cerrah said, "The family should have safeguarded their daughter."

At the conclusion of the trial of 26 men for the rape of a 13-year-old girl named N.Ç. in Mardin, the court imposed light sentences, having determined that the rape was carried out with the "consent" of the girl. There are many gang rape cases in the courts at the moment and most of the victims are under 18.

Women Resist

Women are not simply accepting the government's polices but are resisting in the courts, in the legislature, and in the streets. Women's resistance comes out of the long struggle of Turkish feminists for equality and for social justice. During the nineteenth century, at the end of the Ottoman Empire, educated women began organizing themselves as feminists and fought to increase women's access to education and paid work, to abolish polygamy and the Islamic veil, the *peçe*. Early feminists published women's magazines and established various organizations dedicated to the advancement of women. The first women's association, the Ottoman Welfare Organization of Women was founded in 1908 and became somewhat involved in the Young Turks Movement that was a driving force in the founding of the Turkish Republic.

Mustafa Kemal, known as Ataturk, the head of the new state, wanted to create a secular republic. Consequently, the new government passed a Civil Law that banned polygamy, required civil marriage, and made women legally equal to men in terms of divorce, inheritance, and testimony in the courts. The feminist movement of that era gradually became integrated into the state and established itself as part of the Kemalist modernization efforts from 1923 onwards. There was no independent women's movement again until the 1980s.

While feminism began to sweep the world in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in Turkey independent and radically minded women became involved in social movements that were focused on reconstructing the Turkish state with socialist ideals in mind. The military coup of 1980 suppressed the left throughout Turkey. In the 1980s, after the coup, women's movements truly became more independent, existing both outside the state organizations and also outside of leftist groups.

We can say that the Second Wave of feminism came to Turkey only after the coup. The 1980 coup d'état had crushed the socialist movement, and socialist women, being left unorganized and having experienced the male dominant political culture of the opposition movements, organized the contemporary feminist movement in Turkey. Women—especially socialist women—from both urban and academic milieus began to meet in reading groups and discuss feminist literature together, especially translations of feminist literature from the United States, Britain, and France. They discovered that the patriarchal culture was not only present in the state, but also in their own lives and criticized the standard construction of the family in Turkey as well as the gender-specific roles that were forced on women from a feminist perspective. For the first time women rejected the notion that only the state could advocate for women's rights and began to politicize the inequality present in private life. Women began to discuss the notion that "the personal is political," just as in the West, though there were also other questions, such as the "headscarf issue" which is still being discussed by women in Turkey.

Feminists organized hundreds of public meetings and country-wide campaigns and published many independent journals during the last 30 years. Although there are more than 250 women's groups (women's groups of socialist parties and unions, independent feminist groups, Islamic feminists, Kurdish feminists, etc.) and although there are many ideological differences between these groups, feminists come together to work on common issues affecting women's lives such as violence against women. As the rising neoliberal conservatism of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government is now threatening the basic rights of Turkish women, we can talk about a new Third Wave feminist movement embracing the legacy of the socialist feminists of the earlier generation. This movement started to unfold during the rallies held in June 2012 against the attacks on abortion rights and raised its voice in defense of women's social rights and control over their own bodies.

The Erdoğan government has attacked women in an extraordinary way never seen before in Turkish history, in an attempt to establish its overriding authority over women's bodies. That's why it is no coincidence that so many women stood behind the barricades during the Gezi Park Revolt and why the news agencies sent out to the media around the world many photos of women standing up against water cannons, tear gas, and pepper spray. A recently published demographic analysis made by security forces on a "sample" group including more than five thousand suspects who were taken into custody during Gezi Park Revolt showed that 50 percent of the suspects were women. Women's participation in the revolt stands in stark contrast to their subordinate role in Turkey today, especially in terms of employment, education rates, and representation rates in the parliament. Many women today are critical of the government, of neoliberalism, and of patriarchy, are active in broad social movements including their own feminist movements, and fight for a more democratic, just, and egalitarian society.

The statistics, laws, and statements of the authorities are sufficient to comprehend how well-organized is the assault on women. The required response to this assault can only be given when the courage that shields its chest against the water cannons meets with a more organized and political consciousness of women and their allies.

A footnoted version of this article will be available online at newpol.org.

Women and Austerity in Britain

Susan Pashkoff

Since the Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition came into power in Britain in 2010, there has been a vicious attack on both the public sector and the social welfare state that is being justified as a response to the "high deficit." Austerity is being introduced for two related reasons. First, the low profitability and resulting stagnation following the economic crisis of 2008 led employers to squeeze wages in order to keep profits up. This is part of a long-term strategy to undermine workers' incomes and working conditions in the face of continuing profitability problems outside of the financial sector, issues that also led to the shift of industry and manufacturing to emerging and peripheral economies. Second, the long-term move to privatize potentially profitable parts of the public sector continues. This is not only being done to open up new areas of profitability for capital but also to undermine unionization.

Privatization of these services—such as the privatization of the post office, the creation of charter schools, and contracting out by the National Health Service—means subjecting them to profitability criteria so that in the future they will be available only to those who can pay. This will affect both the supply of services to the working class and poor, as well as their demand for access to these services. Given generally lower incomes, services formerly obtained for free will not be demanded any more once they are privatized, and thus may not be as profitable as anticipated. In the case of childcare and caring for the sick and elderly, this work will inevitably fall on working class women as part of caring for extended families for which they are still predominately responsible.

Historically in Britain, there has been a universal social welfare state. This is significantly different from what exists in the United Sates where the welfare system is geared primarily towards taking care of the poor. In Britain, benefits were not limited to those with insufficient income but were available to all regardless of their wealth or wages. For example, all people above a certain age were entitled to a winter fuel allowance to help with heating costs. Child and maternity benefits were given irrespective of income; the same held for the disability living allowance. Introduction of means-testing eroded the universality of the social welfare state, shifting it towards one that is more similar to that in the United States and making it an easier target for divide-and-rule tactics.

The impact of austerity in Britain, both in terms of the assault on the state sector and the attack on the social welfare state, has substantially affected the working class. A Benthamite ideological offensive based on the distinction between "the deserving and the undeserving poor" has been used as a stick to beat those in the reserve army of labor in Britain, especially people with disabilities. Insistence that unemployment is voluntary is then linked to a criterion of less(er) eligibility whereby those getting benefits must receive lower incomes than those who are working, thus "incentivizing people into work." With general incomes falling, the

Susan Pashkoff *is an independent researcher in economics, blogger, and a life-long political activist.*

logic of the argument is that government social welfare benefits must fall as well.

The direct ideological assaults against women as "undeserving" have been limited to the "welfare mother" arguments (*e.g.*, the claim that women have children in order to receive housing and child benefits). Only rarely has it been suggested that women in the work force are to blame for male unemployment. Generally, the depredations of women are presented as more subtle and tied into women's traditional roles in the labor market and in the process of social reproduction.

> Women face increasing economic insecurity without sufficient state assistance to ensure that their children and families have a decent standard of living provided by our employment.

There are several reasons why austerity affects women so strongly. First, job losses have mainly occurred in the public sector where women's labor is predominant. Second is the fact that women are more dependent on the social welfare state. And, third, the British state has historically failed to provide completely for social reproduction, especially in childcare and care for the infirm and disabled.

With incomes falling in the advanced capitalist world as part of the general economic condition since the late 1970s, women face greater threats than men. Women receive lower incomes and lower pensions (due to historically lower wages), and face the increasing reluctance of the state to support women in the workplace through the provision of childcare and after-school programs or by shouldering caregiver responsibilities for the elderly and infirm. As the general pattern of work tends more towards increasing underemployment and part-time labor, women will begin to face competition from men for part-time jobs that women traditionally held while at the same time benefits decline.

Women face increasing economic insecurity without sufficient state assistance to ensure that their children and families have a decent standard of living provided by their employment. No longer able to depend upon the fact that their low-paid labor is of sufficient value to capitalists, as men also face increasing precariousness in their employment, and in the absence of a strong labor movement and of left-wing movements, men may be reduced to playing the same role as women, that of an easily intimidated, and therefore, underpaid workforce.

Women's Labor Market

Women have always worked under capitalism, but their working lives are affected by the primacy of their role in social reproduction. Women's job choices are also constrained by segregated labor markets and they are trapped in jobs undervalued in the capitalist economic system. This is compounded by the discontinuity of their working lives due to social reproduction responsibilities—childbirth and nursing, child raising, domestic chores, care for the elderly—so that even if they get on an unsegregated job ladder, advancement is difficult due to time taken off to perform career responsibilities.[1]

While traditional women's labor creates use values, its exchange value is low in the capitalist economic system as the work is seen as unskilled or low-skilled especially as it relates to social reproduction. This is probably because so much of it is still provided as unpaid labor in the home. Even tasks requiring professional skills, such as nursing and teaching are undervalued as "women's work."

Britain's modern public sector developed after the Second World War and was largely staffed and to a great extent built upon the labor of women workers and immigrants from the British Empire's former colonies who were overwhelmingly people of color. The socialization of some traditional women's work (*e.g.*, education, nursing, social work, caring, cleaning) led to higher representation of female than male workers in the public sector. Women additionally found employment in administration and clerical work in both public and private sectors. The privatization of potentially more profitable parts of the public sector will have an enormous impact on women as workers due to the wage gap between the public and private sectors. That is, women's wages in the public sector from supervisory to unskilled labor are higher than in the private sector due to unionization.

Following the crash of 2008, men initially experienced more layoffs and had higher unemployment rates than women due to declines in construction, manufacturing, and finance. Since the introduction of austerity, it is women that have been facing rising unemployment. In Britain 65 percent of public sector workers are women—4.4 million out of 6.8 million—and almost a quarter of working women are in public sector jobs.[2] David Cameron's Conservative Party government has failed to create full-time jobs with good wages and decent working conditions. The vast amount of "increased employment" has been in low-paid jobs in retail, jobs that are often temporary and part-time. There has been a significant and deliberate destruction of wages, incomes, and conditions of work to maintain the profitability of the private sector. The result has been an increase in the working poor who have suffered benefit cuts, though their incomes have not risen. Insultingly, Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary for Work and Pensions, recently blamed the working poor for not earning enough and threatened to cut their benefits even further, as though they set their own wage levels and choose not to earn a decent income.[3] Rising underemployment, more precarious jobs, and zero-hours contracts—contracts with no guaranteed hours where workers are on-call—are the result of policies in which the rights of working people, job conditions, and wages have all been undermined.

The impact of women's responsibility for social reproduction is evident looking at economic inactivity in January-March 2013.[4] Out of a total of 9 million people who are economically inactive, 2.3 million people cite household and caring responsibilities as the reason for their economic inactivity; of these, 220,000 are men and 2.1 million are women. Of the 2.3 million of those that say that they want a job, 630,000 report that they are looking after home and family, with this breaking down to 76,000 men compared to 556,000 women.

Impact of Austerity

In the June 2010 budget, the government switched from using the Retail Price Index (RPI) to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to calculate increases in benefits and state pensions (including public sector worker's pensions). The CPI results in a lower cost-of-living index for pensioners. According to the government's own estimates, this move resulted in savings of £1.2 billion (US$1.9 billion) in 2011-12 and will increase each year to £5.8 billion by 2014-15.[5] This re-pegging of benefits accounted for the largest cut in government expenditure and the attempt in the United States to change the index for social security from the CPI to a chained CPI is attempting to do the same.[6]

Increases in the retirement age for women are being gradually phased in. Instead of being able to retire earlier than men, their retirement age is being increased from 60 to 66 by 2020.[7] Combined with pay freezes, increased contribution to pension schemes, and the re-pegging of increases in pensions (and for that matter, state welfare benefits) to the CPI, this means that public sector workers are working longer and harder, due to job cutbacks, for less pay, and for a pension that is actually going to be worth less.

Women live longer than men and have lower incomes (both because they receive lower pay for the same jobs and because "women's work" pays less). Consequently, their pension contributions and hence their pensions will be lower, so that women who *can* retire will be living longer on lower pensions. Married women may get their husband's higher pensions upon their deaths, but that does nothing for single women or single mothers. This means that more women will be living longer in poverty.

Given their predominance in lower-paying part-time and temporary labor, and thus their greater dependence on social welfare benefits to cover living expenses, women are much more affected by the destruction of the universal social welfare system. Single parent households are predominately female and they are feeling the impacts of the cuts far harder.[8] Moreover, the government has been floating the idea of limiting benefits to those who have more than two children, meaning that women with three or more children will be further harmed.[9]

According to the Fawcett Society, a British non-governmental organization that supports women's equality and rights at home, at work, and in public life: "on average, one-fifth of women's income is made up of welfare payments and tax credits compared to one-tenth for men. Put another way, *benefits make up twice as much of women's income as men's.*"[10]

The government has capped benefits at £500 (US$810) per week for couples or lone parent households and at £350 (US$567) for single childless adult households.[11] Another new cap limits benefit increases to 1.0 percent each year, which is lower than the rate of inflation, even that calculated under the CPI; this is justified by arguing that the real wages of employed people are falling and that the incomes of people on benefits should not increase more than for those who are working.

While the government claims that it is "helping people into work," that clearly does not include women as they cut the childcare portion of working tax credits from 80 percent to 70 percent in the 2010 budget. This particularly affects single working mother households who make up 60 percent of the recipients of the childcare credit. The government has increased the number of working hours needed to qualify from 16 to 24 hours per week; finding eight additional hours under conditions of generally rising underemployment is not easy.[12]

To clear the poorest from the center of London, government housing benefits are being capped at a maximum of £400 (US$637) per week for a four-bedroom property. Insufficient numbers of social housing units mean long waiting lists; this is especially so for large families. Elimination of rent controls in private housing under Thatcher and the rise of "buy to let" have led to skyrocketing rents in London. With housing benefits capped, there is a danger that people will take money from their other benefits to cover their housing.[13] Forcing the poor out of the center of the city will lead to the overcrowding of schools in other more accessible areas and will undermine existing supports that families rely upon. Fifty percent of those receiving housing benefits are single women (often single parents) and there are one million more women than men claiming housing benefits.[14] Additionally, the bedroom tax (an over-occupancy charge for extra bedrooms) for those in social housing is hitting people with disabilities and single mothers disproportionally, as they are primarily the people who live in social housing.[15]

Social subsistence for working people in Britain is being undermined. The rising use of food banks and reports that mothers are foregoing eating in order to feed their children indicate a serious erosion of living standards.[16] Because of the impact of the cuts and the rising demand for food banks, for the first time since World War II the British Red Cross is planning to distribute food in Britain.[17]

The Need for a Movement and a United Left

The British labor movement has been on the defensive, particularly in the private sector, where recently, even when they have fought back, unions have often been defeated. There is definitely resistance from some of the public sector workers unions. They have made a stand on protection of pensions—though not on jobs, wages, and working conditions. Pensions in the private sector have been long undermined and the government used divide-and-rule effectively. There have been local and regional strikes; teachers unions have gone out, university and adult education lecturers have gone out, the Fire Brigades Union has gone out—but these are one-day strikes that are insignificant. The union bureaucracy has not for the most part broken with the Labour Party.

There is no general movement against austerity with roots in the population. There are campaigns certainly. People with disabilities have been fighting very strongly. There is an anti-Bedroom Tax Campaign (but remember, the Bedroom Tax, unlike the Poll Tax, only affects the small number of people that are in social housing). There is a Boycott Workfare movement that fought Workfare both in the streets and in the courts; but the appeals court still insists that it is not forced labor. There has been a serious fightback around the National Health System; and the save the Lewisham Hospital campaign legally beat back attempts by Secretary of Health Jeremy Hunt to close departments in a local hospital whose finances were secure in order to protect two nearby hospitals indebted due to a private financing initiative. That was a strongly-fought local campaign with real roots in the community. So fightbacks have occurred, but most of them have been locally based. There have been victories. But there have been bitter defeats like the closure of Remploy factories, plants that employed people with disabilities; these people will not find work again.

The majority of people are not apathetic, but they are resigned. Polls indicate that people would support the renationalization of energy, water, and transport. People generally opposed the privatization of the Royal Mail. None of the mainstream parties—Conservative, Liberal, and Labour—offers anything but austerity. Small band-aids such as Ed Miliband's proposal of an energy price freeze are met with cries of Marxism, as though no one heard of Richard Nixon's price freezes in the wake of the collapse of Bretton Woods.

In terms of the hard left, it suffers from substitutionism, that is, the attempt to substitute the sect or party for a movement. What are called "united fronts" are actually not what they purport to be. The left unfortunately has limited impact beyond its members. There are some autonomous groupings more attractive to younger activists than the Marxist left, but their impact too is narrow, although Occupy the London Stock Exchange, for example, generated interest and controversy. The crisis in Britain's largest left party, the Socialist Workers Party, has not helped. There is an attempt to build a new campaigning party, currently called Left Unity, to fill the space to the left of the Labour Party. Whether it will be successful or, like so many previous attempts by the left (*e.g.*, Socialist Alliance, Respect), will fail is dependent on its being able to attract those outside of the hard left. Only time will tell whether it has a future. What is clear, however, is that unless a mass movement of resistance develops, the future of austerity's many victims in Britain, especially women, will be grim.

NOTES

1. Equality and Human Rights Commission, "Women, men and part-time work," www.equalityhumanrights.com/scotland/legal-news-in-scotland/articles/women-men-and-part-time-work/.
2. UK, Office for National Statistics (ONS), "Public and private sector employment by gender and region Q2 2012," available at www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html.
3. Shiv Malik, "UK's lowest-paid employees to be classed as 'not working enough,'" *Guardian*, Sept. 6, 2013, theguardian.com/politics/2013/sep/06/uk-lowest-paid-classed-not-working-enough.
4. Economically inactive people are not employed but do not meet the internationally accepted definition of

unemployment because they have not been seeking work within the last four weeks and/or they are unable to start work within the next two weeks.

5. See Research Paper SN/SG/5830, parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05830.pdf.

6. Since 2008 the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has said real inflation had climbed by 25 percent rather than the 17 percent increase as judged by the CPI (www.jrf.org.uk/publications/MIS-2013).

7. Women's retirement age is scheduled to rise to 63 in 2016, and 65 in 2018; everyone's State Pension age will increase to 66 by 2020.

8. According to the ONS, in 2011, women accounted for 92 percent of lone parents with dependent children and men accounted for 8 percent of lone parents with dependent children (www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/families-and-households/2011/sum-lone-parents.html). According to the Fawcett Society: "Single mothers will be hardest hit by the government's program of benefit cuts and tax rises. It estimates they will lose an average 8.5% of their income after tax by 2015. The gender equality charity said this compared with 7.5% for single fathers, 6.5% for couples with children and 2.5% for couples without children" (www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/benefits/).

9. According to the BBC, "Of the 7.8 million families receiving child benefit, 1.2 million have more than two children. Of the 5.2 million families receiving child tax credits, about 926,000 of them have more than two children" (www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-20077758).

10. www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/benefits/.

11. Benefits affected by the cap: https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-a-cap-on-the-amount-of-benefits-working-age-people-can-receive. Capped benefits primarily affecting women are: 1) Bereavement Allowance; 2) Carer's Allowance; 3) Child Benefit; 4) Child Tax Credit; 5) Maternity Allowance; 6) Widowed Parent's Allowance (or Widowed Mother's Allowance or Widow's Pension that started before Apr. 9, 2001).

12. See www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/benefits/. 35+ hours is considered full time in the UK.

13. Housing Benefit obtainable depends on the size of the property rented. five-bedroom properties are no longer eligible for housing benefits (www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/@benefits/documents/digitalasset/dg_201860.pdf).

14. www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/benefits/.

15. Rajeev Sayal, "'Bedroom tax' will hit single parents and disabled people hardest," *Guardian*, Mar. 4, 2013, www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/mar/04/benefits-housing.

16. See: Patrick Butler, "Number of people turning to food banks triples in a year," Guardian, Apr. 23, 2013, www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/apr/24/number-people-food-banks-triples. See also Judith Burns, "Save the Children urges action for poorest UK children," BBC, Sept. 12, 2012, www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-19478083.

17. See *e.g.*, Charlotte McDonald-Gibson, "Exclusive: Red Cross launches emergency food aid plan for UK's hungry," *Independent*, Oct. 11, 2013, www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/exclusive-red-cross-launches-emergency-food-aid-plan-for-uks-hungry-8872496.html.

End of a Cycle and a New Beginning

Some Thoughts on Today's Italy[1]

STEFANIE PREZIOSO

IN MARCH 2010, a few months before his death, Mario Monicelli, the unforgettable director of the 1958 caper film *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (*I soliti ignoti*), was interviewed live on Michele Santoro's program "Rai per una notte."[2] Disillusioned, Monicelli sketched the portrait of a subdued country, an Italy overcome with fear, which he then followed with expressing the hope of "a real blow [to the system], a revolution, something Italy has never experienced," because, according to him, redemption only comes from sacrifice and pain.

Monicelli's intervention was a perfect fit for the program, whose host, Michele Santoro, made attacking the government of Silvio Berlusconi his main on-air hobbyhorse. But its principal interest lies in the fact that the film director appeared to neither entertain the idea of, nor—even less so—aim for, getting rid of Berlusconi alone. He clearly understood then that the task was not merely to remove a politician from power but indeed to be rid of Berlusconism, "an eclectic ideology made of populism, extreme individualism, historical revisionism, and the use of religion instrumentally as a foundation for identity politics."[3] In short, the goal was to transform an Italian society in which a certain "right-wing culture" took hold well beyond the partisan boundaries and long before Berlusconi's 1994 dramatic entry into politics, a culture whose roots can be found in the 1980s—that beginning of the "great leap backward" (Serge Halimi)—the "accursed eighties" of Thatcher and Reagan, of the ubiquitous "get-rich-quick," the forced individualism of "individuals without individuality," and anti-politics.[4]

Yet despite all that, when, on November 12, 2011 at 9:42 PM, Berlusconi left office with the crowds booing, his demise was due not to popular pressure but to the demands imposed by international financial markets. And for good reason. In the preceding three decades, in the wake of the unprecedented high-point it reached during the after-war years, the Italian Left (but should one perhaps speak in the plural, of Lefts?) frayed, decomposed, and "lost its spine,"[5] ebbing towards its current disastrous condition of dwindling hope and receding horizons. The electoral breakthrough, last February, of "MoVimento 5 Stelle" (M5S – the Five Star Movement), the movement led by comedian Beppe Grillo, which took place against a background of social and political crisis, corresponds to the end of a long political cycle whose aftermath is as yet hard to discern.[6] On the Left, the idea that "new beginnings" are necessary has for several weeks now dominated the period of waiting.[7]

The Newcomers and the Plural Right

Seen from the outside, but not exclusively, the

STEFANIE PREZIOSO *is Professor of European contemporary history at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. She is the author of numerous publications on Italian contemporary history, the First World War, and problems relating to the public use of history. She is one of the organizers of the French Language network "Penser l'émancipation" (Emancipatory Thought), which will hold its second conference in Nanterre on February 19-22, 2014.*

political jolts of the last twenty or thirty years could represent the features of an Italian *Sonderweg,* explainable by the "Latin" anomalies of a weak nation. "The Italian way" is indeed the watchword of journalistic commentary, and is applied to all the political systems that took hold on the Italian peninsula, from fascism to today—an expression that seeks to limit the implications and downplay the meaning of the most diverse political phenomena that have emerged and developed in Italy. Yet in many respects Italy has served as a true political "laboratory" at the heart of Europe. And if this observation holds without a doubt for the length of the twentieth century, it assumes additional weight with regards to the makeup of this new, "plural" [8] Right that emerged in Italy from the upheavals of the early 1990s—a period marked by the collapse of the political system and the disappearance of the Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democratic parties, caught in the "Tangentopoli" corruption storm and the judiciary machine of "mani pulite" (clean hands), but also by the collapse of the Lira; in 1994 the Italian public debt reaches 121.8 percent of GNP and the rate of unemployment explodes.

As one recalls, it is then that Silvio Berlusconi founds "Forza Italia" and presents his movement as the best positioned to assure the passage to a "new Republic," against an "old political class overthrown by reality and overtaken by the times." He then emphasizes his desire to constitute a "pole of liberty" against the "cartel of the Lefts," and promises "a great, new, marvelous Italian miracle."[9] The public appearance of this new political force—associated with the face change of the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), which in 1995 becomes Alleanza Nazionale under the strong push of Gianfranco Fini, and with the powerful surge, from the early 1980s, of Umberto Bossi's party, La Lega Nord (Northern League)—changes the image of the Italian Right and inscribes it as a permanent feature of the political landscape.

While this is not the place to retrace the history of Italy since that faraway year of 1994, a few gridlines will nevertheless permit a better grasp of the defining features of the period that began with that decade. Its key element was without a doubt the change that took place in the way Italian society related to politics and in particular to those political organizations born in the first half of the twentieth century. While in Europe there was, beginning with the 1980s, a general disaffection with politics, in Italy it was coupled with the "moral" crisis that preceded and accompanied operation "clean hands," a series of judicial investigations that exposed a vast network of corruption in which the political world and the financing of the parties were implicated.

It is precisely in that fault line that Berlusconi's new formation appeared, and that despite the fact that the Milanese entrepreneur was himself "deeply implicated in the corruption of the last phase of the First Republic."[10] Berlusconi's "discesa in campo," his entry into the political arena, constituted a true earthquake; a poll concerning "events that have changed Italy the most during the last three decades," conducted in July 2012, put it third in order of importance, below the economic crisis and the introduction of the Euro in 1996, but above Tangentopoli, terrorism, and Berlusconi's own political exit in 2011.[11] Thus, as historian Antonio Gibelli declared in 2010, Berlusconi had indeed "made history."[12] Berlusconi embodied some of the most salient features of the change in Italian society's relation to politics, manufacturing and personifying the new "imaginary" of a side of Italy in which the informal economy plays a structural role, in which individualism dominates—and indeed the most elementary ties of social solidarity vanish—and in which society's "political passion" has been replaced by atomization, and its vision of the world limited to the glitter-covered dancers on offer on every national television channel. One effect of Berlusconism's amazing staying power was that, in part, the Italian public accepted as natural the dissolution of a whole series of paradigms on which its relation to politics and civil society had previously rested.[13]

To this one must add the extraordinary cultural strength of the new Right that emerged in the 1990s, setting the tone for Italian society. This strength lay primarily in a new way of combining diverse political cultures, which did not however smooth the rough edges specific to each tradition. The new culture rested on a particularly effective network (public as well as private TV chains, daily newspapers, journals...) that set itself the task of reshaping public opinion, but also on the construction of narratives of "origins" that made do with whatever the totality of its components was able to provide, from Umberto Bossi's Northern League, that linked frenzied regionalism, racism, and anti-statism, to the neo-fascism of Alleanza Nazionale. Anti-communism was one of the key ideological elements uniting the forces that rallied around Berlusconi. This anti-communism was founded on the memory of an Italian Communist Party that during its history had at one time exceeded two million members, controlled the strongest trade union on the peninsula, and inserted itself in every fissure of Italian society—an unavoidable aspect of the imperfect two-party system that Giorgio Galli described at the end of the 1960s.

The anti-communism of the coalition that formed this plural Right corresponded thus well to an anti-communism of interests, being a convenient fig leaf behind which to battle the welfare state, impose the most anti-social policies, and undo the very conditions of social emancipation. Furthermore, Berlusconi group's stated intention of building a new republic required the utterly uncompromising discrediting of anti-fascism and of the Italian constitution born of the Resistance. It was Gianfranco Fini who played a decisive role in this politics of memory. In 1995, speaking in Fiuggi, Fini called for closing the door on the "century of ideologies," and consigning both fascism and anti-fascism to the history books—seeing that as late as 1994 Fini called Mussolini "the greatest statesman of the century," the effort should have been transparent.[14] In 2000, the regional government of Lazio, led by Francesco Storace of the Alleanza Nazionale and fully committed to this rewriting of history, tasked a commission of experts with censoring the "facetious" school textbooks.[15] In 2002, it was at the national level that a similar political agenda sought to oppose "an ideological political vision that had often distorted irrefutable historical facts for political purpose" in the name of the "non-ideological" reading of history.[16]

This historiographic revisionism was massively broadcast by the media, as it satisfied "a public demand" that conceived "history from the standpoint of its end, of an absolute present in which the relationship with the past is molded to the requirements of the laws of the spectacle."[17] Berlusconi's numerous "gaffes," the last one comparing his children to the Jews under Hitler, are no more than a deviant caricature of the deep roots this historiographic revisionism sank into Italian society. To underestimate this is to fail to understand that this revisionism and its diffusion are also responsible for the Left's difficulty of developing a "revolutionary critique of the present."

"Two Woes in a Single Body"

Certainly, the strength of this "right-wing culture" in Italian society in the last twenty years can be explained by reference to a long list of factors: the "crisis" of the models and cultural values of the "short twentieth century"—this crisis, already embryonic in the 1980s, explodes following the fall of the Berlin Wall; the "destruction of the past, or rather of the social mechanisms that link one's contemporary experience to that of earlier generations, … one of the most characteristic and eerie phenomena of the late twentieth century"[18]; the "end of history" (Francis Fukuyama) looming over the horizon of capitalism's uncontestable victory with its share of enslavement, austerity, poverty, and precariousness; the disorientation that comes with the new challenges and risks faced by a society undergoing a deep mutation, in which the working class drops from sight; but also, and more specific to Italy, that which Francesco Biscione called "the underground of the Republic," namely, the persistence in the peninsula after the Second World War of an anti-democratic and anti-communist culture, which proved a fertile ground for Berlusconi's coalition to plow.[19]

All these factors are necessary for comprehending the apparent "victory" of this new Right, but not sufficient. This victory cannot be understood without noting the opening created by the crisis of the Left and the effective support for Berlusconi by parts of it, support which allowed him throughout these twenty years "to clean his slate and entrench his power."[20] Thus the reorganization of the political field of the Left was essentially limited to presenting an alternative government, first social-democratic (with the 1991 forming of the Democratic Party of the Left and, in 1998, the Left Democrats), then merely democratic—the creation of the Democratic Party in 2007, born from the fusion of former members of the Left Democrats with the Catholics of Romano Prodi.[21]

The Center-Left so constituted, pretending to rid itself of the "dead weight" of twentieth-century totalitarianisms, left by the wayside the political and cultural baggage, the very history of struggle, of the Italian workers' movement, which was already reeling from the repeated attacks of the Socialist Bettino Craxi, close friend of Berlusconi and prime minister in the 1980s. To this was added the deafening, guilty silence of post-communist intellectuals, who abandoned it to the general hounding. The Center-Left thus showed itself amenable to a rereading of the recent past, and in particular of the period of the resistance and anti-fascism, calling for the creation of a "shared memory" on which would then rest the legitimacy of governments coming from the two political poles that have been contesting power between them since 1994.

In fact, the reorganization of the Left corresponded to the abandonment of that heterogeneous group consisting of those who were attached to the idea of social emancipation, namely, those who called themselves communists and of which Giorgio Gaber recalled in 1992 "that they were two people in one body. On the one hand, the personal, everyday strain, and on the other hand, the sense of belonging to a species that wanted to take off and really change life."[22] This abandonment was accompanied by the very renunciation of the ideas of justice and equality. Indeed, between 1996 and 2001 the governments of the Center-Left showed themselves to be the most assiduous in the service of the "virtuous" economic policies of public debt reduction, with their share of liberalization and privatization. In parallel, the Center-Left responded to the "authoritarian democracy" instituted by Berlusconi and his coalition as soon as they consolidated their power, from 2001 on, with the rhetoric of "the lesser evil," thus condemning the radical Left that regrouped in 1991 in the ranks of the Rifondazione Comunista to the single choice between impotence and surrender.

No doubt the same transformation that the Italian Left underwent has been at work everywhere in Europe at about the same time, but in Italy it played a pioneering role that would have a uniquely devastating impact when Rifondazione Comunista, the only radical left party with a national presence, in the words of the writer Daniel Bensaid, is transformed from the "lyrical movementism" of its full participation in the 2001 protests in Genoa, to joining the governing coalition of Romano Prodi in 2006.[23] It is then that, as in the lyrics of Giorgio Gaber, the political horizon recedes because "the dream has withered," and nothing remains except "the person cut in two, on the one side, the one traversing obsequiously the dullness of daily survival, and on the other side, the seagull who gave up the intention of flying. Two woes in a single body."[24]

New Beginnings...

And now? Silvio Berlusconi's repeated forays back into the political arena after his booed 2011 exit; the "technical" government of Mario Monti, a "technocratic white knight whose mandate was to make the tough decisions needed to set Italy right,"[25] at a time when the Italian public debt reached 1,905 billion Euros[26]; the constitution, in April 2013, of the sacred union government by the former Christian-Democrat Enrico Letta—so much tossing and turning that marks the end of a long political cycle, the slow agony of a political system at its last breath.

Meanwhile, Italy dives deeper into the crisis. Thousands of businesses have closed their doors and unemployment is off the charts, especially among the young. Millions live in poverty; a growing number of Italians lose their house when they lose their job. And the inexorable numbers of austerity measures hit workers—whether in traditional jobs or the new, precarious, economy—the unemployed, retirees, men and women alike.

As destructive as the social situation is, the solutions proposed by the Left (and I obviously exclude DP from this locution), both on questions of organization and as a matter of strategic horizon, appear heading towards an impasse. Between 2011 and 2013, the Italian social movements rediscovered—in parts without realizing it—the strength and creativity of their predecessors, the 2001 no-global, the Italian version of the anti-globalization movement, certainly, but also those of the end of the 1960s, the 1970s, and even the 1980s, that sought to redefine, reinvent, and rethink the spaces of the struggle for social liberation. From the farmers of the South to the activists of No-TAV who opposed the high-speed train,[27] from the Sicilian environmental No MUOS to the many committees that emerged from the incredible mobilizations in defense of the commons,[28] from students and artists fighting for freedom of expression and the right to education to migrants protesting for their rights, social movements have indeed continued to grow in strength against every headwind (repression of demonstrations, threat of disproportionate sentencing, censorship of media, etc.), tirelessly bringing their demands into workplaces, public squares, cultural spaces, and online. The last mobilization was as recent as this fall: in October, a general strike lead by the COBAS, CUB, and USB labor organizations[29] brought together tens of thousands of activists, migrants, and workers.[30]

Thousands of conflagrations thus continue to flare up all across the peninsula, but fail the task of finding the capacity to converge and to propose general answers that are capable of expression in the political field. Even more worrying is that the only movement that appears able to canalize this flurry of unrest is the M5S movement of Beppe Grillo, which became the largest political party nationally following the February 2013 elections, in which it won 25.55 percent of the vote in the lower Chamber and 23.79 percent in the Senate. This is a movement that, ideologically "non-ideological," declares itself "neither left, nor right," stigmatizes the "criminality of African immigrants," offers to collaborate with (the neo-fascist) Casa Pound movement, and—through one of its elected representatives—holds that "fascism was originally good and only turned bad later because of racism and the war."[31] And the guru of M5S's leader, Gianroberto Casaleggio, the person behind the 2005 creation of the blog BeppeGrillo.it, participated in the Forum Ambrosetti, an annual gathering of the movers and shakers of Italian capitalism. Strongly centralized around the media star personality of the billionaire Beppe Grillo, who is alone authorized to speak for the movement, M5S thus appears as the almost perfect product of Berlusconism. Yet M5S cannot be simply dismissed, as it is, with much complacency, by members of the Democratic Party—whom Beppe Grillo calls the "DP minus the L" of liberty, to make the point of the almost complete sameness, in terms of actual policies, between the Democrats and Berlusconi's party, the People of Liberty—or by, for example, Rossana Rossanda, who describes it as the "typical right-wing *whoever-ism*,"[32] just as it cannot be reduced to the fact that some of its voters used to vote for the Left (but for which left?).

In fact, M5S embodies not only the rejection of austerity, eurosceptism, and the criticism of the "political caste," but also another political expression that one finds in some variation almost everywhere in Europe, but which has very deep roots in the underground of Italy: the *sovversivismo*, subversivism, that Antonio Gramsci described in his prison notebooks. As the Sardinian Communist wrote,

> the purely Italian concept of the "subversive" can be explained as follows: a negative rather than a positive class position—the people is aware that it has enemies, but only identifies them empirically as the so-called *signori* [lords].... The "subversivism" of these strata has two faces, one turned to the left and one turned to the right, but the left face is simply a means of blackmail; and at the decisive moments always moves to the right, and their "desperate courage" always prefers to have the carabinieri on their side.[33]

Only time will tell. But one thing is already certain: M5S and its 2013 electoral victory—a true political "tsunami," according to the explicit goals of the Genoan comedian—did not deliver a "decisive blow" to the so-called Second Republic, instituted by the respective efforts, each in its turn, of Berlusconi's formation and the Center-Left. It is true that at the time this text is written, the Italian Right is undergoing a crisis, triggered by the creation of the "New Center-Right" by Angelino Alfano, Berlusconi's protégé. Yet nothing has really changed, thus seemingly justifying Pasolini's observation that "Italy is a circular country, leopard-like, in which everything changes so as to remain the same."[34]

Despite the grandiloquent prognostications of M5S, the system has not collapsed; the "popular uprising" is yet to come; but injustice moves on with an even surer foot.[35] "There is an open war in Italy," denounced recently by the writer Andrea Camilleri, a war that is going to waste two or three generations.[36] While waiting, Italy's radical Left, recording the fact that "everywhere in Europe" "the anticapitalist left forces experience a difficulty both material and of political strategy," declares "new beginnings."[37] Indeed, "Sinistra Critica" (the "Critical Left") was born already in 2007, in response to Rifondazione Comunista's turn towards participation in the government, as

> a political project which, in the framework of the Rifondazione Comunista experience, aimed to blend the necessary refounding of Marxist thought and practice with energies made available by the new social and political movements. In this sense, it has found inspiration and its political project in social disputes, in the life and vicissitudes of the labor movement, in the antiglobalization and for peace movements, in the new feminism and in the LGBT movement.[38]

Today, noticing that it has not been able "to produce a strong and credible alternative to the drift of the Italian left," Sinistra Critica dissolved itself to allow for the hatching of other projects, "one which proposes a political organization more than ever aimed at a strong class rooting, the other intent upon undertaking, in a class perspective, the way of promiscuity between 'political' and 'social.'"[39] Yet one thing is nevertheless certain. In this transitional phase between the old that is dying and the new that cannot be born, it is difficult to discern how the radical left can play a role in a process that ties together the multiple foci of conflagration that flare up everywhere with their so many different idioms, but which strain to reveal a horizon of discontinuity with the present.

NOTES

1. Translated from French by Gabriel Ash.
2. Rai per una notte, March 25, 2010; http://internetepolitica.blogosfere.it/2010/11/addio-a-mario-monicelli-il-testamento-a-rai-per-una-notte-la-rivoluzione-nella-civilta-del-bunga-bun.html.
3. Gabriele Turi, "Quella cultura che soppravviverà al suo interprete," *La Repubblica*, Oct. 16, 2010.
4. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid times: living in an age of uncertainty* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2007).
5. Perry Anderson, "Italy. An invertebrate left. Italy's Squandered Heritage," *London Review of Books*, March 12, 2009.
6. The capitalized V refers to the 2007 inauguration of Beppe Grillo's movement with the launch of the so-called *vaffanculo* day, literaly "fuck you" day, a day of anger against Italian politics.
7. Sinistra Critica (Critical Left), The National Coordination Committee of Sinsitra Critica, "New Beginnings," Aug. 29, 2013, http://sinistracritica.org/.
8. G. Caldiron, *La destra plurale. Dalla preferenza nazionale alla tolleranza zero* (Rome: Manifestolibri, 2001).
9.Silvio Berlusconi, "Il discorso della discesa in campo. Per il mio Paese," Jan. 26, 1994, www.cini92.altervista.org/discorsoberlusconi.html.
10. Perry Anderson, "An entire order converted into what it was intended to end," *London Review of Books*, Feb. 26, 2009.
11. Cf. www.demos.it/a00739.php; see also Ilvo Diamanti, "'Peggio di Berlusconi nessuno mai.' Un Italiano su due boccia il ritorno," *La Repubblica*, July 16, 2012.
12. Antonio Gibelli, *Berlusconi passato alla storia. L'Italia nell'era della democrazia autoritaria* (Rome: Donzelli, 2010).
13. Gianpasquale Santomassimo, "Marxismo e storia dal solido al liquido," *Passato e Presente*, No. 72, 2007, p. 138.
14. Intervention of Filippo Focardi in the colloquium "Anti-Fascism in Question, 1922-1945: New Objects, New Debates," held in Paris, June 2013.
15. See in this regard the work of the 7th Commission of the Italian Parliament, mentioned notably by G. Turi, cited in note 3. For the Lazio, see Consiglio regionale del Lazio, "Gruppo Alleanza nazionale-Mozione 9 novembre 2000," in www.edscuola.it/.
16. Resolution 7-00163, approved by the 7th Commission of the Italian Parliament, Dec. 11, 2002, www.edscuola.it/archivio/norme/varie/ris7_00163.html.
17. Pier Paolo Poggi, *Nazismo e revisionismo storico* (Rome: Manifesto libri, 1997).
18. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short*

Twentieh Century 1914-1991 (London: Abacus, 1997).

19. F. Biscione, *Il sommerso della Repubblica. La democrazia italiana e la crisi dell'antifascismo* (Turin: Bollati-Boringhieri, 2003).

20. Anderson, "An invertebrate left."

21. Adele Sarno, "Stragi, il 'papello' e tangentopoli. 1992, l'anno che cambiò l'Italia," *La Repubblica*, Oct. 18, 2011. Marco Berlinguer, "Qualcosa rinascerà ma sarà diverso," interview with Rossana Rossanda, Nov. 18, 2012, http://web.rifondazione.it/.

22. Giorgio Gaber, "Qualcuno era comunista," 1992; See the video recording: www.youtube.com/watch?v=emoFu3iejiQ.

23. Daniel Bensaid, "Sur le retour de la question politico-stratégique" *Critique communiste*, no. 179, March 2006.

24. Gaber, "Qualcuno era comunista."

25. Rachel Donadio, "As a Premier Prepares to Depart, the Talk Is of Lost Opportunities," *New York Times*, Dec. 14, 2012.

26. *La Repubblica*, Dec. 14, 2012.

27. A civic mobilization in the Val de Suse, contesting the construction of a line of high-speed train intended to connect Turin to Lyon.

28. The No Muos bring together Sicilian activists fighting against the Mobile user objective system, a satellite communication system of the U.S. Navy. The committees for the defense of the common good emerge from the mobilizations around the referendum of June 12-13, 2011, against nuclear energy, water privatization, and "legitimate obstruction" (which allows government ministers to avoid trial); their startling victory in the referendum has been all but forgotten.

29. The COBAS (grassroots committees) emerged in the 1980s in various businesses and professional sectors, in response to trade unions federations deemed too conciliatory. Today, the two main forces in labor organization are *Confederazione COBAS*, primarily based in the public sector since its inception (in particular the teachers' formation, the *"Cobas della Scuola"*), and the *Unione sindacale di base* (USB), formed in May 2010 by the unification of a number of independent unions including *Rappresentanze sindacali di base* (RdB), the *Sindacato dei lavoratori intercategoriali* (SdL), and parts of the *Confederazione unitaria di base* (CUB).

30. Andrea Martini, "18th and 19th October: two special days in the fight back in Italy," Oct. 27, 2013, www.internationalviewpoint.org/.

31. See Andrea d'Urso, "Représentativité démocratique et conscience de classe," *Contre Temps*, No. 17, April 2013, pp. 111-35; Antonio Moscato, "Un nuovo bilancio del movimento di Grillo," Nov. 3, 2013, http://antoniomoscato.altervista.org/.

32. Berlinguer, interview with Rossana Rossanda, Nov. 17, 2012. She refers here to l'Uomo qualunque, the movement of Guglielmo Giannini founded in 1944, which led a ferocious campaign against the antifascist parties and politics in general, a receptacle for discontent that would converge later in the Italian Social Movement (MSI).

33. A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 272.

34. Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Scritti corsari* (Milan: Garzanti, 1975), p. 87.

35. Alain Badiou, *Le réveil de l'histoire* (Paris: Lignes, 2011).

36. Andrea Camilleri, "Alla ricerca dell'impegno perduto," *Micromega*, No. 6, 2013.

37. Sinistra Critica, "New Beginnings."

38. Sinistra Critica, "New Beginnings."

39. Sinistra Critica, "New Beginnings." The two organizations coming out of these projects are Sinistra Anticapitalista (http://anticapitalista.org) and Solidarietà Internazionalista (http://solidarietainternazionalista.wordpress.com).

"Nothing is Too Good for the Working Class"

Classical Music, the High Arts, and Workers' Culture[1]

John Halle

Last season's announcement of the New York Philharmonic's Henry Kravis Award, financed by a seven figure withdrawal from the ten figure bank account of one of America's more notorious financers, is one of many indications that while its influence has waned, classical music still has friends in high places. These connections tend to accrue mainly to high profile conductors, opera stars, and virtuoso soloists. But even those not inhabiting the peaks of the profession will occasionally find themselves recipients of scholarships, grants, or small awards for which plutocrats of various sorts have footed the bill. And so it is not uncommon to find ourselves at a dinner or reception where we, or friends of ours, are being feted and in this capacity, to shake the hand of a bona fide one percenter, engaging in small talk with him (it is usually him) or, more likely, his spouse.

While it requires a substantial leap of imagination to see much of an overlap between our interests and theirs, musicians' comparatively close proximity to elites makes it understandable that we are more susceptible to the infection which the Marxists diagnose as false consciousness. Whether we are capable of identifying and acting politically in accordance with our real economic interests, as opposed to those of our aspirational or imagined social milieu is the question raised in my article "Composers and the Plutocracy."[2] While I will have something more to say about that in the following, the main focus will be on a related, reciprocal question: whether the work which we and others in the so-called "high" arts produce has a place within a movement for the 99%. Any discussion around this subject needs to begin with the recognition that for at least three generations now, the answer to the question has been an obvious no. The high arts generally, and classical music in particular, are seen as, if not by the elite, for them, which is to say designed mainly for their consumption and, as argued by Lawrence Levine,[3] serving their agenda. It will therefore seem farfetched to claim that classical music could serve as a medium for critiquing the 1% and function in support of mass movements.

But it turns out that in the not too distant past, it was taken for granted by many on the left that it could do so. The main period where this potential was explored, namely, during the political and artistic ferment within what is known as the cultural front,[4] provides us not only inspiration, but also indications of how a movement in which we are involved might take shape and what our role within it might consist of. For this reason, it seems worth revisiting some of this history and the controversies which became inevitable as artists made a sincere effort to function in the service of the 99%, repudiating their traditional relationship with economic and social elites.

John Halle *is Director of Studies in Music Theory and Practice at Bard College.*

OF COURSE, WHILE GRANTING the possibility that we can move from false to class consciousness, it needs to be conceded that the well-worn stereotypes of classical musicians as mannered and obsequious servants of wealth and the wealthy are based on fact, albeit facts from three centuries ago. Then, as is well known, most composers were, like Haydn, attached

> The well-worn stereotypes of classical musicians as mannered and obsequious servants of wealth and the wealthy are based on fact, albeit facts from three centuries ago.

to, or, like Mozart, failing to acquire positions within European dynastic royal courts. Bach at the beginning of his career was also a beneficiary of these arrangements. A good indication of what was expected of him and the others in their relations with superiors was the composer's inscription on the title page of the Brandenburg Concerti:

> As I had the good fortune a few years ago to be heard by Your Royal Highness, at Your Highness's commands, and as I noticed then that Your Highness took some pleasure in the little talents which Heaven has given me for Music, and as in taking Leave of Your Royal Highness, Your Highness deigned to honour me with the command to send Your Highness some pieces of my Composition: I have in accordance with Your Highness's most gracious orders taken the liberty of rendering my most humble duty to Your Royal Highness with the present Concertos, which I have adapted to several instruments; begging Your Highness most humbly not to judge their imperfection with the rigor of that discriminating and sensitive taste, which everyone knows Him to have for musical works, but rather to take into benign Consideration the profound respect and the most humble obedience which I thus attempt to show Him.

Bach's transparently absurd protestations of his "little talents" and "imperfections" and his entreaties to be exempted from his majesty's stern but fair judgment are a lavish albeit not atypical display of flattery, understood then not as demeaning to, but as required of, those expecting to remain at court. At the same time, musicians recognized their value and were sometimes able to negotiate favorable terms for their service. But overly aggressive assertions of independence would subject them to punishment, Mozart's disciplining at the hands of the Salzburg Archbishop being the most celebrated instance; Bach having served a prison term for incurring the displeasure of his royal patron in Dresden is another.

Aristocratic patronage remained a source of composers' livelihoods throughout the nineteenth century, with Beethoven's annuity contract which supported him from 1809 until the end of his life secured through the contributions of a consortium of Viennese nobility. Later in the century, Tschaikovsky's musical career was lavishly supported in equal measure by the Imperial Court and by a generous allowance made available to him by his admirer, Madame von Meck, an heiress to a railway fortune. Each of these arrangements, significantly, required very little of either composer. Most notably, it did not require their appearance at court, or even their presence in the near vicinity: Beethoven was only required to remain in Vienna, Tschaikovsky, famously, met his patroness on only one occasion, their relationship having been otherwise entirely epistolatory. Independence, as opposed to subservience was, by this point, taken as the great artist's prerogative, and elites were willing to financially underwrite the conditions necessary for artists to achieve it.

In this connection, it is hard to avoid mentioning the figure of Richard Wagner who parlayed musical genius, formidable intellect, and social connections into a position of considerable economic power and political influence.[5] While Wagner would be appropriated and serve as a foundational inspiration for National Socialism, less well known is Wagner's friendship with Bakunin and his leadership role in the 1849 Dresden uprisings.[6] That Wagner would remain in the good graces of European royals, ultimately being provided an unlimited budget by his Bayreuth patron King Ludwig, is indicative of composers relating to hereditary nobility on an increasingly equal footing—recognized by the latter as de facto "aristocrats of the soul."

Roughly concurrent with these evolving forms of elite patronage was the ascendancy of the merchant class and the growth of cities which led to the creation of large public concert halls, performances which were highly lucrative for touring virtuosi. Fees derived from concerts were augmented by sales of composers' works through the burgeoning music publishing industry, and eventually, recordings, the combination of which provided some musicians access to real wealth. Eventually, musicians were increasingly able to cut their ties with feudal courts and patrons entirely, becoming entrepreneurs marketing and selling their musical product to an increasingly affluent consumer base.

But having managed to thrive under the market's invisible hand they found themselves increasingly subject to its vicissitudes. This became most apparent during the post-WWI period in which Europe was unable to regain its economic footing. By the 1930s, conditions had deteriorated to the point that many began to question elites' competence in managing economic affairs and moral and intellectual fitness to govern. This recognition in some cases emboldened musicians to begin to question their traditional allegiance to the political right.[7] It was in this context that we begin to see something more or less unprecedented in music history: groups of classical musicians committed to participating in organized radical and even revolutionary left politics.

Perhaps the first musician easily identifiable within this category was the German composer Hanns Eisler. Considered by Schoenberg his most brilliant student, Eisler would become radicalized in his early twenties, attempting to join the Communist Party (he was rejected for failing to pay his dues) and succeeding Kurt Weill as a collaborator with Berthold Brecht. Forced into exile in 1933, Eisler moved to New York City where he would exert an influence on the members of the Composers' Collective which, like the Berlin-based November Group of which Eisler was a member, consisted of artists more or less sympathetic to and operating under the auspices of the CP.

Among the Collective's membership, which included Henry Cowell (composer of "The Banshee" and other modernist classics), Marc Blitzstein ("The Cradle will Rock"), Earl Robinson ("The Ballad of Americans," "Joe Hill"), Alex North (film score for "A Streetcar Named Desire"), was the best known American composer of concert music, Aaron Copland. Copland's political trajectory during this period is representative of many in his generation. Already sympathetic to socialism through the candidacy and writings of Eugene Debs, upon returning to New York City from Paris in 1925 Copland would belong to artistic circles which, according to his biographer Howard Pollock, "identified strongly with 'the masses' and the 'proletariat' and spoke confidently of the coming 'revolution' and the collapse of 'bourgeois capitalism.'"

Along similar lines to other artists and writers associated with the cultural front, the Composers' Collective, according to Pollock, viewed themselves as seeking "to find a style of music appropriate to the Marxist revolution," though this style turned out, not surprisingly, to be not so easily identified or achieved. In theory, all sides agreed with Big Bill Heywood's adage that "nothing is too good for the working class." When it came to the arts generally and music in particular, the question of what "the best" was and who should determine it was hard to answer. One view, associated with Eisler and at least initially influential, was along traditional lines, taking high arts and culture generally in more or less their existing form as constituting a pinnacle of human achievement.[8] The revolution would view them as it would any of the feudal and haute bourgeoisie's most coveted possessions, as assets to be liberated and made available to the masses, just as one would a castle, its grounds, its Rembrandts and Velazquezes, or the crown jewels.

But it was also recognized that Eisler's vision required working class audiences able to appreciate what was being provided for them, or at least a desire to achieve a requisite degree of conventional musical and cultural literacy. This entailed their being provided access to an education far above the rudimentary level that most had received. It should be understood that regarding a lack of familiarity or appreciation of the high arts as a form of impoverishment was not mere paternalism among vanguardist elements of the leadership. That workers themselves recognized their experience of cultural deprivation and economic oppression as linked can be seen in Stanley Aronowitz's description of his working class Jewish family as committed to "'high' art [as] the only possible cultural legacy for a working class that sought to transcend the degraded conditions of its subordinate existence."[9] While it would result in a rightward political trajectory in his case, journalist Joe Queenan observes along similar lines that it was "Because of my working-class background, [that] 'serious' music was important to me—not only because it was mysterious and beautiful in a way the Rolling Stones were not, but because it confirmed that I had cut my ties with the proletariat and 'arrived.'"[10]

The demand among workers for the education enabling them to transcend their cultural impoverishment was fulfilled by two different institutions within the organized left. One was the labor unions which were, as has been observed, very different organizations from the narrowly focused, legalistic bureaucracies they have since become. An indication can be seen in a 2006 newsgroup posting[11] from upstate New York electrical worker Jerry Monaco:

> My Italian working class neighborhood in an industrial town was ruled by General Electric, the Catholic Church, the democratic machine, and the union local. But the people in that neighborhood I remember from 1965, had a good eye for "the quality" of certain things—good food of course, but also good music . . . My great grandfather could tell you why Verdi was good and Puccini was "like adding sugar to honey" and he never even finished the third grade. . . . My great Uncle Tony could tell you why Louis Armstrong was great . . . and why he liked Frank Sinatra and Billy Holiday but why so many other popular singers were "empty." Uncle Tony never graduated from high school, but he did take classes in classical music [at] the union hall. He belonged to a reading group at the union hall and read poetry. Yes there was a poetry group for the factory workers at the union hall in Schenectady, NY. I tend to think that because such people were around I learned to appreciate quality.

There is anecdotal evidence that Monaco's experience was not unusual: union halls fulfilled an important social, cultural, and educational function for many thousands of workers, though so far as I know, these have not been the subject of much scholarly attention.

Although the unions' role was substantial, probably more central in advancing workers' cultural education in the beginning of the twentieth century were the now mostly forgotten workers schools operated under the sponsorship of the Communist Party. These, which included the Thomas Jefferson School for Social Science in New York, the Samuel Adams School in Boston, the Abraham Lincoln School in Chicago, the Los Angeles People's Educational Center, and the San Francisco Labor School, would spread to virtually every major city with a yearly enrollment of many thousands at their peak.[12] While weighted towards the social sciences, economics, history, and sociology, taught from a Marxian perspective, a substantial humanities and arts curriculum was also available to students, with courses at the flagship Jefferson School in music history and music theory taught by composers such as Wallingford Riegger and Marc Blitzstein and by scholars such as Sidney Finkelstein and Charles Seeger. While these would be best described as music appreciation, that they were pitched at an atypically high level can be seen by the specialized topics covered, such as a class devoted to "the chamber music of Beethoven."[13] Additional evidence is provided by transcripts of the House Un-American Activities Committee making snide reference to classes taught by the distinguished emigré scholar Dr. Joachim Schumacher on "the bourgeois music culture in the period of monopoly capitalism"[14] and "the topography of Carl Maria Von Weber." Given the total enrollment which in some years numbered as many as 10,000, music classes at Jefferson School can reasonably be seen as having helped create a working-class presence among the core of enthusiasts for standard repertory works which was, at least until recently, a distinguishing feature of concert life of New York City.

In addition to its role in developing an appreciation for "the classics," what can be referred to as the organized left, that is, the Communist Party, along with its splinter parties and labor unions (some affiliated with the CP, others hostile to it) frequently used their facilities and publicity networks to present musical events. While only some of these featured classical musicians, the scale on which these occurred was impressive. One of the most important venues was the ILGWU's summer retreat Unity House whose 1,200-seat open air concert hall, according to a pamphlet circulated at the time, featured "famous guest stars" in addition to orchestral programs performed by a "brilliant, permanent company of musicians." A 1938 *Life Magazine* profile[15] of the "million dollar resort" suggests that it "would make a fine setting for a movie," describing a boy-meets-girl romance against the backdrop of "listening to string quartets" and the 2,000-volume library. The union workers pictured in the issue look like nothing so much as present day students at my own school (Bard College), privileged hipster sophisticates sporting wrap-around sunglasses, chinos, and sneakers. While probably a cynical attempt by *Life* and its publisher, the notorious media mogul Henry Luce, to promote the ILGWU as a bulwark against other more left leaning unions, it is nonetheless revealing that *Life* presents union life as having achieved not only decent wages and working conditions for its members, but something approaching glamour.

The organized left assumed a role not just as an inheritor but, to a significant extent, as a curator of artistic high culture.

WHAT THESE ANECDOTES attest to is the organized left having assumed a role not just as an inheritor but, to a significant extent, as a curator of artistic high culture. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, it would be high culture along the most traditional, so-called Arnoldian lines, a reference to the Victorian figure Matthew Arnold who famously described the arts as "the best which has been thought and said." The implicit statement conveyed by the left was that the kind of relationship of the arts with society that a reactionary nineteenth century Eton headmaster envisions is not only not inconsistent with economic radicalism but that a workers' state offers its best hope for survival.[16] While subsequent decades offer conflicting evidence as to whether this was a reasonable status for the left to aspire to and whether it could assume it effectively, there is some evidence in its favor. In particular, while much was amiss in the later years of the Soviet Union, it can in retrospect be seen as the last bastion of classical music in something approximating a traditional, viable, and even vibrant form: it was more or less unanimously conceded that the greatest virtuosi of the second half of the twentieth century, Richter, Oistrakh, Rostropovich, among many others, were nurtured by the Soviet System and found a place as cultural icons within it. Furthermore, unlike in the West where postwar avant garde composers tended to be relegated to the status of "uninvited guests to a dinner party," in the words of Polish composer Witold Lutoslawski, Soviet contemporary composers such as Shostakovich and Schnitke were honored by general audiences, their works being appreciated as at once contemporary and as a legitimate extension of the tradition, in sharp distinction to the attitudes of audiences towards the self-conscious "Year Zero" ideology promulgated by Western high modernists such as Pierre Boulez. Richard Taruskin's report of the premier of the Shostakovich 15th Symphony describes the audience receiving the work as "a grateful, emotional salute to a cherished life companion, a fellow citizen and fellow sufferer, who had forged a mutually sustaining relationship with his public."[17] This was, according to Taruskin, "altogether outside the experience of any musician in my part of the world." In particular, it would be hard to imagine this reception applying to any Western composers of the postwar period, even the most celebrated who were to some degree respected, but in an important sense not beloved.


THE UNION'S SUMMER RESORT, UNITY HOUSE, MAKES A FINE SETTING FOR A MOVIE

Hollywood has not yet become aware of the movie possibilities in a union like I.L.G.W.U., nor realized how gay and lovely a setting the union's own summer resort, Unity House, would make. Set in Pennsylvania's Poconos, two hours from New York, Unity House is a $1,000,000 country-club hotel for I.L.G.W.U. members. A producer might find inspiration in these pictures or a scenario like this:

Girl works in pantie factory, does tap dance in her local's revue. After show, meets boy who jeers at her union devotion. She flounces off, remembers conversation at work next day, stabs self with scissors in rage. Disabled, she decides to use $7 weekly compensation toward Unity vacation. In Unity bus meets boy, newly hired as athletic director. At Unity, both are overwhelmed by modern administration building and dining hall (shown on opposite page), fine quarters, lovely lake, pretty woods. She swims, boats, plays tennis and handball, rides horseback (like girls on *front cover*), listens to string quartet and guest comedian, dances. Quarrels incessantly with boy, who is impressed with union but won't show it. She wanders wistfully alone watching other Unity boys & girls at lake (see *page 51*). Goes canoeing with boy, gets mad, jumps off into woods, gets lost. Boy finds her, promises to love her and join a union. Lovelight creeps into her eyes as the dawn comes up over dining hall, seating capacity 1,100.

A welcome to Unity is given to anyone, but lowest rates ([illegible] a week) are for I.L.G.W.U. members. Members of other unions pay [illegible] a week, non unionists [illegible]. Everything but riding is free.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Their seminal role within the Soviet Union notwithstanding, the Eislerian/Arnoldian vision of high arts within working class culture would not, ultimately, be sustained by left political formations in the West. Among the reasons for the decline was, on the one side, intellectuals becoming increasingly aware of the climate of repression under Stalin, which extended to the targeting of creative artists, most notably Shostakovich. In response, most composers and musicians would abandon the Communist Party, fracturing their alliance with the working class achieved under the cultural front umbrella, with most ultimately finding themselves somewhere on the spectrum from the liberal left to the neo-conservative right. On the other side, the working class would not always be as open as Aronowitz and Monaco would have predicted to the attempts to provide them with cultural and artistic guidance. Among many indications, a consultant hired by the ILGWU to offer advice on programming at Unity House noted that "the working class patrons. . . did not care for the serious entertainment, nor did they want to be uplifted, report[ing] that Unity House had too much culture, classical music, heavy drama, and surreal dancing. [He] suggested that it lighten up with lowbrow humor, dance contests, amateur nights and costume balls."[18] As the unions were abandoning their commitment to high culture in the 1950s, composers were moving in the other direction, viewing themselves, as noted in a widely circulated article[19] by Milton Babbitt, as "specialists" in an arcane technical discipline, who should no more make accommodations to popular tastes than would an algebraic topologist or quantum physicist. Predictably, it would not be long before the gap between working class and high musical culture would widen to the point that no bridge between the two would seem possible or even imaginable.

In retrospect, it appears obvious that the Eislerian/Arnoldian view could not survive the general resistance to the imposition of a high art which most found alien and an increasingly uncompromising and hermetic classical music establishment celebrating its refusal to be dictated to by an unsophisticated broad public. What would eventually supplant Eisler as the dominant musical philosophy informing not just the Communist Party but the left across the board was one which would embrace and celebrate working class musical culture, rather than repudiate it as alienated and degraded. This view would be associated with another Composers' Collective member, Charles Seeger, then a composer and musicologist, now best known as the father of Pete Seeger, who should be seen as functioning as a proselytizing Aaron to his father's Moses.

Whereas for Eisler, the foundation of the new musical culture would remain recognized masterworks and classical forms in which they were composed, the Seegers rejected elite, haute bourgeois high arts as inherently undemocratic and authoritarian. Rather, what needed to be recognized and celebrated by the left were indigenous popular forms of music, which, while necessarily expressively impoverished and stunted by capitalism, would provide the foundation on which a rich proletarian musical culture would develop. Among these indigenous styles was the urban, cosmopolitan variant, jazz, the subject of Seeger's *Daily Worker* colleague Sidney Finkelstein's "Jazz a Peoples Music," one of the first serious studies of the idiom, anticipating by many years its eventual institutionalization within university jazz studies departments and canonization by Ken Burns (among others) as "America's classical music." The rural variant was folk music, which Pete would passionately champion in a now seven-decade-long career. Folk would become during the fifties culturally and commercially central, as groups such as the Weavers (of which Pete was a member) and then their well-scrubbed, depoliticized successors such as the Kingston Trio, the New Christy Minstrels, and The Brothers Four, took their place on the hit parade.

The folk revolution would be succeeded in short order by rock, which would, to an even greater degree, define itself by its rejection of high art and elite culture: gone were traditional forms celebrated by Eisler, almost entirely vanished were extended self-contained instrumental works, these replaced largely by songs, usually of dimensions appropriate for commercial airplay. Orchestral instruments would be displaced by the guitars inherited from the folk revolution, with amplified guitar becoming the vehicle for virtuousic displays of a familiar Liszt-Paganinian sort, albeit projected into stadiums holding audiences two orders of magnitude larger than those of the nineteenth century.

A more conspicuous and significant departure can be found in the extra-musical accouterments of the concert ritual. The new standards, which applied to both folk and rock, and the public's quick and enthusiastic acceptance of them were accurately described in a recent letter[20] to the *New York Times* from Grant Wiggins of Hopewell, N.J.: "For the past 40 years, rock has taught us that emoting and participating with our bodies and voices are part of the show. You can't do that in a concert hall. The entire society dresses informally now; concerts still involve formal wear by the audience, as if back in the 1890s."

As Mr. Wiggins suggests, not only would formal concert dress, tuxedos, evening gowns, high-heels, and patent leather shoes be replaced by the worker's blue jeans, shirts, and sneakers or cowboy boots. Acculturated speech would be replaced by vernacular r-droppings, dipthongizations, "ain't," "wontcha," and "dontcha." Field hollers and screams of the evangelical church were imported for use both by the performers and audience. Most conspicuously, the repressed codes of behavior claimed by Levine as mechanisms to discipline a restive working class at the turn of the previous century would be jettisoned with audiences now taking for granted active as opposed to passive participation in the concert ritual. All this would be at least superficially consistent with Seeger's philosophy, if not to his liking, as will be discussed momentarily.

Before we engage this point, it is worth digressing to note that the replacement of haute bourgeois standards of decorum by those associated with the working class is often taken as a victory, the cultural equivalent of the storming of the winter palace or the sans culottes entering Versailles. But if this was a victory, it needs to be well understood that it was a tiny skirmish in a much larger war in which the devastation of the working class was virtually total. The indications of the defeat are by now so familiar as to barely require mentioning, among them, the aggregate wealth of the top 500 families exceeding that of the bottom 100 million, the decline of private (and now public sector) union density to single-digit levels reminiscent of the darkest, most Dickensian periods in industrial history, the leveling or even drop in life expectancy of lower income groups over the past two decades, etc.[21]

Rather than merely register a correlation, another possibility is along Eislerian lines, viewing the collapse of high musical culture as connected to the decline of the working class and its capacity to resist the elite campaign against it. That this explanation might seem dubious is partly indicative of the distance that we have travelled from the Composers' Collective. Among the few who have been willing to link the collapse of the left's core agenda to the collapse in musical high culture is R.G. Davis who, in the late 1980s, attempted to rehabilitate Eisler in one of the initial issues of the seminal left journal *Rethinking Marxism*.[22]

In particular, Davis endorses Eisler's view that "simple music does and can reflect only simple political thinking." While conceding that they will not necessarily do so, "it is easier for people who appreciate complex music to move on to an appreciation of complex political problems, than for those who limit themselves to folk (pop, rock, gospel, blues, etc.)" Echoing Eisler's endorsement of the "rigorous methodology," of serialism as "inherently anti-thetical to fascism," Davis argues that the "sonata form [which] entertains two thoughts working simultaneously" embodies a "Hegelian . . . notion of contradiction" and thereby can support a critical discourse. The "easy resolution of folk which has come down from the 1930s into the 1980s via Charles Seeger and his followers is almost always 'feel good' music . . . with only room for one theme and little for oppositional dialogue." This is because

> the form of most folk and almost all jazz/pop music does not (cannot) even reflect industrial social relations as we know them, much less make a comment on them. Classical music, or music organized by a trained composer, art

> music, is more likely to produce an instructional metaphor (and form) with which to examine the foundations of corporate society.

While I would not necessarily endorse it, Davis's equation of "easy listening" with the easy platitudes of corporate public relations and government press releases propagated through the commercial media seems reasonable enough. A bit more of a stretch, but certainly worth considering is Davis's metaphor relating the habits of thought necessary to grasp the logic of an extended composition, say, the Sibelius Fifth Symphony, with the sort of critical engagement required to make sense of the systems of hierarchy and control in complex political economies.

It probably won't come as a surprise that Davis's article made little impact, and was likely regarded by the few who read it as somewhat eccentric. The reason for this returns us to Seeger and to the basic outlines of the Seegerian philosophy. In particular it requires the recognition that these have by now achieved a nearly hegemonic status in popular consciousness—including among the left. Eclecticism of the sort endorsed by both Seegers now reigns supreme, all musical genres are equally worthy of celebration, assumed, when subject to the form of analysis appropriate to the genre, to inevitably reveal considerable and sometimes astounding subtlety and sophistication. This provides the grounds for taking as established truth Duke Ellington's remark that all styles are equally able to produce the only two meaningfully distinguishable types of music: good and bad. And with this comes the corollary that musicologist Robert Fink advanced more than a decade and half ago and worth restating here, that classical music is by now "one style among many and by no means the most prestigious."

Accepting Ellington leaves Eisler and the Eislerians on shaky ground—proselytizers for a self-important elite agenda bearing some resemblance to the vanguardist intolerance which would be a notably unattractive feature of the state socialist regimes many of them endorsed, reluctantly or otherwise. From this follows the rather underwhelming conclusion that rather than escaping their class to the greener fields of high culture, the workers could have gotten what they wanted by staying where they were. Stanley Aronowitz's father and Jerry Monaco's uncle had no reason to have felt deprived in the first place. The education they received could have been better directed to an appreciation of what they already possessed. Rather than climbing the high culture mountain, they could have gotten to the summit by driving their air-conditioned Impalas up the other side.

To the extent that the demise of musical high culture and the elevation of popular forms, both in terms of their prestige and their nearly complete domination of the musical marketplace, constitutes a triumph, Seeger has triumphed. But it is by no means clear that Seeger himself would have regarded it as such. One indication to the contrary is provided by an iconic moment within rock history, the 1965 Newport Folk Festival at which Bob Dylan made his final break with unamplified folk music, assaulting the audience with a maximal volume Maggie's Farm. Charles, nearly 80, accompanied Pete. And while accounts of Pete's hostility to amplified rock are likely highly exaggerated by Dylan fans wanting to construe a Seeger-Dylan standoff in mythic, Oedipal terms, Charles likely did have misgivings both with respect to Dylan's performance and with the form which the rock revolution was ultimately to take.

To recognize what these may have been requires looking more closely at Seeger's stated views which are somewhat subtler than Davis's critique of them would suggest. One statement is contained in a memo[23] Seeger wrote in his capacity as director of the WPA Federal Music Project overseeing those working under the FMP's auspices. Most prominently, Seeger will be seen to promote a horizontalist musical culture privileging active participation in music above passive listening: the former is the "essential thing," whereas the later was "secondary" according to him. Complementing this was a

> Another possibility is viewing the collapse of high musical culture as connected to the decline of the working class and its capacity to resist the elite campaign against it.

rejection of the peaks of musical achievement, i.e. the production of masterpieces as the standard by which musical culture should be judged: "As every person is musical . . . [t]he musical culture of the nation is to be estimated upon the extent of participation of the whole population rather than upon the extent of the virtuosity of a fraction of it." And given that "music as a group activity is more important than music as individual accomplishment," "professional music" should not be "artificially stimulated." Finally, perhaps most challenging of all, Seeger wasn't interested in whether a piece of music was or was not, in some sense, "good"; rather he was interested in "what is it good for?"

These amount to a direct attack on the Eislerian vision of the high musical arts, albeit of a familiar sort. The "artificial stimulation" Seeger refers to implicates the many years of subsidized, formal training which are necessary for classical musicians; in contrast, the skills required to perform in most other styles are learned "on the job," mainly by performing and socially engaging with others. The subsidies are justifiable if one assumes that the masterpieces of the literate medium have a unique, transcendent value. But this assumption is challenged by Seeger, raising doubts as to whether the question of musical quality—"what is good"—is even meaningful in the absence of an understanding of what is gained by defining a hierarchy of musical value—"what is it good for?" Asking the latter question turns back on itself classical music's commitment to "timeless masterpieces," equating these to an economy similarly hierarchically organized albeit around the production of concentrations of wealth and power. How can we criticize one, and celebrate the other, Seeger quite reasonably asks the left?

The implications of Seeger's horizontalism, its rejection of rigid hierarchies of taste defined by the traditional, sacralized canon, its devalorization of tuxedo-clad celebrity conductors, singers, and instrumentalists, its deflation of the pomposity of traditional concert music rituals are of a piece with a populist left critique particularly applicable to a self-improvement oriented, Mortimer Adler-reading bourgeoisie of the 1950s. But a minute's thought will reveal that what was intended as an attack on the musical culture of the previous century dominated by the classics is just as applicable to the contemporary musical hierarchy in which the classical canon has little to no place. Most conspicuously, music has for years been dominated by a hierarchy of stars having a more or less comparable public profile and social status as Liszt, Caruso, Bernstein, or Paganini. And music fans are obsessed with what they take unproblematically to be "the best" relying on objective rankings systems such the top 40, youtube hits, or downloads as a proxies for quality. Rock critics such as Chuck Klosterman and Ken Ward, by now far more numerous and visible than the Olin Downses and Harold Rosenbaums of the last century, argue passionately over elaborate and subtle points of interpretation within what has become an equally sacralized rock music canon. Classical music competitions—the Queen Elizabeth, Tschaikovsky, and Naumberg—have somehow limped on into the new century but by now much more prominent are their farcical repetitions in the form of *American Idol* and its assorted spin-offs. And while musicians tend not to have traditional conservatory educations, rock is thoroughly professionalized, with layers of highly trained studio engineers, video technicians, legal staffs, and marketing and sales personnel engaged in the promotion and distribution of what is a major commercial product.

Furthermore, now that conventional musical literacy no longer poses a barrier, there is considerable room for amateur participation in music making, though it is not obvious that it is of a sort with which the Seegers would have had much affinity. For it is likely that the advance of communications technologies, having made professionally-produced music available for free to all those wanting it, has made for a less participatory music culture, the production, as opposed to the consumption, being left to those who have successfully negotiated the obstacles of the commercial marketplace. Performing music which used to mean manipulating the eighty-eight keys of a keyboard or the six strings of the guitar now tends to mean entering the sequences of keystrokes necessary to download an MP3 on I-tunes. DJ's have now blurred the boundaries of the skills required of the performing musician with that of the listener. Is this really the kind of participation Seeger envisioned, or is it nothing more than a slightly elevated form of passive engagement?

ALL THIS SHOULD BE sufficient to demonstrate that, with the exception of a few minor points of overlap, both Seeger's and Eisler's visions of a proletarian musical culture are far distant from where we are now, as is the broader social and economic transformation which both were committed to. What has triumphed is, of course, capitalism, and within it a musical culture reflecting the dominance of markets as much as, if not more than, in other aspects of society.

It is in this light that the mid-century musical culture wars should be seen. For a brief period, the counter-hegemonic potential of Seegerian musical styles (folk and rock) was realized and played a role in the mass movements of the sixties. But it soon became clear that a part of the foundation on which they were constructed would be unable to support the aspirations that were projected onto it. For just as workers themselves suffer from what Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb in their classic study[24] call "the hidden injuries of class" so too does working class culture reflect the routine degradation, tedium, and imposed ignorance which the Aronowitz and Monaco families were committed to escaping. Eventually, what was taken initially as transgressive political content turned out to be no more than another circus provided by elites in exchange for ever diminishing bread. Worse, the "revolution" in musical style resulting in the global hegemony of rock music, was celebrated by the right as a validation of capitalism's transcendent virtues.

This among other indications would seem sufficient to validate Eisler's equation of simple music with the toxic simple truths of public relations and capitalist "common sense." With capitalism now in deep crisis, it might appear to those of us whose musical lives have been committed to preserving the sonatas, variations, minuets, and fugues that Eisler claims should constitute the foundation of an oppositional musical culture that our time has finally come. But any optimism along these lines should be combined with the critical Seegerian awareness that elite, haute bourgeois musical culture can be, and usually is, deeply alienating to those outside its walls and is often designed to achieve precisely this end.

Related to this is the increasing awareness that the reports of the demise of classical music are now no longer exaggerated, at least in the sense of it having become a dead language—its repertoire of gestures, inventory of timbres, limited formal roadmaps and performance rituals leaving it largely unable to communicate to audiences other than the most geriatric. All that tells us what we already know: our project is to build a new world either on the foundations of the old or, more likely, if the past is any guide, somewhere else entirely. We should be doing it everywhere—in and outside of music.

NOTES

1. This piece had its origins in a talk at the James Connolly Forum in Troy, NY, on March 15, 2013. I would like to thank Connolly Forum director Jon Flanders for the invitation and the Connolly Forum audience for questions which precipitated many of the ideas that are discussed herein. Also, thanks to Anton Vishio, Karl Lerud, Mark Mishler, Noam Chomsky, and Alex Ross for commenting on the draft.

2. John Halle, "Occupy Wall Street: Composers and the Plutocracy," *New Politics* (14/1 2012): 85-96, newpol.org/content/occupy-wall-street-composers-and-plutocracy-some-variations-ancient-theme.

3. Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

4. Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1996).

5. I am indebted to Anton Vishio and Alex Ross for reminding me of this oversight in an earlier draft.

6. See socialjusticefirst.com/2013/05/22/wagners-200th-birthday-his-politics-his-music-and-the-ring/ for an excellent discussion of Wagner's political commitments and alliances.

7. E.g., Schoenberg described himself as a "royalist," and Stravinsky expressed "veneration" for Mussolini, as did Webern (somewhat more ambiguously) for "this unique man" Hitler.

8. For Eisler's views on these matters, see James Wierzbicki, "Hanns Eisler and the FBI," *Music and Politics* (2/2: 2011), and R.G. Davis "Music from the Left," *Rethinking Marxism* (Winter 1988): 7-25.

9. Stanley Aronowitz, *Roll over Beethoven: The Return of Cultural Strife*, (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 107.

10. www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/jul/09/classicalmusicandopera.culture.

11. mailman.lbo-talk.org/2007/2007-December/023833.html.

12. I am grateful to Joel Kovel to bringing these remarkable institutions to my attention.

13. Marvin Gettleman, *Lost World of U.S. Labor Education: Curricula at East and West Coast Community Schools, 1944-1957*, available at www.gothamcenter.org/festival/2001/confpapers/gettleman.pdf.

14. archive.org/stream/investigationofc5701unit/investigationofc5701unit_djvu.txt.

15. "ILGWU: A Great and Good Union Points the Way for America's Labor Movement," *Life Magazine* (August 1, 1938): 45.

16. A concise formulation of the idea is attributed to the late journalist and labor scholar Robert Fitch: "The bourgeoisie takes very bad care of its cultural inheritance."

17. Richard Taruskin, "Double Trouble," *The New Republic*, (Dec. 24, 2001): 26-34.

18. Lawrence Squeri, *Better in the Poconos: The Story of Pennsylvania's Vacationland* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

19. Milton Babbitt, "Who Cares if You Listen?" *High Fidelity,* Feb. 1958.

20. Grant Wiggins, letter to the editor, *New York Times,* Nov. 25, 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/11/25/opinion/sunday/sunday-dialogue-is-classical-music-dying.html?pagewanted=all.

21. Documentation provided in, for example, Jeff Madrick, *Age of Greed: The Triumph of Finance and the Decline of America, 1970 to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011).

22. R.G. Davis, "Music from the Left," *Rethinking Marxism* (Winter 1988): 7-25.

23. Quoted in Pete Seeger, *Where Have All The Flowers Gone: A Singer's Stories, Songs, Seeds, Robberies* (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out, 2005).

24. Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

Deutscher and the Jews

On the Non-Jewish Jew—An Analysis and Personal Reflection

SAMUEL FARBER

ISAAC DEUTSCHER'S CONCEPT of the "The Non-Jewish Jew"[1] has been adopted by many secular leftist Jewish intellectuals as a badge of identity. Defined by a universal and humanist outlook that is rooted in Jewish thought, his is a construct that draws inspiration from Jewish thinkers such as Baruch Spinoza, Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx,[2] Rosa Luxemburg, Sigmund Freud, and Leon Trotsky whom he sees as revolutionaries of modern thought who went beyond the boundaries of their Jewish background. In what perhaps is the most lucid passage of his provocative essay, Deutscher attributes their exceptional breadth to the fact that, as Jews, they lived in the boundaries of various civilizations, religions, and national cultures and were born and grew up on the boundaries of various epochs. Their minds matured where the most diverse cultural influences crossed and fertilized each other, and they lived in the nooks and crannies of their respective nations, living in society but not being part of it. This was, Deutscher avers, what enabled them to lift their gaze above their own community and nation, beyond their times and generations, and to strike mentally into wide new horizons and far into the future (27).

Although an apt description of the real, historical phenomenon of Jews that revolutionized thought and society, Deutscher's "Non-Jewish Jew" also includes him and as such it reveals his subtle but clear sense of disassociation, of his attempt to put a distance between the Jew and the Jewish world he left behind. For the secular, universalistic Jew, that may be understandable in the context of the world in which Spinoza, Heine, Marx, and Luxemburg lived, but much less so in 1958, the year when Deutscher wrote this essay, only thirteen years after the end of the Holocaust and World War II. This disassociation became all the more conspicuous against the background of a Freud[3] and a Trotsky, who having witnessed the rise and consolidation of the German anti-Semitic regime (they died in 1939 and 1940 respectively) expressed their unequivocal solidarity with the persecuted Jews.

IN A LATER 1966 ESSAY/INTERVIEW entitled "Who is a Jew?" included in the same volume (42-59), Deutscher abandoned that sense of setting himself apart by stating unambiguously that he considered himself a Jew and that he did so out of his unconditional sense of solidarity with the persecuted and exterminated, because he felt the pulse of Jewish history and the Jewish tragedy as his own, and because "I should like to do all I can to assure the real, not spurious, security and self-respect of the Jews" (51).

However, it is that sense of disassociation that pervades his broader interpretation of Jewish history and of the Jewish condition of his times throughout the corpus of his work on Jewish issues assembled by his widow Tamara

SAMUEL FARBER, *a son of Polish Jewish immigrants, was born and raised in Cuba. He has written numerous articles and books about that country. His most recent book is* Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959: A Critical Assessment *published by Haymarket Books in 2011.* *He wants to thank Carel Bertram, Jonah Birch, David Finkel, Joel Geier, Charles Post, and especially his wife Selma Marks for their critical comments and suggestions.*

Deutscher in *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*. This comes through, for example, in his views in favor of the assimilation of the Jews. Although clearly opposed to the use of force, he supports the active dissolution of the Jews into the larger society. In "Remnants of a Race" (84-90), published in *The Economist* on January 12, 1946, not only does he celebrate the first declaration of equal rights for Jews by Jacobin France in 1791, but he also brings in Napoleon's "enlightened maxim" of "let the Jews look for their Jerusalem in France," and argues that Napoleon's purpose of

> disaccustoming the Jews from usury and illicit trade, of breaking down their separation and making them submerge themselves in the gentile population was certainly sound; and—who knows?—if it had been consistently carried into effect all over Europe, the Jewish problem might have been forgotten long ago; and our generation would perhaps have been spared the indelible shame of witnessing the deliberate murder of six million human beings in concentration camps and gas chambers (86-87).

Although he acknowledges Napoleon's "tyrant's touch" towards the Jews, as in the emperor's proposal to compel every third Jewish man and woman to marry a Christian, his overall treatment of Napoleon's policies towards the Jews is indicative of an extreme assimilationism that borders on the perverse: had the Jews disappeared, due to their own actions and inactions, there would have been no Jews left for Hitler to kill.

Deutscher's admiration of Napoleon's strongly assimilationist attitude to French Jews bears a strong parallel with his apologetic view of Stalin, whom he saw as a Thermidorean figure similar to Napoleon. Deutscher saw both Napoleon and Stalin as pursuing worthy goals even though he might, in a subordinate note, regret their methods. It was this apologetic approach that led the Russian socialist historian Roy Medvedev to object to the way in which Deutscher, in telling the story of industrialization and collectivization, argued that Stalin could be considered one of the greatest reformers of all times because he had put the ideas of the October Revolution and socialism into practice. That the price was very high—the Gulag, the purges, and the deliberate creation of famines resulting in the death of millions of people—only proved to Deutscher the difficulty of the task.[4] Stalin to him was primarily a reformer, not a mass murderer. As in the case of Stalin and his legacy, Deutscher adopts an "objectivist" analysis of Napoleon's wishes for the French Jews, pretending to stand outside of history and lacking in empathy for the choices actually faced by its living actors, except, perhaps, for the "problems" faced by leaders promoting change from above.[5]

For the Jews, assimilation, in the sense of disappearing rather than just acculturating to various host societies, has historically been and continues to be an extremely important and complex issue.[6] Deutscher is so disassociated from those concerns that he does not even mention them. For Jewish communities throughout the centuries, assimilation has on one hand been associated with forced conversion, a historic source of tremendous suffering and even martyrdom. But on the other hand, it has also been a veritable bugaboo, because of the deeply ingrown failure to clearly distinguish forced conversion from the social traffic that is bound to occur among human groups that lead to an entirely voluntary "assimilation." The obsessive if not pathological fear of voluntary assimilation can lead to a very distorted understanding and perception of the world. Thus, growing up under the very dark shadows cast by the Holocaust, I repeatedly heard from many members of the small (approximately 10,000 people) Ashkenazi community of Polish and other Eastern European Jews in Cuba[7] that anti-Semitic genocidal Hitlerism had developed in Germany *because* of the high degree of assimilation among German Jews. It is very hard to see how this kind of logic, or rather illogic, could explain how a high degree of assimilation would lead to the Nazi Holocaust, but the low degree of assimilation of Polish and other East European Jews would "only" lead to blood libels, pogroms, and widespread and deeply entrenched anti-Semitic discrimination and prejudice.

A closer look at the traditional Jewish obsession with peaceful voluntary assimilation will show its close kinship with the attitudes common among practically all nationalisms not only to protect themselves against outside coercion but going well beyond that legitimate goal, to seek if not demand a *guarantee* not only for the perpetual existence of their particular nation, but even for its current cultural configuration against any conceivable change. Such a guarantee could of course only be obtained through the erection of strongly xenophobic barriers against any kind of foreign cultural influences, including the immigration or even close contact with people of different races, religions, and cultures.

Deutscher's treatment of assimilation was clearly informed by classical Marxism. As extensively documented by the Marxist scholar Enzo Traverso in his excellent study *The Marxists and the Jewish Question*,[8] classical Marxism as a whole had a highly schematic—as opposed to historically specific—view of Jews and the Jewish question. Put in its simplest terms, it held that Jews had played a certain role in precapitalist trade as moneylenders and usurers, particularly in the European Middle Ages. When trade would disappear, the Jews would have no other special role to play in society and therefore they would end up assimilating. As Traverso explains,

> the fundamental limitation of this approach lies in its incapacity to consider the Jews as a community with a specific cultural and ethnic physiognomy, capable of transforming itself, but also of conserving itself, beyond and through changes of social and economic structure (one could say by, with, and in history).[9]

Deutscher adopts this kind of schematic Marxism when he, in "The Non-Jewish Jew," reduces the reasons for the survival of the Jews as such to their having "represented the market economy amidst people living in a natural economy" (39). While it is true that, after the eleventh century, most European Jews began to assume a particular economic role accompanied by exclusion and discrimination, the schematic

> For Jews, assimilation, in the sense of disappearing rather than just acculturating, has historically been and continues to be an extremely important and complex issue.

Marxist interpretation could not explain the existence and survival of Jews in the pagan Hellenic world, in the Roman empire before and after Christianity, or in the Islamic world where the Jews were a minority distinguished, on the whole, neither by language nor by economic role, but solely by religion.[10]

Deutscher's historical schematism also expressed itself in his peculiar claim that it was a Jewish tragedy that the world has driven the Jew to seek safety in the nation-state—Israel—in the middle of the twentieth century when "the nation state is falling into decay" (113). There are of course lots of powerful and convincing arguments against Zionism but this one, rooted perhaps in a schematic philosophy of history that does not meet the test of empirical reality, is a remarkably weak one. At the very moment that Deutscher was writing those lines the Colonial Revolution was in full swing and in the process of creating dozens of new states in Africa and Asia. At the same time, the United States and other Western imperialist powers were in the middle of the greatest economic boom they had ever experienced while arming themselves to the teeth with nuclear weapons to confront the USSR, the rival nuclear imperialist power, which was also reaching the peak of its own state power that would very soon allow it to launch the first satellite—Sputnik—into orbit in 1957.

It is true that Deutscher expressed a certain skepticism towards schematic Marxism, although without attempting to provide an alternative. Thus, for example, in "Who is a Jew?" (42-59), while describing with great pride the role he played in the Jewish labor movement in Poland, he notes that "as Marxists we tried theoretically to deny that the Jewish labor movement had an identity of its own, but it had it all the same" (45). In this instance, he also oversimplifies the position of East European Marxism towards the Jewish labor movement. The issue was not whether that movement had its own identity, which was never in question, but whether and the degree to which it should be autonomous and independent from the larger socialist movement before and after the fall of the Czarist empire.

It is important to clarify that the long-term Marxist assimilationist view of Judaism could coexist with the most vigorous and militant stance against anti-Semitism, as was the case with V.I. Lenin's views and practical political record, and an enlightened cultural policy towards the Jews as was the case in the Soviet Union of the twenties. It is also usually ignored, sometimes maliciously, that Marx's original essay on the Jewish question, commonly attacked as anti-Semitic, was an argument *for* Jewish political emancipation.[11] However, it is true that the classical Marxist tradition has shown a certain degree of historical insensitivity towards Jews. This can be seen, for example, in the Russian Social Democratic polemics—Bolshevik or Menshevik—against the Jewish Bund on occasions such as the 1903 Congress of Russian Social Democracy. The Bund may have made unjustifiable demands, such as insisting on being declared the exclusive representation of all Jewish workers no matter where they lived inside or outside the Pale of Settlement. But Social Democracy was insensitive and historically obtuse when, influenced by its expectations of Jewish assimilation, it refused to treat the Jews like any other *national* group within the Czarist empire, as the Jews were, at least within the Yiddish-speaking Pale of Settlement.

If nothing else, history demonstrated, with extreme and horrific cruelty, the lack of validity of the assimilationist perspective of Russian Social Democracy, and by extension, of Deutscher's. East European Jews were exterminated by the Nazis before any major assimilationist trends similar to those in Western Europe and the U.S. became evident in Poland, Lithuania, and other parts of Eastern Europe where the bulk of the Jews lived. It is interesting to note that the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany led Leon Trotsky to abandon his earlier assimilationist assumptions. In 1937, while ruling out the possibility of a "forced assimilation" inside a socialist democracy, he left open the question of whether the Jews would assimilate naturally or if, on the contrary, they would opt for the creation of what he called an "independent republic." But he clearly affirmed the existence of a modern Jewish nation maintained through the development of the Yiddish language as an instrument adapted to modern culture, and although he unambiguously rejected Zionism, he affirmed the necessity of a territorial option that socialism should offer to the Jewish people.[12]

In 1908, Bundist leader Vladimir Medem refused to make a forecast about the future of the Jews (nation or assimilation) and argued that "we are neutral…we are not against assimilation, we are against assimilationism, against assimilation as a goal."[13] Many years later, Belgian Trotskyist Abram Leon, who later became a victim of Nazism, echoed Medem and argued that "Socialism must give the Jews, as it will to all peoples, the possibility of assimilation as well as the possibility of having a special national life" and added that socialism would confine itself, in this area, to "letting nature take its course."[14] That may well be the most pertinent democratic and socialist position on the issue of Jewish assimilation: while it does not "guarantee" the existence of Jews for eternity, it does provide them with the favorable conditions to remain Jews as long as they so wish.

While Deutscher's "Non-Jewish Jew" focuses on the Jewish intellectual, it also assumes the existence of a Jewish world from which this intellectual has come and which has given her a distinctive gaze. It is when going into that Jewish world, what and who Jews are, that Deutscher is at his weakest. In contrast with the painstaking historical scholarship he is known for in his work on Trotsky, his treatment of the Jewish component of his intellectual Jew is unsupported by history. Yet, if nothing else, Deutscher's prominence as a Marxist historian and as the proponent of the notion of the "Non-Jewish Jew" makes his ideas influential, including those about Jewish existence.

It is not clear whether Deutscher thought of the Jews as a people, or as a religious, cultural, or ethnic group. His discussion of Spinoza and Heine (27-30) suggests a possible emphasis on Judaism as a religion. This emphasis might be due to the weight that religion had in defining Judaism in Spinoza's times. But it also may stem from Deutscher's own upbringing as an orthodox Jew. It is clear, however, that he rejected the notion of a Jewish community, of Jews being linked with each other by ties beyond religious ritual and practice. He argued that to speak of the "Jewish community" as if it were an all-embracing entity was meaningless, especially for a Marxist who saw all societies primarily from the point of view of their class divisions and for whom it was clear that the Jewish "community" contained antagonistic social classes (52). Taking this argument seriously would lead Marxists to deny the very notion of society and community, since what Deutscher saw as an exclusive characteristic of Jewish life is true of all societies and communities: all are divided into classes. By way of contrast, American Marxists have for a very long time spoken about Black and other minority communities in the U.S. without implying or assuming that they have no internal class divisions.

In his "Who is a Jew?" Deutscher states that Jews would not have survived as a "distinctive community" if it had not been for anti-Semitism. It is important to underline that he does not simply say that it is only Zionism, or more broadly, Jewish nationalism, that is a product of anti-Semitism, but that it is the existence of the Jews itself that is entirely a function of anti-Semitism (47).[15] Thus, to him there is nothing intrinsic to the Jews that binds them together (except for the religious bond); they are some sort of artificial group. Curiously, the fact that, in the years he wrote that essay, there were Jewish communities flourishing as such in many Western countries with a relatively low degree of anti-Semitism, did not change in any way his position.

For Deutscher, the idea of a Jewish community was also belied by the geographical differences among Jews. He claimed that the different native cultural traditions of which "the Jews were a minority, affected them differently and left a different imprint on their mental outlook." (52) This is not only true about the differences between German and East European Jews, which were the examples he cited, but even more so about the differences between both of those groups and Sephardic and Oriental Jews. And it is worth noting that while Jews of these diverse geographical areas shared a religious persuasion, they were not part of the same nation. But there are two major exceptions to this claim: the Jews who lived within the Pale of Settlement and shared the Yiddish language and were in most respects culturally homogeneous and the Jews who emigrated to Israel and became forged into a Jewish Israeli nation by a cohesion and national consciousness achieved through common education and the universal use of a modernized Hebrew language, service in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), and a nationalist ideology, all of which have become consolidated by their contempt for the ethnically cleansed Palestinian people.[16]

One could argue that because he was focused on the "non-Jewish Jews," the philosophers and revolutionaries of Jewish origin, and not on rank-and-file Jews, Deutscher had no interest in analyzing the complexities of Jewish social life, even though his views on the "non-Jewish Jews" at least implicitly required some understanding of the nature of it. That might be why much of the Jewish social world that comes through in his work is presented, at least implicitly, in terms of a polarity between, on the one hand, a traditional Jewish religious group and, on the other hand, a group of left-wing emancipated intellectuals who have left behind the particularism of that religious community but who still maintain what could be called a Jewish style of thought created and reinforced by their continual social marginality. Regardless of the reasons that might have led Deutscher to adopt this perspective, it was not an accurate characterization of the trends that existed in the Jewish communities in the West at the time he wrote his essay in the middle of the twentieth century. By the fifties and sixties, Jewish society in the West, and even more so in the USSR,[17] had developed large secularized majorities who retained a Jewish identity. In the U.S. of that period, the overwhelming majority of Jews were either secular or belonged to Reform or Conservative synagogues. Most members of these synagogues related to them not as their grandparents related to the "shul" in the old country, but as the occasional place to go for the High Holidays and major lifecycle related occasions. So why did Deutscher, a profoundly political writer, gloss over this new Jewish majority of the mid-twentieth century?[18]

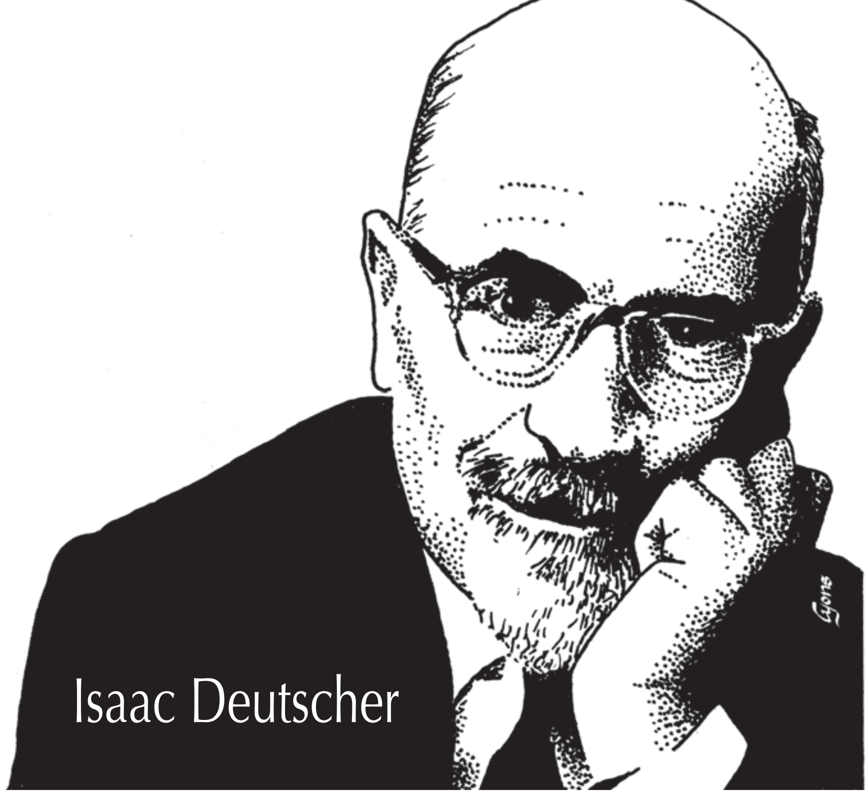
> It is not clear whether Deutscher thought of the Jews as a people, or as a religious, cultural, or ethnic group.

Part of the reason was Deutscher's political distaste for much of Western Jewry based on his perception, clearly shown in this volume, of their style of life and their politics. While Deutscher in "Who is a Jew?" (42-59) strongly praises the political and intellectual achievements of the Jewish labor movement, of which he was part in Poland, it is revealing that all he has to say about Western Jewry is "how repellent" some of their milieus are where "there is nothing but a few taboos and a lot of money…We [the Jewish labor movement in Poland] had a thorough contempt for the *Yahudim* of the West. Our comrades were made of different stuff" (45). Later on, in the same essay, he blasts the record of Western Jewish intellectuals for "their extraordinary conformism, political, ideological, and social. In the cold war which has dominated our lives for more than thirteen years, the Jews have been most prominent." (59) He did not consider, however, that, compared to other ethnic and religious communities, Jews were more likely to question, at least in the United States, the premises of the Cold War even though, like all the other ethnic and religious groups in North America, they overwhelmingly supported the U.S. side in that conflict.

With a touch of ethnic and intellectual elitism, Deutscher seems to uncritically accept, in his 1954 essay "Israel's Spiritual Climate" (91-117), the idealized stereotype of Ashkenazi Jews as a "higher civilization" than Oriental Jews (107-108), and as *Am Hassefer*—the "People of the Book" for whom "the book is a first necessity." That's why, according to Deutscher, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem seemed to have "as many bookshops and lending libraries as there are grocery and greengrocery stores," and that farming settlements possessed rich libraries you would hardly find in any other countryside. That Deutscher accepts the conception of the "People of the Book" is ironic: on the one hand, he points to the existence of class divisions among Jews; on the other hand, class divisions disappear when talking about the intellectuality of the Jews.

The supposed love of learning that is commonly attributed to the East European Jews of the *shtetl* has been seriously questioned by the anthropologist Mariam K. Slater who branded it as the myth of intellectuality.[19] The average Jewish man in the *shtetl,* Slater shows, attended only the *kheyder* or *Talmud Torah* until adolescence. His education there consisted in memorizing the commandments for twelve hours a day.[20] That kind of learning, Slater observed, rather than being rational and scientific, was actually an obstacle to the development of the modern intellectual spirit since it was based on factual ignorance of the developments in the outside world, the cultivation of memory instead of critical thinking, and an arid disputatious scholasticism ritualistically preoccupied with Talmudic legalisms.[21] Citing another scholar's work,[22] she notes that very few of the Jewish males in the *shtetl* were directly exposed to Talmudic scholarship. Moreover, the religious authorities had a very hostile attitude to non-religious learning. The historian Antony Polonsky cites the case of a rabbi in the town of Liozno in the Lithuania of the 1880s who ordered a search of all homes. All books, except religious ones, were to be brought to the synagogue courtyard for burning so evil could be purged from the town.[23]

The Ashkenazi Jews of the *shtetl* and cities were certainly more literate than the surrounding non-Jewish population. According to the 1897 Russian census, the rate of literacy in Russia for those over ten years of age was 50 percent for Jews and 28 percent for non-Jews. Among men, the literacy rate was 65 percent for Jews and 39 percent for non-Jews. Sociologist


Isaac Deutscher

Stephen Steinberg questions the explanation of this difference based on a distinctive religious factor and suggests that had the Russian census compared Jews with non-Jews who were engaged in urban occupations the difference would have been less striking.[24] But even accepting the higher rate of Jewish literacy, historian Tony Michels points out that most of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants arriving in New York in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries experienced considerable difficulty in becoming readers of the Yiddish newspapers published in the city. Most individuals had to learn how to read before they could just simply pick up a Yiddish newspaper. Even if literate, most of them possessed only rudimentary reading and writing skills since the *kheyder* in the old country taught little more than the Hebrew alphabet, prayers, and the Bible to boys. Jewish girls received an even more inadequate education.[25]

Not only were Ashkenazi East European Jews overwhelmingly urban in background—whether coming from villages or cities located within the Pale of Settlement—they were also more likely to be skilled in artisanal occupations such as tailoring and shoemaking. Thus, while 67 percent of Jews entering the United States between 1899 and 1910 were skilled workers, that was only true for 20 percent of all immigrants.[26] In light of this background, it is not surprising that once they became involved in the rising trade union and socialist movement centered in the lower East Side of New York of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were much more likely than workers who came from peasant backgrounds in Europe or rural backgrounds in the United States to participate in a more intellectual fashion. According to a 1913 Columbia University study cited by Michels, almost 32 percent of Russian Jewish men between the ages of 17 and 25 attended at least one public lecture per week in New York City; Russian Jewish men between 25 and 35 followed close behind; and single Russian Jewish men frequented lectures twice as often as their married counterparts suggesting that these lectures were social as well as political-intellectual events. Among the topics covered were: “Socialism and Religion,” “The Development of Private Property,” “The Necessity of Education,” “Socialism from A to Z,” “The Origins of Rights,” “History as Science,” and “What is Trade Unionism?”[27]

My own personal experience is closer to Slater’s analysis than to Deutscher’s notion about Jewish intellectuality. A very small proportion of the Jewish immigrants from Poland and Eastern Europe in Cuba were intellectuals or intellectually inclined; the great majority were shopkeepers and small wholesalers and manufacturers in the garment and related trades who, although literate, did not take intellectual endeavors seriously and were sometimes contemptuous of them. University titles and professional certifications and accomplishments were held in higher regard, although not as much as material success, a phenomenon that Slater also found in her review of the literature about Jews in the United States.[28] But exclusive intellectual endeavors with no prospect for material gain, whether artistic or political, were regarded with condescension as belonging to the impractical realm of dreamers, of irresponsible people who did not have their feet solidly on the ground. Thus, for example, Albert Einstein was regarded by most Cuban Ashkenazi Jews as a successful, universally famous figure who was a huge credit to Jews everywhere. Cuban Jews also appreciated that he had taken the trouble to visit Cuba and its Jewish community in the twenties. However, his slovenliness and his socialist leanings were proof positive that people like him—intellectuals and pure scientists—did not have their feet on the ground and were thus not reliable people. It is true that Jewish Bundists, Communists, and left-wing Zionists in Cuba did not share this outlook but, having been an important minority of the community in the twenties and thirties, they had, with the possible exception of the left-wing Zionists, significantly declined by the late forties.

It is intriguing that, although not at all "intellectual," the immigrant generation of Ashkenazi Jews in Cuba did import from their original *shtetlach,* a particular quality and strength not mentioned by Deutscher and many other observers when discussing Jewish traits: a "Tocquevillian" proclivity for and success in forming voluntary organizations, probably rooted on the tradition of communal ("kehillah") self-government. In fact, one could make the case that traditional Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement was as much about community as about religion. My parents, as was true of most Ashkenazi Jews in the Havana metropolitan area, were members and supporters of a number of organizations that had been formed for a wide variety of purposes. These included community health (anti-tuberculosis committee); occupational training (ORT) which existed and enjoyed the financial support of U.S. Jews; general social assistance (Froyen Farein or Women's Association); and of course political organizations like the Unión Sionista de Cuba (Cuban Zionist Union). More informal, but no less important, were the financial subsidies to the significant number of poor students that were quietly provided in the Spanish/Yiddish elementary school I attended from 1945 to 1951 (I was born in 1939) following the norm that inability to pay should not be allowed to deprive a Jewish child of a Jewish education. These organizations and funds were financed by the members of the Jewish community on the basis of their ability to pay as assessed by the (sometimes elected) community leaders. These community leaders often resorted to the mechanism of shame as a way of getting people to contribute their share. The failure to comply with these informal but strongly enforced assessments put individual Jewish men, and by extension their families, at the risk of acquiring a bad reputation as *schnorrers* (literally beggars, but with the broader connotation of social parasites) with important consequences, such as diminishing the prospects that their children would find a "good" Jewish boy or girl to marry.

Assimilation and the Future of Jewry

In light of Deutscher's strongly assimilationist perspective, it is worth considering the current trends relevant to that issue. It is unclear whether the number of Jews in the United States—being the other major center of Jewish population besides Israel—is currently increasing or decreasing. This has been an elusive figure for at least two decades. The U.S. Census cannot obtain and provide data based on religious affiliation. The estimate of approximately 6.5 million Jews in 2011 made by the Berman Institute of the University of Connecticut is about 20 percent higher than the previous estimate of 5.2 million provided by the 2000 National Jewish Population Survey, but the lower figure was based on a study that was criticized as flawed, a view that was eventually accepted by the survey's sponsor.[29] What is clear, however, is that the proportion of religious orthodox Jews is increasing substantially while the adherents of milder forms of Judaism such as the Conservative and Reform movements, is declining. The study of the Jewish community in New York City published in 2012 by Steven M. Cohen and Jacob B. Ukeles shows that the Jewish population in that city—the largest in the United States—grew to nearly 1.1 million people between 2002 and 2011 after decades of decline, due to an "explosive" growth of the Hasidic and other Orthodox groups. These groups now amount to 40 percent of Jews in the city compared to 33 percent in 2002. During the same period, the Reform and Conservative movements each lost about 40, 000 members in New York City. Even more revealing of current and future trends is that 74 percent of all Jewish children in the city are Orthodox. The same study also found that while the rate of intermarriage remains at roughly 22 percent for all Jewish couples in New York City, it is growing among the non-Orthodox. Between 2006 and 2011, one out of two marriages in which one partner was a non-Orthodox Jew was to a person who was not Jewish and did not convert to Judaism.

At the other end of the spectrum from the Orthodox Jews, nearly a third of the respondents who identified themselves as Jews did not belong to a particular denomination or claimed not to observe or follow any religion. Jacob B. Ukeles, one of the authors of the study, stated that "there are more deeply engaged Jews and there are more unengaged Jews…. These two wings are growing at the expense of the middle. That's the reality of our community."[30]

A national survey of Jews conducted by the Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Project in 2013 found that the intermarriage rate was very similar to that of New York and had reached a high of 58 percent for all Jews, and 71 percent for non-Orthodox Jews. Surprisingly, the study also found that the percentage of Orthodox in the country as a whole was only 10 percent, while Reform Judaism remained the largest religious tendency at 35 percent and Conservative Jews at 18 percent.[31] But, just like in New York, 30 percent of Jews did not identify with any denomination. In spite of the decline in religious identity and participation, the national survey also showed that American Jews had a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people and felt proud to be Jewish.[32]

The prevailing situation in New York would confirm one of Deutscher's implicit assumptions about the significance of religious orthodoxy in defining Judaism. While that assumption was incorrect when Deutscher was writing about Jews from the forties to the sixties, it has acquired greater validity in the early twenty-first century, although in part for reasons that Deutscher did not anticipate, since it would be mistaken to attribute changes such as these only to the internal dynamics of the Jewish community and its relationship to the outside world. Major changes in American society have created parallel developments in Protestantism, with the mainstream denominations such as Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists, who are roughly comparable to Reform and Conservative Judaism,[33] having substantially declined while the size of fundamentalist Christianity, which is comparable to Orthodox Judaism, has substantially increased. At the same time, and paralleling what Jacob B. Ukeles pointed out about engaged and unengaged American Jews, the number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. A survey conducted in 2012, by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, found that one fifth of the U.S. public—and a third of adults under 30—are religiously unaffiliated, the highest percentage ever in Pew Research Center polling. The poll found that between 2007 and 2012 the unaffiliated increased from just over 15 percent to just under 20 percent of all U.S. adults.[34] Similar "secularizing" trends have been noticed in Western Europe for quite some time; even countries with a profound Catholic history, such as Spain, have legalized gay marriage and effectively limited the influence of the Catholic Church.

Support for Israel has also played an important role in maintaining the cohesion and limiting the assimilation of American Jews. However, a 2007 study by Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman showed that younger American Jews are less connected to Israel than older American Jews. The report noted that while the majority of younger Jews remain attached to Israel, that country is less salient to the less connected, non-Orthodox, and increasingly intermarried Jews, with instances of genuine alienation as many more Jews, especially young people, profess a near-total absence of any positive feelings towards Israel.[35] An influential and controversial article by Peter Beinart brought this development to the attention of a broader public, and claimed that the erosion of American Jewish support for Israeli policies was related to what he saw as the contradiction between American Jewish liberalism and the illiberalism of Israeli policies. Whatever degree of truth there might be to that claim, it is evident that the American Orthodox Jews, the least liberal sector of American Judaism, are much more likely to uncritically support Israel and its policies. As Beinart points out, "in their yeshivas they learn devotion to Israel from an early age; they generally spend a year of religious study there after high school, and often know friends or relatives who have immigrated to Israel." The same American Jewish Committee 2006 survey found that while only 16 percent of non-Orthodox adult Jews under the age of forty feel "very close to Israel," among the Orthodox the figure is 79 percent.[36]

One can draw the conclusion that, contrary to Deutscher's expectations, a relatively low degree of anti-Semitism has not led to the disappearance of the principal Jewish community in its principal place of residence outside of Israel. But these trends also pose the question of whether the demographic and social base from which the secular Jewish left-wing intellectuals and activists, Deutscher's "non-Jewish Jews," emerged in the past is declining. It is doubtful, for a variety of reasons, that the growing proportion of "unengaged Jews" can play a similar role in the development of leftist Jewish activists and intellectuals as was once the case with the Jewish labor and socialist movements. As far as Jewish liberalism is concerned, if one measures it by the metric of voting for Democratic Party candidates, it remains alive. This measurement, however, is very flawed and does not take into account considerations such as the likely rightward drift of Jewish liberalism, let alone the extent to which Democratic candidates may not themselves be liberals. Aside from Jewish liberalism, it is likely that the proportion of people of Jewish background in the U.S. radical left has declined, an issue that remains to be investigated.

A Personal Reflection

Having been reproached by my late older sister, a strong but somewhat disillusioned Zionist, for being concerned about the fate of every group and nationality "except the Jews," I have often thought about the response that Rosa Luxemburg gave to a friend while sitting in prison in February 1917: "Why do you want to come to me with the special sufferings of the Jews? For me, the unhappy victims of the hevea plantations of the Putumayo region, the Negroes of Africa whose bodies the Europeans kick about as if playing with a ball, affect me as much." And she added "I sense myself at home in the wide world everywhere there are clouds, birds and tears."[37] Luxemburg was a forthright and vigorous opponent of anti-Semitism, but her statement here is problematic to me. Regardless of how she defined herself, she was treated by the world at large, and particularly by anti-Semites, as a Jew. Her disassociating herself from her Jewish background in those circumstances was tantamount to a withdrawal of solidarity from the other Jews that were also the victims of anti-Semitism. She seems to have assumed that an internationalist *politics* required an internationalist *identity*, that the revolutionaries who felt themselves part of an "imagined community" of internationalists, could not, unlike the nationalists discussed by Benedict Anderson, identify with any particular country or nationality.

Contrary to Deutscher's expectations, a relatively low degree of anti-Semitism has not led to the disappearance of the principal Jewish community outside of Israel.

In fairness to Luxemburg, taking distance from one's Jewish origins was very widespread among Jews in the socialist movement. Thus, in the 1890s, even socialists who were building an all-Jewish, Yiddish speaking movement in New York City favored the eventual dissolution of the Jewish labor movement and even of the entire Jewish culture, community, and identity and saw assimilation as inevitable, especially in democratic and industrial countries like the United States. For them, assimilation would accelerate with the revolution they saw approaching.[38] The problem with this perspective is that it weakened politically these Yiddish socialists when they were confronted with major Jewish disasters such as the Kishinev pogrom of April 1903. As historian Tony Michels has pointed out, their socialist belief in Jewish assimilation—which they saw as part of their internationalism—now struck many individuals as naïve, even indecent. He describes previously staunch internationalists questioning, after Kishinev, whether their commitment to the workers of the world conflicted with their loyalty to the Jewish people.[39] Not surprisingly, Jewish nationalism emerged strengthened from these events. While the growth of Jewish nationalism might have been inevitable as a result of those anti-Semitic attacks, it was clearly reinforced by the socialist ambivalence about defending Jews as Jews rather than as just workers,[40] as well as by its active pro-assimilationist perspective.

As a Cuban-Jewish Marxist, I find Deutscher's "Non-Jewish Jew" a questionable notion because of its disassociation from the Jewish condition and because of the lack of solidarity it evinces towards what has historically been an oppressed, persecuted group even though anti-Semitism may have declined in countries such as the United States. As an alternative, I am proposing the notion of the Internationalist Jew. Most Marxists nowadays do not make an internationalist identity into a condition of internationalist politics. The fact that as a Cuban Jew, I am not "affected as much," to use Luxemburg's terminology, by what happens to people who are neither Jewish nor Cuban does not mean that I am indifferent to their oppression by others. The essence of internationalist politics seems to me, then, to refuse to place the interests of Cubans or Jews above the interests of other people and to support those people when they are oppressed by fellow Jews or Cubans. In the early fifties, long before my having become a Marxist, a Cuban friend tested my Cuban nationalist credentials by asking me which side I would take if there were a war between Cuba and the recently established state of Israel—a question faced, by the way, by many other Jews of my generation.[41] After briefly hesitating, I answered that would depend on who the aggressor was. Many years later, I concluded that even though I was at the time affected by sentiments of "dual loyalty," it was nevertheless an apt answer because it centered on the substantive issues at stake rather than on an unconditional loyalty to one country or another (my country right or wrong). In retrospect, I realize that it was the Jewish marginality that Deutscher so acutely analyzed that allowed me to think like that. Nowadays, for me, being an internationalist Jew means recognizing, that it is the Palestinians, and not the oppressive actions of the state of Israel, that deserve solidarity rather than the critical ambivalence of Deutscher. It also means refusing to remain silent when confronted by anti-Semitic statements and actions. It means acknowledging my profound sense of solidarity with the victims of the Holocaust and of anti-Semitism. I identify with the solidarity expressed by a number of Jews including Marc Bloch, the great French historian and anti-Nazi resistance fighter, who were for "flaunting" their Judaism in only one instance: when encountering an anti-Semite.

Although this stance might reflect a negative kind of Judaism—proclaiming one's Jewishness only when confronting anti-Semitism—it is an in-your-face attitude of resistance (and it is not premised on the Zionist notion, deeply rooted in East European Jewish culture, that anti-Semitism is both inevitable and incurable). It also shuns a sentimental view of Jews when they are victimized and an uncritical view of Jews when they are the victimizers. Primo Levi's searing objectivity analyzing and resisting the temptation to prettify the brutalizing effects that extreme oppression such as that of the concentrations camps can have on people, and his refusal to be an apologist for Jews or for Israel, shines very bright in my mind.

NOTES

1. Isaac Deutscher, "The Non-Jewish Jew" in *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*, Tamara Deutscher, ed. (New York: Hill and Wang and Oxford University Press, 1968), 25-41. Subsequent parenthetical page numbers in the text are from this volume.

2. Rather than making a case for the "Jewishness" of Karl Marx, Deutscher just assumes it. Marx's father had converted to Christianity so one may wonder about what made Marx "Jewish." I want to thank David Finkel for calling my attention to this matter. Personal communication of March 27, 2013.

3. Freud had a more active association with organized Jewry than was the case for several of the other major "non-Jewish Jews" identified by Deutscher, although he was nevertheless ambivalent toward his own Jewish background. See Peter Loewenberg, "Sigmund Freud as a Jew: A Study in Ambivalence and Courage," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, No. 7 (1971), 363-369.

4. Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*, ed. and trans. George Shriver, revised and expanded edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 869.

5. Of course, my purpose here is not to evaluate Napoleon's policies and actions towards the Jews (he emancipated them everywhere he ruled) but rather Deutscher's vision of the French emperor.

6. The historian Ezra Mendelsohn makes an important distinction between assimilation and acculturation. Thus, during the in terwar period there was significant acculturation of Polish Jews to the Polish language and culture but very little assimilation. Ezra Mendelsohn, "A Note on Jewish Assimilation in the Polish lands," in Vela Vago, ed., *Jewish Assimilation in Modern Times* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), 145-146. In this context, it is revealing and significant that historians of the Jews such as Simon Dubnov and Raphael Mahler thought that the replacement of Hebrew and Yiddish by modern European languages would carry the Jewish people towards its complete assimilation and self-destruction. Jonathan Frankel, "Assimilation and the Jews in nineteenth-century Europe: towards a new historiography?" in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 21.

7. There were also some 4,000 Sephardic Jews of Turkish origin and several hundred North American Jews on the island. However, my family and most Ashkenazi Jews had little contact with the members of these two other communities. Intercommunal contacts began to gradually increase after the Holocaust and the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948.

8. Enzo Traverso, *The Marxists and the Jewish Question: The History of a Debate 1843-1943*, translated by Bernard Gibbons (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1994).

9. Traverso, 21.

10. Traverso, 217.

11. Hal Draper, "Marx and the Economic-Jew Stereotype," Special Note A, in *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution: Part I State and Bureaucracy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), 591-608.

12. Traverso, 227-28. For a more extended discussion, although from a Zionist point of view, of the evolution of Trotsky's thinking about the fate of the Jews in the 1930s see Joseph Nedava, *Trotsky and the Jews* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 202-210.

13. Traverso, 104. Medem's view remained his own since it was not officially adopted by the Bund.

14. Cited by Traverso, 228.

15. Many prominent, educated, elite Jews such as Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau also felt that "only anti-Semitism had made Jews of us." Cited by Steven Zipperstein, who describes the comment as "half-frivolous, but also deadly earnest" in "Ahad Ha'am and the politics of assimilation," in Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds.), *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 344.

16. For a different approach, see Moshe Machover, "Zionist myths: Hebrew versus Jewish identity," *Weekly Worker*, 962, May 16, 2013, www.cpgb.org.uk/home/weekly-worker/962/zionist-myths-hebrew-versus-jewish-identity.

17. For a brief discussion of Soviet Jewry, which underlines how anti-Semitic discrimination helped to prevent assimilation, see Yaacov Ro'i, "The Dilemma of Soviet Jewry's Assimilation After 1948," in Vago, ed., *Jewish Assimilation in Modern Times*, 165-170.

18. It is perhaps ironic that Deutscher's essay "The

Non-Jewish Jew" was based on a lecture delivered during Jewish Book Week to the World Jewish Congress, in February 1958.

19. Mariam K. Slater, "My Son the Doctor: Aspects of Mobility Among American Jews," *American Sociological Review,* Vol. 34, No. 3 (June 1969): 359-373. Stephen Steinberg has pointed out that sociologists have argued not that Jewish intellectual traditions were in themselves important but rather that they fostered a positive orientation toward learning that was easily adapted to secular education. However, that was not Deutscher's view about Jewish intellectuality. Stephen Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity and Class in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 132-133.

20. Slater, 365.

21. Slater, 365-366. Interestingly, in her introduction to this volume, Tamara Deutscher cites her late husband to the effect that his religious training provided a "pseudo-knowledge" that "cluttered and strained my memory, took me away from real life, from real learning, from real knowledge of the world around me. It stunted my physical and mental development" (7).

22. Slater, 366. Slater is quoting here Louis Wirth, "Education for Survival: the Jews," in Charles S. Johnson, ed., *Education and the Cultural Process*, reprinted from the *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (May 1943).

23. Antony Polonsky, "Introduction. The Shtetl: Myth and Reality," in Antony Polonsky, ed., *The Shtetl: Myth and Reality,* Studies in Polish Jewry, Volume Seventeen (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004), 18.

24. Steinberg, 101-102.

25. Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 109-110.

26. Steinberg, 98.

27. Michels, 77.

28. Slater, 371.

29. Ira Sheskin and Arnold Dashefsky, *Jewish Population in the United States, 2011,* Number 4, 2011, Berman Institute—North American Jewish Data Bank, University of Connecticut; and Naomi Zeveloff, "U.S. Population Pegged at 6 Million," *Forward.Com*, published Jan. 17, 2012 issue of Jan. 20, 2012, http://forward.com/articles/149492/us-jewish-population-pegged-at-million/.

30. Joseph Berger, "With Orthodox Growth, City's Jewish Population is Climbing Again," *The New York Times,* June 12, 2012, A18.

31. I would have expected a lower proportion of Orthodox Jews outside of New York but not such a large difference (40 percent of Jews in New York compared to 10 percent in the U.S. as a whole).

32. Laurie Goodstein, "Poll Shows Major Shift in Identity of U.S. Jews," *The New York Times*, Oct. 1, 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/10/01; and Pew Research Religion & Public Life Project, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*, Oct. 1, 2013, www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/.

33. It is worth noting, however, that perhaps in response to their relative decline and the gradual move to the right of the Jewish community, the Conservative and even the Reform wings of American Judaism are moving closer to Orthodox religious practices.

34. *"Nones" on the Rise. One-in-Five Adults Have no Religious Affiliation*. Poll conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, Oct. 9, 2012. www.pewforum.org/unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx

35. 2007 Survey of American Jews—[North American Jewish Data Bank] www.jewishdatabank.org/study.asp?sid=90.

36. Peter Beinart, "The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment," *The New York Review of Books*, June 10, 2010. www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/jun/10/failure-american-jewish-establishment.

37. Cited by Traverso, 49.

38. Michels, 123.

39. Michels, 126.

40. It is worth noting the similarity between this Jewish socialist stance and the reluctance of the American socialist leader Eugene Debs to go beyond the defense of Black workers as workers and develop a political program specifically addressed to the problems and oppression that Black people faced as Blacks.

41. A military clash between Cuba and Israel could have potentially taken place when the Cuban Army sent a tank brigade to reinforce Syria's border with Israel near the Golan Heights after the "Yom Kippur" war of 1973. Ignacio Ramonet, *Fidel Castro. Biografía a Dos Voces* (Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, S.A., 2006), 529.

Sabaneta to Miraflores

Afterlives of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela

Susan Spronk and Jeffery R. Webber

The inner-city parish of La Vega sits in the lush mountain terrain of Western Caracas. Roughly 130,000 poor residents are cordoned off sociologically from nearby El Paraíso, a wealthy neighbourhood that supplies the clients for the upscale shopping center that separates the two communities. In La Vega, the bottom 20 percent of households live on US$125 per month, while the average family income is $US409. Well over a third of households are led by a single mother. Proletarians of mixed African, indigenous, and European ancestries populate the barrio's informal economies.

In Venezuela, one of the most urbanized countries in Latin America, these households constitute a key demographic base of *chavismo*. Six years ago, the journalist Jacobo Rivero asked a 50-year-old black woman from La Vega what would happen if Chávez died. The Bolivarian process "is irreversible," she told him, its roots are too deep to be easily torn asunder in the absence of *el comandante*. In the years since Chávez's rise to the presidency in 1999—an interval of unprecedented popular political participation and education for the poor—the woman had learned, for the first time, the history of African slavery and the stories of her ancestors. The historical roots of injustice were being demystified, their causes sorted out. Dignity was being restored in inner-city communities, and their political confidence was on the rise. There had been motive, it now seemed to her, behind the manufactured ignorance of the dispossessed. The "Venezuelan people stood up," political theorist George Ciccariello-Maher observes, "and it is difficult if not impossible to tell a people on their feet to get back down on their knees."

The residents of La Vega, Petare, San Agustín, and 23 de Enero, among the other poor urban barrios of Caracas, entered an extended period of public commiseration, of shared mourning, on March 5, 2012, when Vice President Nicolás Maduro announced on television that Hugo Chávez had passed away at the age of 58, after 14 years as president, the last two years of which he struggled with cancer. Identification with this improbable president runs in the veins of the popular classes of contemporary Venezuela.

Raised in poverty by his grandmother—"Mamá Rosa"—in Sabaneta, the capital of the state of Barinas, young Chávez dreamt of being a professional baseball player, like his hero Isaías Látigo Chávez. Indeed, this was one compelling reason for him to join the army, where he was able to rise through the ranks of their baseball league. The complicated climb to the presidential palace in Miraflores began with entrance into the Military Academy in Caracas in 1971.

Susan Spronk *teaches international development at the University of Ottawa. She is a research associate with the Municipal Services Project and has published various articles on working-class formation and water politics in Latin America.*

Jeffery R. Webber *teaches politics and international relations at Queen Mary University of London. He is the author most recently of* Red October: Left-Indigenous Struggles in Modern Bolivia. *Spronk and Webber are co-editors of the forthcoming* Crisis and Contradiction: Marxist Perspectives on Latin America in the Global Economy.

Chávez graduated as a sub-lieutenant in 1975 with a degree in engineering, and a diploma in counterinsurgency.

In one thoughtful commemoration of his life, the Mexican journalist Luis Hernández Navarro remarks on its parallels with the magic realism of a Gabriel García Márquez novel. In one exemplary moment, in Navarro's account, Chávez finds himself in 1975 in the middle of a military operation. Half hidden in the vegetation of mountainous Marqueseña, Barinas, he encounters an abandoned Mercedes Benz. Prying open the trunk of the black car with a screwdriver, Chávez discovers the works of a certain Carlos Marx and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. He begins to read.

> At its root, explaining support for Chávez involves none of the complexity of quantum mechanics, nor the pop-psychological theory of masses entranced by a charismatic leader.

Perhaps a more banal ideological genealogy would begin with his older brother, Adán, a militant in the *Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Movement of the Revolutionary Left, MIR), whose early influence on the leftward movement of the future president is widely acknowledged. Adán went on to become Minister of Education, ambassador to Cuba, and governor of Barinas over the course of the Chávez era. Also important in Chávez's political formation was an educational experiment within the military called the Andrés Bello Plan, dedicated to the construction of humanist values within the armed forces. Through his military education, Chávez discovered nineteenth century liberation hero Simón Bolívar, and the lesser known Ezequiel Zamora. Blending these influences with twentieth century left-military nationalism and anti-imperialism, Chávez linked his rule historically to Panama's Omar Torrijo and Peru's Juan Velasco Alvarado. Indeed, while still a cadet in the Military Academy, Chávez travelled, together with other young Venezuelan soldiers, to Peru for a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the battle of Ayacucho. "Chávez and the other Venezuelan cadets were each given a small memento by President Velasco," Richard Gott records in his *Hugo Chávez*, "a booklet of speeches called *La Revolución Nacional Peruana*.... The Peruvian experiment has remained an important influence on his political thinking." Soviet-inflected, bureaucratic Cuban socialism also lent its considerable weight to the president's orientation, not least through his close personal ties to Fidel Castro.

Chávez drew on an eclectic range of classical and contemporary Marxist thinkers—from Rosa Luxemburg to István Mészáros—who he cited and discussed with growing frequency in the later episodes of his weekly *Alo Presidente* TV program. Without drawing too neat a linear progression from moderate to radical, it is not for nothing that in the earliest period of his presidency he was taking advice from the Argentine Peronist Norberto Ceresole, whereas in the latter years the Chilean Marxist Marta Harnecker, and her Canadian partner and theoretician of *Capital* Michael Lebowitz, were common points of reference.

Dancing on Chávez's Grave

Part of the popular appeal of Chávez has to do with the exuberant hatred he inspired in his enemies. The latter's frothing at the mouth tended to stoke the loyalty of his supporters. Perhaps not since Ronald Reagan's hysterical reaction to the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua in 1979 has a government in Latin America been the subject of such relentless demonization. Recall that once Reagan assumed office in 1980 he depicted the regime in charge of tiny Nicaragua, nestled in the middle of the Central American isthmus, as an imminent threat to the national security of the United States. Chávez stood in as the region's bogeyman for the new millennium.

George W. Bush's national security strategy documents claimed that Hugo Chávez was a "demagogue awash in oil money," seeking to "undermine democracy" and "destabilize the region." Donald Rumsfeld, Bush's secretary of defense, compared Chávez to Adolf Hitler, reminding us that Hitler, too, had been elected. Not much has changed since Barack Obama took over. The main message from the White House continues to be that Chávez ran a dangerously authoritarian regime in desperate need of democratization. In a 2009 interview with the opposition television station Globovisión, Obama's Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted that the U.S. would "like very much to see leaders being effective in helping to create greater economic opportunity for poor people, but we think there are ways that that can work that are not anti-democratic." In a patronizing gesture emblematic of the Obama epoch, she pointed out that democracy "had worked pretty well for us for a very long time, so I would hope that it could be viewed as a good idea for others as well." The drones over Pakistan would soon spread the democratic word to wedding parties and other civilian gatherings, a message already received in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"As Venezuela begins a new chapter in its history," Obama said in response to the death of Chávez, "the United States remains committed to policies that promote democratic principles, the rule of law, and respect for human rights," all implicitly absent in the South American country. "At this key juncture," Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper echoed, "I hope the people of Venezuela can now build for themselves a better, brighter future based on the principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights." Although disingenuous in the extreme, this statement was more measured than Harper's comments in 2009, just prior to a Summit of the Americas meeting. There he noted that Chávez was representative of certain leftist leaders in the Western hemisphere who were "opposed to basically sound economic policies, want to go back to Cold War socialism... want to turn back the clock on the democratic progress that's been made in the hemisphere."

The establishment press—from London to Barcelona, from Toronto to Miami via New York—has sought viciously to distort the character and significance of the collective, street eulogizing of the dead Venezuelan president expressed in the gatherings of humble millions throughout Venezuela in the wake of Chávez's death.

Rory Carroll, the former Caracas-based correspondent for the *Guardian*, is one prominent dilettante narrating dystopias for leading broadsheets and websites of what life is said to have been like in Venezuela since 1999. Viewing the South American country through his lens we learn how Chávez managed to cajole the support of his infantilized supporters through a "dramatic sense of his own significance." Rather than the political fissures of contemporary Venezuela being read as the result of longstanding contradictions of uneven capitalist development in an oil-rich dependent country, Carroll teaches us that it was instead the president's "dramatic flair" that "deeply divided Venezuelans."

During election periods in North America or Europe, it is commonplace to read in the financial press of the candidates' promises to reduce corporate taxes in order to reassure investors and establish attractive business environments. These considered measures to reward materially the propertied classes are as natural to the background environment of contemporary liberal elections as water is to a fish's habitat, and about as closely scrutinized. But when Chávez introduced a new initiative for building subsidized housing for the destitute in the lead up to the presidential elections of October

2012, it was vilified as manipulative vote buying. On this reckoning, meeting human needs is populist witchcraft, while meeting the imperatives of profit is the science of economics. "He spent extravagantly on health clinics, schools, subsidies and giveaways," Carroll reports, with characteristic contempt for the undeserving poor.

As if the profligate spending of a charismatic populist, prone to clientelist manipulation of the lower orders, was not enough to buckle in disgust, in Carroll's world we can add to that the creeping authoritarianism of unfair elections and the regime's domination of the airwaves. With all the power Chávez ostensibly concentrated in his hands, he nonetheless lacked the managerial sense with which to employ it to good effect. A constant media refrain signals the deterioration of Venezuela's state institutions and economy since Chávez assumed office. In present day Venezuela these are said to suffer from "decay, dysfunction and blight" while "bureaucratic malaise and corruption" is all pervasive.

Paths to Popularity

If the state of Venezuela is in such disrepair, what explains support for Chávez? At the time of death, the president's approval rating hit 70 percent. Mark Weisbrot, a social-democratic economist based in the United States, once complained that Venezuela "is probably the most lied-about country in the world." Chávez won decisive mandates for three presidential terms, together with a series of national referenda on constitutional reform. According to Jimmy Carter, former U.S. president, Nobel Prize winner, and monitor of 92 elections worldwide in his capacity as director of the Carter Center, the Venezuelan electoral system is "best in the world." While the press lambasts Chávez for his "giveaways," in the 2006 presidential race, the opposition candidate Manuel Rosales offered US$450 per month to three million impoverished Venezuelans on personal black credit cards as part of a plan called *Mi Negra*. Despite this blatant attempt at vote buying, the ungrateful would-be recipients aligned themselves on the other side of history, backing Chávez with 62 percent of the vote.

At its root, explaining support for Chávez involves none of the complexity of quantum mechanics, nor the pop-psychological theory of masses entranced by a charismatic leader. Venezuela sits on oil. Other petro-states, such as those in the Gulf, have funnelled the rent into a grotesque pageantry of the rich—skyscrapers, theme parks, and artificial archipelagos—built on the backs of indentured South Asian migrant laborers. They've done so, moreover, while aligning geopolitically with the U.S. empire—backing the wars, and containing the Arab uprisings. In Venezuela, as a result of the shifting balance in social forces and the radicalization of the Bolivarian process since 2003, the state has been forced to adopt a different set of priorities.

After recovering from the steep collapse in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2002 and 2003—hitting -8.9 and -7.8 percent respectively as a consequence of political crisis spurred by an unsuccessful coup attempt and business-led oil lockout—GDP soared on high petroleum prices to 18.3, 10.3, 9.9, and 8.2 percent in the years 2004-2007. There was a drop to 4.8 percent in 2008 as the international oil price took a fourth-quarter plunge from US$118 to US$58 a barrel due to centrifugal waves of the global crisis spreading out from its epicentres in the U.S. and the Eurozone. Within six months, however, world oil prices recovered, and countercyclical spending brought the Venezuelan economy up to 4.2 percent growth in 2011 and 5.6 in 2012.

A significant cut of oil revenue captured by the state over this period was directed toward social programs—known as missions—in health, education, and housing. According to official national statistics, the cash income poverty level fell 37.6 percent under Chávez, from 42.8 percent of households in 1999 to 26.7 percent in 2012. Extreme poverty dropped 57.8

percent, from 16.6 to 7 percent between 1999 and 2011. If these income poverty measures are expanded to include welfare improvements from the doubling in college enrollment since 2004, access to free health care for millions of new users, and extensive housing subsidies for the poor, it is easy to see how Carroll's narrative of decay breaks down.

The Venezuelan process has also had an enormous impact on the region. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) has undoubtedly been the most important achievement in this domain. ALBA first destabilized and then eventually crippled the U.S.- and Canada-backed Free Trade Area of the Americas by the early 2000s. ALBA has been a means of establishing cooperation between Latin American countries on principles other than free trade and market exchange, exemplified in the reciprocal transactions of Venezuelan oil for Cuban teachers and doctors, in solidarity with the internally displaced in Haiti, the landless dispossessed of Central America, and those in need in Bolivia. Credit for these gains belongs, above all, with the social forces in Venezuela driving its capitalist state in social democratic directions.

If ALBA has been a mechanism for the transmission of anti-imperialist strategy and the revalorization of socialist debate and imagination, Venezuela under Chávez has also played a part in the construction of integration projects under a wider ideological umbrella, projects which, at a minimum, have helped to establish a relative Latin American autonomy from the immediate dictates of the behemoth to the north. These include the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), driven by Brazil, Venezuela, and Argentina at its core, which has been able to generate independent regional responses following the geopolitical crises spurred by right-wing coups—in Honduras in June 2009 against Manuel Zelaya, and against Fernando Lugo in Paraguay in June 2012. Likewise, Bolivarian Venezuela has been a central protagonist in the establishment of the Community of Caribbean and Latin American States (CELAC), which with 33 country members and 600 million people under its tent, is the first regional body of its kind to exclude participation of the United States and Canada. The international legacy of the Venezuelan president for sections of the Left has been tarnished by his appalling support of Gaddafi, al-Assad, Ahmadinejad, and the Chinese state. But to begin there for an understanding of the profound resonance of his death for the millions upon millions of Venezuelan and Latin American victims of colonial rule, capitalist exploitation, and imperial humiliation would be to resolutely miss the point.

> Whatever the internal contradictions of the Bolivarian process, the electoral victory of Chávez was seen as the necessary starting point for addressing them.

The October and December Elections of 2012

These domestic and regional realities were the background drivers of the October presidential elections in 2012. That Hugo Chávez had to win on October 7 in order for the Bolivarian process to continue—in whatever form—was recognized by close to the entirety of the Venezuelan Left in the preceding months, including those social movement and labor sectors especially critical of the limits to the political economic program of the government, and the lingering influence of important bureaucratic layers within the governing United Socialist Party of

Venezuela (PSUV). Chávez's victory, with 55 percent of the popular vote on a turnout of 80 percent—10 points above the Democratic Unity Roundtable's (MUD) candidate Henrique Capriles Radonski—signified a straightforward blow to the domestic Right and the interests of the United States in Venezuela and Latin America more generally. Whatever the internal contradictions of the Bolivarian process, then, the electoral victory of Chávez was seen as the necessary starting point for addressing them, salvaging the social gains that have been introduced, and radically extending their breadth and intensity.

In the regional elections for governors and state legislatures on December 16, 2012 the victory for the process was solidified further, despite the fact that Chávez was in Cuba, suffering respiratory complications stemming from a fourth surgical attempt to excise the cancer. Although it is important to note that the abstention rate rose from 22 to 46 percent from the presidential to regional elections, it was nonetheless an unambiguous victory for *chavismo* that the PSUV and its allies bested the MUD at a national level by 14 points, and crucially took back five of the eight states that had previously been controlled by the opposition. In the end, the PSUV took 20 of 23 governorships and were victorious in 22 of 23 state legislatures.

Puntofijismo to *Neoliberalismo*

On the canvas thus far we have a rough portrait of the immediate scenario. This is at best an insufficient guide for the range of possibilities in the post-Chávez future, and, without a richer engagement with the past, a poor foundation for assessing the historical mark, shifting patterns, and internal contradictions of the period under Chávez. The contested emergence of Chávez, who rose out of the ashes of the *ancien régime*, has made him, in death as in life, a carrier of competing myths.

Up until the late 1980s, Venezuela was considered one of the "exceptional" democracies of Latin America. Unlike most other countries of South America, Venezuela escaped the period of non-constitutional rule that cast a dark shadow over the region during the 1960s and 1970s. Since 1958, three centrist political parties—COPEI, URD, and AD—forged a pacted democracy under which the parties agreed to a basic political program. The Communist Party of Venezuela was excluded from the legal political system. This gentlemen's agreement, known as the "Punto Fijo" (Fixed Point), offered relative political stability for almost four decades during which time the two main political parties, the COPEI and the AD, alternated terms in office. For the Venezuelan elite, it was an efficient way to retain monopoly over the spoils of office without resorting to the levels of bloodshed that characterized the violent suppression of the Left in countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.

These spoils have indeed been plentiful. Venezuela sits upon the largest reserves of conventional oil (heavy and light crude) in the western hemisphere and has the largest proven reserves of non-conventional oil (extra-heavy crude) in the world. Venezuela's status as a "petro-state" has shaped almost every aspect of the country's history: its economy, its politics, and its culture. Indeed, from the perspective of right and left alike, oil has been both a blessing and a curse. And this is equally true of *puntofijismo* and the Bolivarian process.

In the times of *puntofijismo,* oil cushioned the elite's projects of clientelist rule. As political scientist Daniel Hellinger explains, Venezuelan democracy before Chávez rested "upon a material basis: the distribution of international oil rents through a system of clientelism." During times of plenty, governments have used the oil wealth to guarantee political loyalty to the state. In the days of the Fourth Republic, the most ambitious program of wealth redistribution was implemented during the first presidency of Carlos Andrés Pérez (1974-1979). Pérez nationalized the oil industry in 1976 following the Yom Kippur War. From 1970 to 1980, oil prices skyrocketed, increasing by 948 percent. This enormous wealth was captured by the state in the form of rent, some of which trickled down to the masses. Workers were paid higher wages than in the rest of Latin America and the government implemented price controls and subsidies on basic food goods, transportation, and expanded social services like education and health care. The leaders of corporatist labor unions in key sectors of the economy—such as public services and heavy industry—stood firmly behind Pérez. Meanwhile, a growing layer of consumers enjoyed the spending frenzy precipitated by the oil wealth that flooded the country.

The flip side of this enormous injection of oil wealth into the Venezuelan economy in the 1970s was the exacerbation of a structural imbalance known as the "resource curse" or "Dutch disease." While Pérez made successful efforts to industrialize the economy in an earlier phase of capitalist expansion, it has been difficult for the Chávez government to diversify the economy. Amongst other problems, Venezuelan elites have long considered themselves to be more "modern" and "Western" than most Latin Americans, and demonstrate their modernity by consuming products made abroad. Imported whisky, for example, tends to be Venezuelans' drink of choice. The heart of the problem lies in a chronically over-valued currency, which cheapens imports and raises the price of Venezuelan exports, which chokes the manufacturing sector and makes it difficult to expand the base of production. In short, why bother to make anything when you can simply sow the oil? Such a strategy is all very well and good when oil prices are high, but over-reliance on one primary export commodity has made the Venezuelan economy subject to boom and bust cycles. While it is possible to fund generous social programs during boom times, these programs tend to crash along with the price of oil. As former Venezuelan oil minister Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonso famously said during the oil boom of the 1970s, "Oil will bring us ruin… Oil is the devil's excrement." A decade later, his words seemed prophetic as the boom of the 1970s turned to bust and Venezuela descended into political and economic crisis.

While Venezuela's economy is characterized by boom and bust, cyclical growth patterns are typical of the region where most countries are dependent on the export of primary materials. Contrary to many claims, Venezuela's political economy between the 1960s and early 1980s was not that exceptional. The region's economy grew by 82 percent between 1960 and 1980, the same time that Venezuela experienced its boom. Likewise, when oil prices crashed and Latin America entered the debt crisis of the 1980s—growing only 15 percent in the 26 years between 1980 and 2006—Venezuela also plunged into the abyss—although Venezuela's fall proved longer and deeper than most. Real GDP plummeted by 26 percent between 1978 and 1986. The effects on Venezuela's middle class were particularly devastating. During the 1980s, poverty rates in Venezuela rose from 40 percent (10 points below the regional average) to above 50 percent (about 5 points above the regional average).

Oil wealth has also fueled a political culture characterized by populism. As the late historian Fernando Coronil argued in his brilliant book, *The Magical State*, the nation's oil wealth came to be personified in the figure of the president as a magnificent sorcerer. As a magician performing tricks of prestidigitation, the Venezuelan president also appears to pull things out of his hat—constitutions, car factories, roads, houses, cosmogonies. Coronil's analysis belies accusations that Chávez has transformed political culture in Venezuela, for the book was published one year before Chávez was elected to office. A more accurate interpretation suggests that Chávez, as charismatic as he might be, filled a void left by the corrupt, incompetent, and unresponsive governments of the Punto Fijo.

Throughout the 1980s, Venezuelans consistently voted for presidents who campaigned against neoliberalism, including the ill-fated Pérez, whose bait-and-switch move in his second term as president (1989-1993) turned out to be the last straw. Rather than focusing on the personal attributes of the leader, to paraphrase Marx's adage in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, "Men [sic] make their own history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing."

Making Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Process

The shallow veneer of Venezuela's "democratic exceptionalism" was shattered on February 27, 1989, the day of the *caracazo* when anti-austerity protests were violently suppressed by state security forces. Under a neoliberal structural adjustment package introduced by Pérez, then in the early days of his second term (1989-1993), the government removed a subsidy on domestically produced gasoline. When owners of the private buses that many poor *caraqueños* rely on for daily transportation attempted to pass the cost onto their passengers, protests broke out in the streets of Caracas. Late into the evening state security forces began to use live ammunition to stymie the protests. In some neighborhoods such as Petare, security forces used automatic weapons to protect property owners against looting. After four days of shooting, the official death toll was 287, but estimates range up to 3,000. The wide disparity in official and estimated death toll is explained by the fact that many families could not register the death of their loved one because they couldn't find the body. Many organizers in the most rebellious neighborhoods, such as 23 de enero, were dragged from their homes and "disappeared." Invisible to the state in life, these Venezuelan citizens were also invisible in death.

The painful memory of the *caracazo* is deeply etched in the minds of poor Venezuelans. As Rosangela Orozco, a young militant with the community organization, Foundation Alexis Vive, put it, "I was only nine years old then, but even then I could see how awful it was that arms were used directly against our community." For those who lost their neighbors and loved ones like Rosangela, nostalgic calls by the opposition for a return to the "unity" that they enjoyed under the Punto Fijo (a time when the rich and the poor supposedly got along) have a rather hollow ring. While the largest protests occurred in Caracas, Venezuela's largest city, protests emerged early in the morning in San Cristóbal, Barquisimeto, Maracay, Barcelona, Puerto la Cruz, and Mérida, and later in the afternoon in other major cities like Maracaibo and Valencia. For this reason, Ciccariello-Maher has argued that the term *caracazo* is misleading since it conceals the generalized and national nature of the rebellion.

The rebellion also made a large impression on young military officers such as Chávez who "had not assimilated to North American geopolitical doctrines nor been fully integrated into the structures of *puntofijismo*." Nor had Chávez undergone training at a U.S. counterinsurgency school, having obtained a degree in engineering from the Military Academy and begun graduate studies at a public, civilian university. In 1982 Chávez and other like-minded officers founded a clandestine revolutionary movement within the military called the Revolutionary Bolivarian Army (*Ejercito Bolivariana Revolucionaria*, EBR-200) in celebration of the 200th anniversary of Bolívar's birth in 1783. As the political and economic situation deteriorated, they began to recruit civilians to their movement, renaming themselves the Bolivarian Revolutionary Movement (*Movimiento Bolivariana Revolucionaria* MBR-200).

On February 4, 1992, the MBR-200 launched an unsuccessful coup d'état. While the movement was successful in taking several military installations, the state authorities were able to thwart the coup attempt thanks to a leak in intelligence. As a key organizer, Chávez was arrested. In his address to the nation donning his signature red beret, he apologized to the Venezuelan public telling them that he had failed, but only "for now." In the context of the deeply delegitimized government of Pérez, Chávez's bold apology made him an instant folk hero—a daring leader who stood up to the corrupt, clientelistic establishment. Chávez spent the next two years in jail, reading, reflecting, and preparing. As Marta Harnecker recounts in her biography of Chávez, it was during this time he immersed himself in the work of the neo-structuralists of the Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which inspired his early economic policies.

After another failed coup attempt on November 27, 1992 by a splinter group from the MBR-200, a new formation led by Chávez, the Fifth Republic Movement (*Movimiento Quinta República*, MVR), was formed in 1997 with an electoral orientation. Campaigning on an anti-corruption, anti-poverty platform, on December 6, 1998 Chávez won with 56.4 percent the largest percentage of the popular vote since 1983. While the majority of the poor voted for Chávez, as political scientist Lesley Gates explains, so did a substantial portion of prominent business leaders who were disillusioned by the corruption scandal that brought a premature end to Pérez's presidency in 1993. Chávez's early economic and social policies were decidedly center-left. But the new constitution that founded the Fifth Republic on December 15, 1999 laid the ground for more radical policies to come, including the establishment of two additional branches of government (in addition to legislative, executive, and judicial)—electoral and popular power. Chávez and the Fifth Republic Movement swept the elections on July 30, 2000, with Chávez winning his second six-year term with an even larger mandate of 60 percent.

Chávez's shift to radicalism was a contingent process, inspired by the blunders of the right-wing opposition. The failed right-wing coup in 2002, the bosses' strike in 2002-2003 and the recall referendum against Chávez in 2004 are major turning points. Instead of neutralizing the Bolivarian process, the events had the unintended effect of further radicalizing voters, as citizens who support the process got a sense of what they almost lost.

On April 11, 2002 Chávez was removed from office for 47 hours, held hostage by members of the military and the peak business association, Venezuelan Federation of the Chamber of Commerce (Fédecamaras), on an island off the north coast of Venezuela. The coup organizers were concerned about Chávez's efforts to assert executive control over the state oil company, which had become a "state within a state" over decades of liberalization. In particular, one of Chávez's most important foreign policies was the reactivation of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) that lay dormant after nearly two decades of neoliberalism. Under the leadership of Alí Rodríguez Araque, the cartel began to curtail production again. Oil prices soared 660 percent from 1998 to 2008.

Upon hearing the news of Chávez's ouster, tens of thousands of citizens poured onto the streets calling for the return of the president. During what has been dubbed the first "media coup," the privately owned media launched a deliberate misinformation campaign, refusing to cover the pro-Chávez rallies in the streets and to report that a key segment of the military rejected the coup, and remaining silent when the pro-Chávez forces regained control over the presidential palace. Venevisión, RCTV, Globovisión, and Televen replaced regular programming with relentless anti-Chávez speeches, interrupted only for commercials calling on viewers to take to the streets to join the opposition rallies. The ads telling viewers "Not one step backward. Out! Leave now!" were sponsored by the oil industry, but the stations carried them for free, as "public service announcements."

Undeterred by the show of popular support marked by the celebrations in the streets with the return of Chávez, the next move of anti-Chávez factions of Venezuela's elite was economic sabotage. In December 2002 and February 2003, the management of Venezuelan Petroleum, (*Petróleos de Venezuela*, PDVSA) shut down production, locking out workers. Chávez's response was to fire the disloyal managers, dismissing 300 of them by January. By April, production was back to pre-lockout levels with the help of new managers and, more importantly, workers loyal to the government who decided to take matters into their own hands. Thus began the initiatives in worker control, as workers restarted the pumps and delivered gasoline to key distribution points. In subsequent months, Chávez fired 18,000 oil workers who participated in the business strike, to create a new PDVSA that would thereafter fulfill its role as a publicly owned and operated corporation. While the bosses' strike had severely damaging consequences on the economy (GDP growth rate hit a record low of -26 percent), it was a boon for the popular movement. Left dissidents from the oil sector along with other industrial workers founded the first independent labor central, the National Union of Workers (*Unión Nacional de Trabajadores*, UNT) in the heat of the oil lockout. The lessons learned from the short-lived experiment in workers' control in the oil industry have since blossomed in other areas of the Venezuelan economy, including the industrial and service sectors. The number of cooperatives in Venezuela has risen from an estimated 877 in 1998 to more than 30,000.

The opposition's third and final futile attempt to get rid of Chávez—apart from regular electoral contests—was the unsuccessful recall referendum of 2004. Critics of the Bolivarian process were the first to put a mechanism created by the new constitution to the test. Súmate, a civil society coalition funded by the United States Agency for International Development, collected signatures of 20 percent of the electorate. Chávez passed with flying colors: 59 percent of voters reaffirmed his mandate as president, with a voter turnout of 70 percent. Two years later this popular mandate was confirmed again when Chávez won his third mandate in the presidential elections of 2006 by 62 percent.

With the opposition thoroughly demoralized by defeat, Chávez appeared to be an unstoppable force. In front of an enthusiastic crowd at the January 30, 2005 meeting of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, he announced the birth of "Twenty-First Century Socialism." "Everyday I become more convinced" roared Chávez, "there is no doubt in my mind, and as many intellectuals have said, that it is necessary to transcend capitalism. But capitalism can't be transcended from within capitalism itself, but through socialism, true socialism, with equality and justice. But I'm also convinced that it is possible to do it under democracy, but not in the type of democracy being imposed from Washington." This version of socialism, he highlighted, would be different from its twentieth-century predecessors. It would be founded on democracy, and determined, in part, at the ballot box through competitive elections.

The reason that the majority of citizens in Venezuela went to the polls to vote again and again for Chávez is because they saw real improvements in their lives. While Chávez is without doubt one of the more charismatic leaders that Latin America has ever seen, his personal attributes are beside the point. There was finally something to vote for. Indeed, the main reason that Chávez inspired such hatred amongst self-professed defenders of "democracy" is that he beat them at their own game.

Danger and Opportunity Ahead

Nicolás Maduro is Chávez's anointed successor as head of the Bolivarian process. He faced off against the MUD's Henrique Capriles Radonski in presidential elections on April 14, 2013. In a surprisingly tight result, Maduro beat Capriles by only 1.5 percentage points. In what many supporters of the Bolivarian process have read as the opposition's return to the tactics of extra-legal destabilisation, Capriles, with the support of the American government, has refused to recognize the legitimacy of the elections. In the immediate wake of the results he called on his supporters to take to the streets. According to government officials, the violence of roving bands of Capriles supporters who responded to the call left nine dead in the few days following the election. With that dust having settled, at least temporarily, Capriles has moved on to a court challenge, which has little chance of success.

By all accounts, April's election was Maduro's to lose. Capriles garnered 6.5 million votes in the October 2012 presidential elections to Chávez's 8 million. During the campaign leading up to the October contest, the opposition stressed the uncertainty of voting for the incumbent given his ill health. In the April election, coming as it did closely on the heels of Chávez's death, Capriles could no longer play this card. The opposition geared up instead for a fight that sought to avoid the issue of Chávez all together, except insofar as to denigrate Maduro by comparison. If the martyr had become more or less untouchable, the only remaining option open to the opposition seemed to be to stew in the shameless hypocrisy of pointing out that Maduro is no Chávez.

In his youth, Maduro was a student militant. He joined the *Liga Socialista* (Socialist League), a splinter group from the bigger MIR, and, once finished his undergraduate degree, became a bus driver in order to contribute to the labor movement. He ascended quickly to the leadership of the New Union of the Caracas Metro (*Nuevo Sindicato del Metro de Caracas,* SITRAMECA). When Chávez went to prison for his role in the 1992 coup attempt, Maduro was a frequent visitor to the jail. Maduro and his wife, the left-wing lawyer Cilia Flores, had been among the first civilians to join the MBR. Maduro subsequently became a founding member of the MVR.

The new *chavista* president became a Member of Congress at the outset of Chávez's first administration, as well as a Member of the Constituent Assembly, which lasted from August 1999 to January 2000. Beginning in 2001, Maduro presided over the Permanent Commission for Integral Social Development, a congressional commission tasked with the development of new legislation for job creation initiatives. In 2006, he became the President of the National Assembly, and after that transferred to the position of Minister of Popular Power for Foreign Relations. He took advantage of the latter posting to work for the extension and consolidation of ALBA (first created in 2004), and the establishment of UNASUR in 2008 and CELAC in 2011. On a more idiosyncratic note, Maduro is reportedly a spiritual follower of the Indian guru Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Just as the past of the Bolivarian process is not reducible to Chávez, its future cannot be anticipated with reference to the results of the April elections and the figure of the new head of state alone. The October and December electoral cycle last year, it should be remembered, was ultimately a contest between two models of capitalism—an oil-dependent state capitalism with a heavier weight for the state in the market, versus a capitalism inflected with a freer market and the privatization of oil. "If [Chávez] loses it would be a terrible setback," the long-time Venezuelan revolutionary and former Vice-Minister of Planning (2002-2003) Roland Denis reminded us in the run-up to the October presidential elections. "But if he wins, we have not really 'won' anything, but the horizons would remain open. What I do sincerely hope happens, is that after the election all of this discontent, this tension that is mounting between the popular forces and the bureaucracy will come to a head. I hope that people will begin to speak and name the problem for what it is. Right now everyone is silent because they are waging an electoral campaign." For Denis, the lucky thing electorally was that Capriles "is a total ass. He is extremely basic. It is painful that we have to put up with this little bourgeois idiot from Caracas as a candidate," running against

Chávez, "who is a giant."

After Maduro's victory over Capriles in the October elections, the pragmatic balancing of contradictory elements within the Bolivarian process that Chávez managed to sustain has become much more difficult. Early signals of continuity include the renewal of Rafael Ramírez as energy minister, and Elias Jaua as foreign minister. On the other hand, the appointment of a former president of the Central Bank, Nelson Merentes, as minister of finance can plausibly be interpreted as an early rightward shift in the regime's economic orientation.

The main reason that Chávez inspired such hatred amongst self-professed defenders of 'democracy' is that he beat them at their own game.

The game, ultimately, is not a virtuous circle of mutuality, but a zero-sum competition of classes with opposing interests. And the battles are likely to take on a myriad of forms across the extra-parliamentary and parliamentary theaters. The lubricant of oil has blurred this reality temporarily, but different developmental exits in which distinct classes win and lose are likely to come to the fore relatively quickly, particularly in the event of a downturn in oil prices. The conservative *chavista* right within the state apparatus, the currents of reaction inside the military, the red bureaucrats enriching themselves through manipulation of markets, and the union bureaucrats aligned against working-class self-organization and emancipation are the preeminent obstacles of immediate concern to many activists on the *chavista* left. At the same time, the experiences of workers' control, communal councils, communes, and popular assemblies have raised the consciousness and capacities of millions. A dire turn is therefore not a *fait accompli*.

The organic intellectuals of the variegated popular movements in Venezuela are the richest resource for understanding the possible roads ahead. In our interviews with a plethora of labor and community activists across a wide gamut of movements in 2008, 2010, and 2012 we learned a great deal from their critiques of the failure of the Bolivarian process to build a collective leadership, a failure sensed very sharply now in the wake of the president's death. For example, Andrés Antillano, a militant in the *Movimiento de Pobladores* (Movement of the Poor, MP), described

> the phenomenon of Chávez as some kind of paradoxical, egalitarian caudillo. Chávez has been the boss, without being the boss, caudillo without being caudillo—the kind of figure that has been a part of Venezuelan peasant struggles stretching back historically, the clearest example being Simón Bolívar. The idea of the egalitarian caudillo was the negation of the delegation of political power. This phenomenon has made it difficult to build a collective political reference point with the capacity to bring together all of the various popular social forces.

Activists also complain about the presence of conservatives in red shirts within the administrative apparatus of the state and the highest echelons of governing circles. They decry the inefficiencies, corruption, and bureaucratism in the distribution of state resources. When these activists from the labor movement and urban movements of the poor barrios of Caracas and elsewhere point to the problem of conservative, or inefficient and incompetent, bureaucrats, however, the often implicit solution seems to be the replacement of these individuals with others who share the ideology of more left-wing currents within *chavismo*. In other words, they tend to downplay the objective and structural obstacles of the bureaucratization of the process, in favor of attending to the subjective, political, and ideological problems standing in their way. A common view of the rank-and-file, then, is to conceive of the problem as conservative individuals within trade union and party bureaucracies, or inefficient and incompetent individuals in these positions; replaced with competent, committed activists the running of the trade union apparatus, the party apparatus, and the state apparatus would function as it should, in the interests of the exploited and oppressed.

There is, in many ways, still too little sense among the rank-and-file of the popular movements of the bureaucracy—the non-propertied officialdom of various organizations—as an independent social layer within the labor movement, the communal councils, the PSUV, and the state apparatus itself, with its own ideology and politics, rooted in its own material interests. A politics of self-organization in opposition to this bureaucracy, structurally understood, remains relatively limited; as do popular understandings of precisely how these bureaucratic material interests have become increasingly attached to and dependent upon the administration of benefits accrued through access to petty drips of the oil riches flowing from the magical Venezuelan state. Antillano, an elegant exception, explains "the perverse role that the state plays in this dynamic, particularly the role of oil rent in the administration of politics and economics in this country. Today, as in the period of oligarchic hegemony, the objective of social organization has been gaining access to parts of the state in order to control a portion of the oil rent, rather than to organize the autonomous struggles of the people."

Pitted against bureaucratization and the conservative elements of *chavismo* that hope to contain the process from deepening and expanding in the transformative ways desired by so many, are the rich experiences of self-organization and self-activity of the formal laboring classes and the informal proletarians, from struggles to control their workplaces to efforts at community self-management. As Gonzalo Gómez, of *Marea Socialista,* a left-wing current operating within the PSUV, told us in an interview last August: "If there is no struggle, if there is no tension, the bureaucratic apparatus will tend to impose itself over the popular interests. In order to prevent this we need to redouble the popular forces fighting against this tendency, and they need to be taken into account by the government."

Following Maduro's victory, then, the battle for the character of *chavismo* without Chávez has just begun. "The process from 1998-2012 has been one of political awakening, raising the levels of popular consciousness," explains Juan Contrera, an extraordinary activist of 23 de enero. "Right now it is time to cash in (*cobrar*). I don't mean this in an economic sense. The people should assume their historic, protagonist role in this process. We need to kick some ass (*da la pata*) in terms of fixing the bureaucracy and resolving the problem of corruption." When we spoke to Juan in August of last year, Chávez's cancer seemed to be in remission. "When Chávez gets sick," he told us, "we feel sad, obviously, I don't want to be misunderstood here. But it is the oligarchy that thinks that Chávez is the problem. They do not understand that the problem is the millions of Venezuelans that have said, 'Enough!' And they are not going to be able to squash our dreams."

A footnoted version of this article will be available online at newpol.org.

Canadian Labor Politics

A Personal View

Sid Shniad

Militant Minority: British Columbia Workers and the Rise of a New Left, 1948-1972
Benjamin Isitt
University of Toronto Press, 2011, 458 pp.

I emigrated from the United States to Canada in 1974, in the aftermath of the period covered by Benjamin Isitt's *Militant Minority,* becoming actively involved in British Columbia's (BC) social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) as well as its labor movement. Isitt's work deepened my understanding of both. By providing detailed histories of strikes, intra-union political struggles, and portraits of various segments of BC's political left, he filled a number of gaps in my knowledge.

During the era described in *Militant Minority*, BC's labor and political scenes differed greatly from those in other parts of Canada. The province's economy, based as it was in logging, mining, fishing and other resources, was conducive to industrial unionism. As a result, the level of union militancy, the frequency of strikes, the standard of living enjoyed by the organized portion of the working class, and the stridency of differences between electoral parties all served to give the province a well-deserved reputation for progressive activism.

The bare-knuckle relationship between labor and capital in BC was rooted in the dominance of these extractive industries, often characterized by robber baron bosses on one side and militant trade unionists with roots in English and Scottish labor on the other. As Isitt puts it, "Benefiting from enduring frontier characteristics and from an influx of class-conscious British immigrants, BC's working class developed a political culture that was independent from the old-line [capitalist] parties and collectivist in orientation."

Isitt describes the central role played by the Communist Party in organizing and running BC's militant unions, including the Fishermen; the provincial district of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers; the Marine and Boilermakers;

Sid Shniad *served for nearly thirty years as the research director for the Telecommunications Workers Union of Canada. He is currently active in Palestine solidarity work through Independent Jewish Voices Canada.*

and Vancouver's Civic Employees Union. In my view, however, he overstates the case when he argues that the province's union and left political organizations challenged the assumptions and structures of postwar capitalism. While they succeeded in extracting a standard of living as well as a degree of control over their working lives not seen in other parts of Canada, neither mounted a fundamental challenge to the workings of the system.

Given the high profile, active presence of the Communist Party, it is not surprising that anti-communism played a major role in the province. White Bloc elements in the unions were aided by stridently reactionary politicians and newspaper columnists. But the combined efforts of such forces proved insufficient to blunt the militancy that characterized the province's unions. As Isitt explains, "Facing internal and external competition from communists, non-communist leaders in BC were more inclined to embrace militant action and a confrontational stance with employers" than was the case in other provinces, where the communist influence was not as strong.

Militant Minority provides insight into the role of "international" (i.e. American) unions in aiding anti-communist forces within BC's labor organizations. Isitt details, for instance, how George Gee, business agent for International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 213, was expelled because of his relationship with communists. One of the charges against Gee was that he had attended the famous concert given by Paul Robeson at the Canada-U.S. border. Isitt also describes how the company and the international worked together to back an apolitical union during Local 213's organizing drive at the Alcan smelter in the northern town of Kitimat.

It is difficult to determine the accuracy of the accusation coming from one of the White Bloc unionists, cited by Isitt, that at one time one third of BC's organized workers were members of communist-led unions. But it is undeniably the case that the Communist Party's influence was substantial. As he puts it, "The Communist Party, warts and all, helped sustain an oppositional working-class culture in Cold War BC."

The amount of historical information included in *Militant Minority* is enormous. Fully half the work is comprised of appendices, notes and bibliography. But while the work supplies exhaustive detail about BC labor and political history in this era, it does not place all this in an analytical framework. In the absence of such analysis, it is difficult for the reader to understand how a provincial labor movement that once represented more than 50 percent of the workforce could, within a matter of years, enter the same precipitous decline that now afflicts labor across North America and beyond.

My personal history in British Columbia picks up where Isitt's work ends. When I immigrated to Canada in the summer of 1974, there was a federal election in progress. Our moving trailer heaped high with all our worldly belongings, we crossed the border to be greeted by an array of election campaign signs—including signs for candidates from the Communist Party of Canada! I harbored few illusions about the CP, but coming as we did from the United States, where McCarthyism was still alive and well, the sight of these signs was an enormous culture shock.

Next we encountered what was then a regularly occurring province-wide beer strike, when militant workers shut down their breweries at the peak of summer beer-drinking season. Communist candidates for public office? Militant, focused strikes? The reality in BC was clearly different from what we were used to in the United States.

Shortly after we emigrated, my wife and I got involved in the New Democratic Party, which had formed the provincial government in 1972. There we encountered a number of dedicated, predominantly working-class, rank-and-file members with strong, progressive political values. After the disheartening experience of party politics in Nixon America, we found the NDP refreshing and inspiring.

Militant Minority describes a time when radical left politics was still practiced openly in BC, inside the NDP and beyond, depicting the prominent role of a number of Trotskyist groups and that of the Communist Party. As new immigrants, we found the level of political energy exhilarating. What we didn't realize was that after having taken office the NDP was moving to the right in the name of electoral realism. At that juncture the influence of professional party bureaucrats had just begun to eclipse that of focused, articulate leftists.

After settling in to our new environs, I returned to school to study economics, armed with a dual desire: to get an understanding of the forces driving the world and to acquire analytical skills that might make me useful as a union staffer. By 1977, I had my Master's degree in economics from Simon Fraser University, but it wasn't until 1980 that I was able to land a job as a union staffer. In that year I was hired by the Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU), which represented the workers at BC Tel, the company that provided phone service in the province. I thought I had died and gone to heaven.

By early 1981, the TWU was involved in a nose-to-nose confrontation with BC Tel. The two had engaged in a series of knock-down-drag-out battles for years. Picking up where it had left off in the last dispute, the company was trying to break the militant union and get rid of gains the union had made in the areas of work jurisdiction and contract language. The union was equally determined to defend these gains, which it had achieved through decades of militant struggle.

The dispute escalated, culminating when union members began occupying BC Tel exchanges across the province. When the company sought redress from the courts and the TWU faced the threat of crushing fines and jailings, the province's entire labor movement responded by mounting a series of regional general strikes that forced BC Tel to back down. The contrast with my earlier experience, in an environment in which unions had little visible presence, could not have been more dramatic.

Little did I know that the province was just two years away from the onset of the corporate-driven attack that has continued to overwhelm both organized labor and the left ever since, in BC and beyond. On July 7, 1983, the right-wing provincial government introduced a legislative package of 26 bills, initiating what in retrospect marked the onset of neoliberalism in BC. Inspired by the ideology of Milton Friedman, the various pieces of legislation attacked renters, immigrants, women's rights, tenants' rights, anti-poverty groups, students, seniors, environmentalists, and the province's human rights commission. It slashed social services and gutted labor laws. One of the pieces of draft legislation allowed public sector employers to lay off their employees without cause.

In response to the government's announcement, the BC Federation of Labour invited all of the unions of the province to the founding meeting of Operation Solidarity, whose purpose was to oppose the legislative package and pressure the government to withdraw it. At the same time, the Fed encouraged the social groups that were targeted by the legislative assault to join together in what became the Solidarity Coalition. Never before in the province's history had labor and community united in support of a common agenda.

Confrontation with the government escalated. At the end of August 50,000 people attended a protest rally at Vancouver's Empire Stadium. By the middle of October 80,000 people marched past the convention of the governing Social Credit party. As a final showdown approached, Operation Solidarity announced a strategy that would have union members come off the job in waves, joining striking government employees in stages, until the entire labor movement was out.

In early November, however, the leadership of Operation Solidarity met behind closed doors with the premier of the province to negotiate an end to the escalating job action. Contrary to the expectations that had been raised by the rhetoric of the union leaders who had launched the movement, the settlement was a very narrow one that addressed only the key concerns of the striking provincial government employees. The community partners who had joined the Solidarity Coalition were left high and dry, their issues unaddressed.

The behavior of BC's unions and that of the NDP, which was anxious to put a damper on the escalating crisis, demonstrated that despite their militant history, neither was prepared to support the kind of push back that would have been necessary to force the government off of its regressive agenda. The lesson drawn by capital was clear: stick to a draconian agenda. Labor and the left are not prepared to mount sustained resistance.

Some years later, the TWU engaged in a depressingly similar retreat, when Canada's telecommunications industry was deregulated and competition was introduced. Under the changed circumstances, the TWU proved as incapable of mounting the necessary response as had the BC labor movement in 1983.

In 1984, the U.S. government forced the break-up of the AT&T company. As the effects rolled out, phone workers employed by regulated monopolies who had earned wages superior to those of most other organized workers saw their relatively privileged existence begin to unravel.

Hundreds of thousands of union jobs were lost. Telecom companies that had been constrained by government regulation established and purchased non-union subsidiaries. They installed a range of new technologies, including digitalized networks, e-mail, the internet, and cell phone service. At the same time, telecom companies went all-out to prevent cellular, the fastest growing and most profitable part of the industry, from being unionized. All of these factors combined to increase the power of telecom companies relative to that of their unionized employees, power the companies used to take back the gains that telephone workers had won earlier in the post-war era.

Because these changes rolled out more slowly in Canada than in the States, it took years before telecom unions north of the border faced the day of reckoning. But it was only a matter of time before the same developments caught up with them. The TWU's problems began in earnest in 1999, when BC Tel merged with the provincial phone company in Alberta to form a new corporate giant called Telus.

Despite the changes wracking the industry, the TWU hoped to maintain the gains it had achieved through decades of struggle, which had given the union unparalleled control over job content, job descriptions, bargaining unit jurisdiction and the administration of technological change. But the tough new CEO hired by Telus to tame the TWU was determined to force the kind of change that had swept the rest of North American telecom by re-writing the union's collective agreement to rid it of language restricting management's rights and doing away with the TWU's unique achievements.

After years of legalistic jousting in the courts and before labor boards, Telus threw down the gloves in 2005. The company mounted a "soft lockout," suspended the remission of union dues, ignored the grievance and arbitration process, and initiated a series of workplace harassments. Finally Telus announced its intention to impose a new contract on the union unilaterally. Having tried its utmost to avoid a confrontation, the TWU was compelled to pull its members off the job.

Telus followed up by mounting a coordinated attack on the union, maintaining its operations through the combined use of scabs, automation and the electronic transfer of work. The TWU did nothing to create a coherent counter-strategy. In contrast to the powerful response mounted by the BC Fed in 1981, when all of the province's unions came to the aid of the TWU, in this confrontation there was no serious effort made by the labor movement to slow the Telus juggernaut. As a result, the company's comprehensive, lavishly funded strategy overwhelmed the union's ad hoc resistance. Two months into the dispute, Telus operations were largely back to normal and its financial results were the best of any phone company in the country. In the end, the TWU had to scramble back to the bargaining table, where it capitulated to preserve its very existence. Holding all the cards, Telus stripped the TWU's contract of the ground-breaking protections that had taken decades of struggle to achieve.

What is the conclusion we can draw from all this? That despite their significant differences from their counterparts in the rest of Canada described in *Militant Minority*, BC's unions and their allies on the left have yet to mount a serious response to the neoliberal assault that has wracked society for the last thirty years. In this context, Isitt's failure to provide an analysis of the factors that enabled labor and the left in BC to exert a significant progressive influence in the postwar era and how these factors have changed leaves the reader without a perspective on the particular circumstances that made such success possible and the steps that must be taken to reverse the disastrous situation facing us today.

It may be countered that Isitt's work is not unique in this respect. True enough. But if the history of labor and the left is to be more than a pastime for academics and intellectuals, this deficiency must be addressed.

Pussy Riot

Karie A. Gubbins

Traditional book publishing does not lend itself well to current events. However, the introduction of self and independent book publications, as well as the e-book, has vastly changed this landscape. Today, books can reach a wide audience almost immediately after they are written. A perfect example of this is Stephen Morgan's recent book, *Pussy Riot vs. Putin: Revolutionary Russia* that chronicles the events relating to the arrest, trial, and sentencing of the Russian feminist punk rock band Pussy Riot in Moscow last year.

> Pussy Riot vs. Putin
> Stephen Morgan
> CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, December 17, 2012

On February 21, 2012, five members of the band Pussy Riot, wearing brightly colored balaclavas, walked into the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow and sang a protest "prayer" entitled "Virgin Mary, Put Putin Away." Their actions were aimed at Orthodox Church leaders' unabashed support for President Vladimir Putin's anti-democratic

Karie A. Gubbins *is a Phd Candidate in the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University-Newark. She teaches Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies at William Paterson University. Her forthcoming dissertation is entitled, "The Myth of Female Empowerment."*

policies in Russia. Morgan writes that the band "wanted to give artistic expression to how outraged they were at Putin," and to highlight that the relationship between Putin and Church leaders, which Putin leverages to serve his own political needs, is unconstitutional in a secular state (20-21). The "punk prayer," which did not include musical accompaniment, lasted forty seconds before the members of Pussy Riot were removed by church security. Three members of the band were later arrested by the police and charged with "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred." Morgan describes the events that followed as akin to Stalin's "Moscow Show Trails." Two of the band members were convicted and sentenced to "the harshest [labor] camps of all possible choices" (43). Emphatically written, *Pussy Riot vs. Putin* expresses both Morgan's passion for the band's mission and in-depth knowledge of the events surrounding Pussy Riot's arrest, trial, and what Morgan would argue was their foregone conviction.

Pussy Riot vs. Putin is a short book divided into three sections. Part I, "From Streets to Cells," comprising more than half of the book, recounts the events surrounding Pussy Riot that took place from February 2012 through December 2012. The first chapter of this section immediately engages the reader by humanizing the arrested members of the group—Maria, 24; Nadezhda (Nadia), 22; and Yekaterina, 30. They are students of philosophy, journalism, and creative writing; they are interested in the arts, theater, and photography; they have done volunteer work for Greenpeace and Children's Hospital in Moscow; and two of them, Maria and Nadia, have young children of their own. In providing this background information, Morgan conveys to the reader just what is at stake for these young women who have bright futures and families of their own. Despite what they have to lose, they have dedicated themselves to "rebelling against the corruption, authoritarianism, and gluttony of Putin and his elite" (14). "Direct Action," as the title of the first chapter suggests, is the means by which Pussy Riot engages in their punk rock protests, performing in metro stations, on roofs of trams, and outside prison walls. They have even invaded fashion shows and occupied high-class boutiques. "[T]hey mean to break law on purpose, rather than submit to the regime's strict rules on registering for protests" (15). According to band members, the reason for their tactic is simple, "'As far as we can see, Putin is scared only of unsanctioned rallies'" (89). Fed up with sanctioned protests that are largely ignored by the authorities, Pussy Riot's outrageous performances have included discharging fire extinguishers, igniting smoke bombs, and simulating masturbation. Morgan illustrates Pussy Riot's political and feminist positions through the lyrics to their songs published in the first chapter, and shows convincingly how the song "Virgin Mary, Put Putin Away" was directed at Putin and Church leaders, and never actually attacked the believers in religion or the Church itself, the crime they were charged with.

In Chapter 2, "The Show Trial," Morgan clearly demonstrates not only how the charge levied against Pussy Riot was absurd, but that the verdict had been pre-determined even before the trial began. He reports that the charge of "hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" was rejected by SOVA, a Russian NGO specializing in human rights violations, including religious issues, which stated that the criminal charges were illegitimate as they "did not see in the actions of the punk prayer's participants any demonstration of religious hatred" (29). In addition, Morgan provides several examples in this chapter of how the judge in the case acted with egregious partiality against the defense, and how witnesses were coaxed into their testimonies by both the prosecuting attorneys and the secret service. Morgan asserts that this charade of a trial and the complete disregard for due process and the rule of law made it clear that this trial was under direct state control. In other words, Putin himself was pulling the strings behind the scene.

Although the evidence in this chapter is abundant and compelling, perhaps the most interesting point Morgan includes is the role feminism played in the trial and conviction of Pussy Riot. After exhausting the political motivations for Pussy Riot's protest the judge suggested that the band's feminist beliefs were to blame because they were antithetical to the Church, and were asserting the superiority of one ideology. Morgan writes that the judges' actions would have us believe that feminism is an "immoral ideology based on hate…in effect criminalizing feminist activity" and further argues that Pussy Riot's trial "is also an attack on feminist movements and women in general" (37). As Morgan further suggests, the trial in effect separates feminism from politics, relegating feminism to just another ideology rather than a political movement focused on equal rights and representation. This is not surprising given the human rights abuses in Russia, particularly against women and the LGBT community.

In the end, two members of Pussy Riot were convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment. Chapter 3, "Condemned to Labor Camps," briefly demonstrates that the partiality and bias against Pussy Riot that was shown in the trial did not abate once they were remanded to prison colonies. Maria was forced to defend herself against harsh provocations by inmates as well as prison guards "with the clear intention of provoking an incident, which might cause a reprimand and undermine her appeal" (47). On the other hand, Nadia was left alone. Morgan suggests this was to forestall any accusation of misconduct on the part of the state. This implies that even in prison the fates of these young women were under Putin's direct control. This also raises the question, as Morgan proposes at the outset of this book, of why would Putin, a world leader with military and economic might, decide to throw his weight behind the conviction and imprisonment of a few members of a female punk band? Perhaps the answer can be found by harkening back to the judges' scathing conviction of feminism in Chapter 3. In a country where left-wing opposition is bubbling under the surface, and a president with a dictatorial style is trying to remain in power, there may be no better group in the opposition to make an example of than one that is young and female.

The next chapter in the book, "Lies, Slander and Insinuations," is largely dedicated to debunking the myth that Pussy Riot is backed by the CIA in an attempt to overthrow Putin and his regime. While most of the evidence presented in this chapter is Morgan's own opinion, it is compelling nonetheless. As Morgan explains: "I don't think …the overthrow of global capitalism is something the CIA would invest in" (68). The next two chapters focus on the ideals, influences, and historical inspirations behind Pussy Riot that range from Sylvia Pankhurst and other "Western" feminists to anarchism to Karl Marx to Slavoj Zizek to the 1980s punk scene. However, there are many influences that situate Pussy Riot as a distinctly Russian group; Morgan loosely likens Pussy Riot's experience in Russia to that of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, the Decemberist revolt, Russian artist rebellions, the Futurists, and on and on to the present day.

The last section of the book, Part III: "Putinism" finally takes on the politics of Russia. However, only 28 pages in length—inclusive of Chapter 7: "The Power Vertical and the Drift towards Dictatorship" and Chapter 8: "What Now for the Opposition?"—this section is very brief in content and short on analysis. This is perhaps both the strength and weakness of the book. Stephen Morgan's *Pussy Riot vs. Putin* is not an academic book. At best it is journalistic in style and lacks both in-depth context and history. The perspectives presented in this book are entirely Morgan's. Under no circumstance is Morgan trying to introduce the world to a new academic concept or term, nor is he trying to implement some grand narrative to explain some missed connection in the conventional wisdom that explains the actions of either Pussy

Riot or Vladimir Putin. This is just the facts, which arguably is the book's strength. The first part, which explains the protest, arrest, trial, and conviction of Pussy Riot, is excellent for both those who are familiar and those unfamiliar with the trial. However, the remainder of the book, while introducing the reader to some very interesting ideas and connections, barely stays on any one topic for more than a few paragraphs to cover anything in depth. This presents the problem that if you were even peripherally aware of Pussy Riot's trial and its relationship to contemporary Russian politics what you would get out of this book would be limited. However, if you knew nothing, this book would leave you wanting to know much more. In this sense *Pussy Riot vs. Putin* makes a good primer, especially for classroom use where one might want to gently ease students into concepts such as communism, totalitarianism, dictatorship, democracy, feminism, anti-authoritarianism, and left-wing opposition and their meaning in action.

The Arab Revolutions

The Game's Not Over Yet

Kit Adam Wainer

> **The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising**
> Gilbert Achcar
> Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013, 328 pages, $65 (hard cover), $27.95 (paperback and e-Book)

Long-time revolutionary activist, historian, and analyst Gilbert Achcar has produced a provocative assessment of the Arab Spring. In *The People Want,* Achcar develops a Marxist analysis of the roots of the Arab revolutions, traces their trajectories since December 2010, and draws a tentative balance sheet of what progress has been made and what possibilities remain.

Using a classical Marxian framework, Achcar roots the dysfunctionality of late twentieth- and twenty-first-century Arab regimes in a clash between outmoded relations of production and the forces of economic production. Achcar relies heavily on the concept of "rentier" capitalism to explain the modalities of Arab states and economies. Rentier capitalist states derive the bulk of their income not from taxing profits and incomes but in collecting royalties, fees, and foreign aid (rents) for providing vital services. Such rents can include payments to states for private concessions to export raw materials (e.g., oil and gas), tolls for access to vital trade routes, or foreign aid in exchange for playing a particular regional military role (72-83; all page numbers refer to the Kindle edition).

While rents produce fabulous wealth for a narrow elite tied to the state, they do little to

Kit Adam Wainer *is a New York City high school teacher and a rank-and-file activist within the teachers union.*

develop the economies of their countries. Nor do they mesh well with neoliberal modernization and its emphasis on privatization and a smaller state.

The wave of post-colonial nationalist revolts of the 1950s and 1960s elevated to power dictators in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, and Iraq. All of them relied upon nationalist rhetoric and top-down bureaucratic versions of "socialism." This model of socialism involved extensive nationalization and states powerful enough to regulate domestic capitalism. These dictators established Bonapartist regimes in which the means of social production were not socialized and some big capitalists were embedded within the state (116-120). In Egypt, for example, many landed aristocrats who had urbanized in the early twentieth century and transitioned into the export sector became bulwarks of Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime in the 1950s. Similarly, Syrian Baathist ruler, Hafez al-Assad, although an Alawite, struck a historic bargain with the Sunni bourgeoisie of Damascus in 1970. The latter tied their fates to the Baathist state from that point to the present day. Libya, however, seems partially exceptional. Achcar describes Muammar Gaddafi's regime as a peculiar combination of absolutist patrimonialism and charismatic authority. In the 1970s, his first decade in power, he adopted sharia law while at the same time engaging in a nationalization program modeled on the Communist bloc (199-203).

The 1970s was a turning point in that it marked the failure and decline of Arab nationalism, the turn toward partial privatization, and the growth of political Islam. The defeat of the Arab alliance at Israel's hands in 1967 shattered popular confidence in a pan-Arabist vision of liberation led by nationalist dictators. Many nationalist dictators followed the course of Egypt's *intifah*—a partial opening to private and foreign investment.

However, even Egyptian rulers feared social discontent. Dramatic "shock therapy"—wholesale privatization and cuts in social services—could trigger strikes and protests. The growth in the labor movements in Egypt and Tunisia justified those fears, as did the earlier histories of labor activism in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. The result was a series of rotten compromises: halting, partial, highly regulated, and corrupt privatizations in the 1980s and 1990s.

> The result of this local neoliberal dead end is that most of the region's economies have ended up marrying the disadvantages of a bureaucratic state capitalism that had reached the limits of its developmentalist potential with the disadvantages of a corrupt neoliberal capitalism—without the benefit of any of the purported advantages of statism or neoliberalism (94).

Achcar's attempt to connect the crisis of Middle Eastern economic development to the theorized conflict between the forces and relations of production does not come across clearly enough. Nonetheless, his historical tracing of the manifestations of the crisis and its national specificities is quite strong and original. Achcar's analysis of the growth of political Islam since the 1970s is also complex and innovative. He argues that political Islam's appeal to the petty bourgeois and professional sectors, particularly in Egypt, followed the discrediting of pan-Arabism and the growth of a super-rich bourgeois elite. While much of that history has been explored by others, his examination of the shifting interrelationship between the United States, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the dictatorships of Anwar el-Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, and Saddam Hussein, and the Saudi and Qatari monarchies is illuminating and little discussed elsewhere.

Also powerful is his critique of those on the international left who, taken in by the radical rhetoric of numerous nationalist dictators, have been ambivalent in their support for the revolutionary movements unleashed by the Arab Spring. Some have even supported Assad and Gaddafi as "anti-imperialists." Achcar writes,

> If one opposes imperialism because, by definition and as a general rule, it violates the peoples' right to self-determination, one will prioritize defense of that right, even in the exceptional cases in which, for purely opportunistic reasons, imperialism, too, defends certain peoples' exercise of it. It was inadmissible to qualify, in any way whatsoever, recognition of the Czechoslovak people's right freely to decide the kind of political regime it wished to establish [in 1968]. A fortiori, it was inadmissible to deny it that right on the pretext that the United States expressed support of it (simply because it was asserted against Moscow).
>
> If, on the other hand, one considers anti-imperialism as such to be the supreme value, one will unhesitatingly endorse the crushing of peoples who assert their right freely to choose their own future, if only imperialism opportunistically supports them, or if one considers the despotic regime oppressing them to be "anti-imperialist." This is the dismal logic that has it that 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' and, conversely, that "anyone who benefits from the friendship of my enemy is my enemy." Such logic is self-defeating. The best service that anti-imperialists can render imperialism is to demonstrate that they attach no more importance to the right of the peoples than it does. (238-9)

In the final chapter Achcar draws up a balance sheet of the progress of revolutionary change in a number of countries. He argues that in Egypt and Tunisia the revolutions have thus far been political: they have overthrown historic dictators and brought new actors onto the stage. The labor and women's movements have grown, as have political Islamist forces. However, the key institutions of the state, notably the Egyptian armed forces, remain intact and their commanding role in the economy has not changed. Quite the contrary, the uprisings of 2011 to the present may have temporarily safeguarded their economic power as they thwarted the project of Gamal Mubarak (the deposed dictator's son) to privatize assets owned or controlled by the army.

Achcar's assessment of Libya will likely prove more controversial. There the uprising of February 2011 triggered a ferocious backlash from the regime. By March Gaddafi's forces appeared on the verge of slaughtering the opposition. At that point the United Nations adopted Resolution 1973 which authorized air strikes against Gaddafi's forces. Achcar argues that the western powers were seeking a "Yemeni solution"—one in which the dictator would be overthrown but, as in Egypt, the instruments of the state would remain intact. (In other writings and interviews Achcar makes a similar argument about western goals in Syria today.) Thus they bombed Gaddafi's forces but refused to arm the rebels. However, the Yemeni solution proved elusive. Unlike in Egypt there were neither autonomous state institutions nor an independent ruling class that could step in and push Gaddafi aside. Instead, when the dictator fell in August 2011 he brought the state down with him. The aftermath, in Achcar's view, provides grounds for hope. Conservative Islamic movements have been weaker than in other countries in the region and women's and youth movements have been stronger. Achcar does not directly address the debate within the international left over western intervention in Libya. At the time he did not oppose UN Resolution 1973, at least as long as the revolutionary movement was in imminent danger of being destroyed by Gaddafi's forces. By pointing out, however, that the defeat of Gaddafi has kept open further revolutionary possibilities, he is, at least implicitly, confirming the view he held in 2011. While his argument is convincing it would have been stronger had he confronted some of the thornier problems his critics have raised: the number of civilian casualties caused by NATO bombings, and the racial violence unleashed against Black Africans during and after Gaddafi's collapse.

Achcar emphasizes that we are still in the early phases of what may turn into a decades-long revolutionary process. He argues that the political Islamic movements, while conservative and often (although not uniformly) counter-revolutionary, may have already peaked. He writes,

> What this overview suggests is that while the earthquake of the Arab uprising has certainly caused an "Islamic tsunami," as was only to be expected, it was, all in all, limited in size and scope. We would, moreover, do well to spin the metaphor out to the end. A tsunami is a transitory phenomenon; it rarely engulfs stretches of land for good. In time, we may very well discover that the "Islamic tsunami" was both the high point of the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism that has been under way since the 1970s and also the point of departure for a new political cycle in the Arab region, one determined by the long-term revolutionary process that was set in motion on 17 December 2010 in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. (261)

It is easy to follow the events of the Arab Spring as it continues to unfold and get excited by some developments only to have the enthusiasm dashed by new twists and turns. While it is important to not gloss over troubling data, Achcar is correct to insist that we are still in the early stages and many different roads are still open. What he says about Libya is true for the entire region: "The game is not over yet" (209).

Bolshevism in Yiddish

Peter Drucker

For most Jews in the United States, the legacy of the Soviet Union is linked to anti-Semitism. This is understandable, given not only the targeting of Jewish writers, doctors, and others by Stalin's terror but also the quotas and petty persecution of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years. Some people remember that the Russian Revolution freed Jews from the pogroms and segregation of czarism. But few have any conception of the extraordinary flourishing of Yiddish-language culture under the Bolsheviks in the 1920s.

> Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk
> Elissa Bemporad
> Indiana University Press, 2013, 292 pp., $28.00

Elissa Bemporad's *Becoming Soviet Jews* opens a window into the almost entirely forgotten wealth of Soviet Yiddish life. She is not the first writer to address the subject; Zvi Gitelman (who is included in Bemporad's acknowledgements) made a significant contribution to it over forty years ago in his *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics*. But Bemporad's detailed focus on the city of Minsk gives a much deeper sense of what communism and Yiddish culture meant in the 1920s to thousands of individual Jews, in all the diversity of their politics, beliefs, gender, and class backgrounds.

A Successful Experiment

Though hardly a big city—it had some 120,000

Peter Drucker *is a union, Palestine solidarity, and socialist activist in the Netherlands, an advisory editor of* Against the Current*, and the author of* Warped: Gay Normality and Queer Anti-Capitalism *(forthcoming from Brill, 2014).* *Thanks to Christopher Beck, Enzo Traverso, and Alan Wald for comments on an earlier draft.*

inhabitants in the 1920s—Minsk was the political, economic, and cultural center of its part of the USSR, the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic. It also had the biggest single concentration of Jews in the Soviet Union, about fifty thousand of them. Before the revolution Minsk Jewry had lived in the shadow of bigger Jewish centers like Warsaw and Vilna. But in the truncated USSR of 1921-39, Minsk's only major rival as a home of Jewish institutions and a source of authority was Moscow, far outside the area of permitted Jewish settlement under czarism.

Minsk's position allowed it to become a showcase of Soviet Yiddish culture. And despite its poverty, a showcase it was. The Bolsheviks formally decided in 1919 to favor Yiddish as a modern, working-class Jewish language over Hebrew (seen as "clerical") and even Russian (the language of the Russian Jewish bourgeoisie). Yiddish thus became one of the Belarusian SSR's four official languages, alongside Belarusian, Russian, and Polish.

The equality of the official languages was taken seriously. A visitor arriving at Minsk's main train station saw the city's name written in all four languages above the main station entrance. And the role of Yiddish was not merely symbolic. It was a language of newspapers, magazines, book publishing, theater, radio, film, the post office, official correspondence, election materials, and even a Central Jewish Court. Yiddish writers like Sholem Aleichem and Mendele Mocher Seforim were celebrated as Soviet Jewish heroes.

Minsk had a public, state-supported Yiddish-language school system, extending from kindergarten to the Yiddish-language section of the Belarusian State University. Although Jewish students tended to switch to studying in Russian as they moved on to secondary and higher education, 55.3 percent of Jewish primary school students attended Yiddish-language schools in 1927 (110). Such was the prestige of Minsk's Yiddish scholarship that researchers trained in Warsaw and Berlin applied for faculty positions at the university.

Yiddish also played a disproportionate role in the city's politics. Although only a bit over 40 percent of Minsk's population was Jewish at the time, 19 of its 25 CP cell secretaries were Jewish in 1924 (38, 40). Jewish predominance in the party cells was such that several cell meetings were held in Yiddish. In fact, Yiddish was spoken at citywide party meetings into the late 1930s.

All this leads Bemporad to conclude that this "very ordinary Jewish city" was in the 1920s a "dynamic, exciting and appealing place to live" (5), "one of the world capitals of Yiddish language and culture," and "one of the most successful examples of the Yiddish experiment in the Soviet Union" (9).

The Bund

Bemporad shows convincingly that the vibrancy of Jewish communist politics and culture in Minsk was largely due to the legacy of the prerevolutionary Jewish Workers Bund. The Bund had been by far the strongest socialist current in Minsk and its region before 1917, reflecting the disproportionate share of Yiddish-speaking Jews in its working class, while the Bolsheviks had been marginal. The Minsk Bolshevik party was largely created at a stroke by the Bund's dissolution into it in 1921. And at first there was a strong continuity between Bundism and Bolshevism.

The main Yiddish-language newspaper in Minsk was the former Bundist newspaper; it kept the same name until 1925, and the same ex-Bundist editor-in-chief until 1937. The top leadership of the Bolshevik party's Yiddish-language section, the Evsektsiia, consisted for years largely of ex-Bundists, not only in Minsk and Belarus but throughout the USSR, even as ex-Bundists quickly became a small minority of the party's Jewish rank and file.

As Bemporad points out, prominent ex-Bundist Bolsheviks suffered from a "Bundist-

Communist dual personality," even an "inner rift" (79). Ex-Bundists tended for years to defend and even celebrate the Bund's record as a revolutionary organization. This was contrary to the official Communist portrayal of the Bolsheviks as the sole keepers of the revolutionary flame.

The higher ex-Bundists rose, the more quickly they learned and the more expert they became in denouncing the old Bund. They developed a tendency to become more-Bolshevik-than-thou. As part of the rivalry within the Evsektsiia between the Minsk and Moscow leaderships, for example, the Minsk ex-Bundists tended to portray themselves as more purely proletarian than the Moscow leadership, whom they accused of pandering to a sort of petty-bourgeois Yiddishist cultural nationalism.

In fact there were good reasons for communists in the 1920s to be critical of the Bundist tradition. Bundists had taken pride before 1917 in maintaining the unity of their organization while ethnic Russian socialists were divided between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. The price of Bundist unity had been the absence of a clear revolutionary program and strategy. In the conditions of single-party rule by an increasingly monolithic CP in the 1920s, however, this legitimate criticism of the Bund could not be openly or fairly debated. It therefore tended to petrify into an orthodox, ritualistic, and even hollow creed.

Judaism and Zionism

While celebrating Yiddish language, literature, and culture, Belarusian communists in the 1920s were fiercely hostile to Judaism as a religion and to Zionism as a movement. Like many other Jewish communist attitudes, these were in continuity with the tradition of the Bund. And the Bund's hostility had been reciprocated. Most pre-revolutionary rabbis had preached that class struggle and socialism were distractions from Jews' exclusive devotion to God. And even labor Zionists had objected to Bundists' single-minded insistence that Jews' future was in Europe and nowhere else.

The Bolsheviks took up where the Bundists had left off. Before the revolution, for example, Bundists had a tradition of occupying synagogues and holding meetings there, since synagogues were often the most suitable spaces available. In the 1920s Bolsheviks transformed this occasional tactic into a permanent practice, as Jewish workers' clubs successfully demanded that synagogues be seized and transformed into secular cultural centers.

In principle there was no reason why communists should have treated religious property as eternally sacrosanct. But here again, single-party rule and the stifling of even inner-party democracy twisted and distorted communist secularism and anti-Zionism. Since there could be no open or honest debate about the relative merits of using a building for worship or as a secular club, genuine needs and sentiments could easily be manipulated by party officials eager to demonstrate their zeal. The Hebrew language, religious ritual, and a yearning for Palestine could not wither away naturally once they were the objects of official anathemas and orchestrated campaigns against them.

In practice, Bemporad shows, anti-religious and anti-Zionist campaigns were still fairly moderate in Minsk in the 1920s, sometimes to the point of soft-heartedness. Although Hebrew was officially banned in 1921, it was still taught and studied at the university. The left labor Zionist group Poale Zion was allowed to exist for seven years after the Bund was forced to dissolve, and Poale Zion members were allowed to join the CP in 1928 on the same generous terms that Bundists had been granted in 1921.

Of the 657 synagogues in the city in 1917, 547 were still functioning in 1930 (119). Since Jewish kosher butchers had a virtual monopoly on meat, even the Red Army's meat was kosher in Minsk. Although synagogue attendance was officially frowned on, Yiddish-language schools were conspicuously ill-attended during the high holy days. One Jewish Bolshevik even complained in 1928 that his non-circumcised son had been denied admission to a public Jewish kindergarten! (133) In the 1930s, however, flexibility on issues of religion and Zionism came to an end, foreshadowing the almost total destruction of Soviet Jewish culture in 1948.

A particular strength of *Becoming Soviet Jews* is its portrayal of Jewish women's position. There were links between activism for Jewish emancipation and for women's rights, and between the work of the Evsektsiia and the party women's organization Zhenotdel.

Jewish women, who had made up a third of the Bund's members in 1905, had a virtual monopoly on the Belarusian CP's work among women in the 1920s; it was hard to find a non-Jewish name among leaders of the Belarusian Zhenotdel. The Evsektsiia and Zhenotdel shared the same fate, being dissolved in the same year (1930) with the same explanation: that the emancipation of Jews and women was complete, so that the organizations were no longer needed.

Still, Bemporad shows, Bolshevik women activists in the 1920s were far from feminists, and their activism was fatally undermined by official party positions. Zhenotdel leaders might urge women party members' husbands to take care of the children so their wives could attend meetings; the men just laughed. Jewish men in particular tended to insist on women's backwardness as a way of excusing their own lapses. If a son was circumcised, if the family kept kosher, male Jewish Bolsheviks routinely tried to defend themselves by blaming their wives.

Terror and Tragedy

The most disturbing part of Bemporad's book for me was the chapter on the purges of 1934-39. The fact that horrifying things were done during Stalin's terror is hardly news to anti-Stalinist Marxists. But we tend to focus, if not narrowly on Stalin as an individual, then on the central Stalinist bureaucracy as the sowers of death and destruction in the 1930s. Bemporad's account reminds us that no regime, however totalitarian, is always entirely top-down.

Once the green light is given from above for terror, terrible things can also be done on initiative from below. Jewish Bolshevism in Belarus in the 1930s was no exception. In fact, Bemporad argues convincingly, some of the same factors that had constituted the strengths of Jewish communism in Minsk in the 1920s contributed to its self-destruction in the Stalinist terror.

As noted above, ex-Bundist CP leaders in Minsk tended to compensate for their non-Bolshevik pasts with a stress on their purely proletarian politics and hostility to any kind of cultural nationalism. In the terror of the late 1930s, this tendency degenerated into a spiral of mutual denunciations and an urge to be especially hard on Jewish culture. This probably helps explain the Belarusian SSR's decision in 1938 to close down the entire network of schools teaching in Yiddish, still the self-declared mother tongue of 49.8 percent of Minsk's Jews (198). Soviet Ukraine, with smaller percentages and numbers of Yiddish speakers, retained its Yiddish school system, reopened it after the war, and kept it open for several postwar years.

If Belarusian ex-Bundists hoped to save their skins by joining the campaign against Yiddish, they failed. In 1937-38 virtually all the leading figures of the Belarusian Jewish cultural world lost their jobs and often their lives. Few if any ex-Bundist CP members survived the purges (191).

Marxism

Bemporad is hampered in fully explaining the tragedy of Jewish communism in Minsk by her lack of engagement with Marxism. It is symptomatic that Enzo Traverso's book *The Marxists and the Jewish Question*, an indispensable guide to Bundist and labor Zionist theory and politics, is not even included in her extensive bibliography. She barely touches on the Marxist debates that were central concerns for many of the protagonists of her study.

She repeats in passing, almost ritualistically, the usual charges about the extent of repression in Soviet Russia under Lenin. She makes no clear distinction between repression during the civil war, repression under the mixed economy of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the relatively pluralist cultural climate that accompanied it, and the later terror under Stalin. This might make a reader wonder how the wealth of Jewish and cultural political life in Minsk in the 1920s, which the book describes in such detail, was ever possible.

Gitelman attempted in *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics* to explain the rise and fall of the Evsekstiia with a crude sociological theory of modernization. Yiddish-language culture and politics were useful to the early Soviet regime as a means of destroying Jewish traditionalist barriers to modernization, he argued; once its work was done, full-fledged Russification was more useful, so Yiddish was swept out of the way. Bemporad does not take up that simple-minded theory. But she puts forward hardly any alternative explanation of her own.

Gitelman's account at least interwove the Evsekstiia's history with the history of the inner-party struggles of the 1920s. He showed that Yiddish-language communists had particularly close ties to the Bolshevik right around Nikolai Bukharin, and that the left and the Stalinist faction were weaker in the Evsekstiia. This makes it logical that the Evsekstiia's dissolution in 1930 followed soon after the right's definitive defeat in 1929. Bemporad hardly mentions the inner-party struggle at all.

In any event, the issues at stake went beyond faction fights. The fate of Yiddish-language communism was bound up with questions about the kind of Soviet society that would succeed the mixed economy of the NEP (in which Jewish traders and small-scale capitalists played a disproportionate if far from exclusive role).

The Jewish world of Minsk might have survived if industrialization had built on the existing working-class foundation and on the light industries (garment, shoes, leather, meat) in which Jewish workers were concentrated. It stood no chance in a breakneck process in which a new working class was created by mass migration of peasants fleeing a countryside ravaged by forced collectivization, and those industries closest to the consumer were (as Trotsky warned in *The Revolution Betrayed*) the most neglected.

Bemporad's lack of attention to the broader fate of the Russian Revolution deprives her book of some of the explanatory power it might have had. Still, the detailed tapestry she weaves of Soviet Jewish life in the 1920s should make it impossible for informed readers to dismiss Bolshevism as uniformly "bad for the Jews." It makes clear that early Soviet nationalities policy still has useful lessons to teach about ways of structuring multicultural, multi-linguistic societies. And if the world that the book conjures up is irredeemably lost, its memory is worth preserving.

The Leninist Model

KENT WORCESTER

Socialism from Below: Writings from an Unfinished Tradition
DAVID RENTON
London: Unkant Publishers, 2013, 167 pp., $14

THE DRAMATIC IMPLOSION of the Socialist Workers Party (U.K.) has provoked an outpouring of analysis, debate, and sectarian invective, most of which has appeared online rather than in print. *Socialist Unity*, *Weekly Worker*, *Soviet Goon Boy*, and *Links: International Journal of Socialist Renewal* have all published exposés and polemics on the party's shameful mishandling of accusations of rape and sexual predation on the part of a leading member, who is referred to as "Comrade Delta" in party documents. The story received prominent coverage in national newspapers, such as the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*, as well as on left-wing blogs. Within a matter of months, the resulting fallout had generated an exodus of hundreds of members, along with ongoing rows over the SWP's internal regime, political strategy, and relationship to the rest of the left.

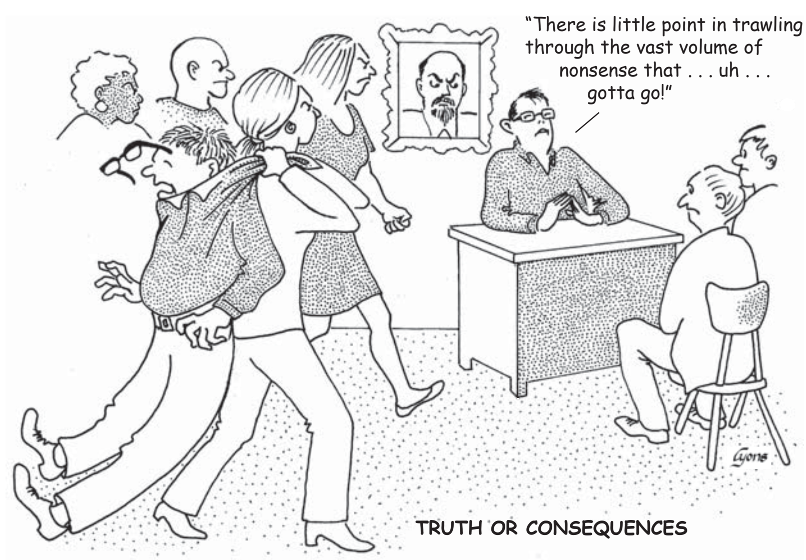
As a consequence of its history as a campaigning organization around such issues as labor rights, immigrant rights, and anti-fascism, the SWP often claims that it "punches above its weight." But the Delta debacle has substantially tarnished the party's reputation. The issues at stake include not only the shortcomings of the SWP's disciplinary procedures, and the persistence of sexist attitudes and myths about rape, but also the strengths and weaknesses of the International Socialist tradition and the relevance of the democratic centralist model of political organization in an era of globalization, social fragmentation, and the Internet. Comrade Delta may have resigned from the organization in the summer of 2013, but the larger controversy rages on.

SWP leaders and critics alike regularly invoke "the IS tradition" in defense of their views. The phrase refers to the ideas and practices associated with the political tendency built by Tony Cliff and his cothinkers in Britain and elsewhere after World War II. Cliff and others split from orthodox Trotskyism to develop a revolutionary current that viewed the long postwar boom as a product of military spending and the Soviet bloc as state capitalist. Having started out with a couple of dozen supporters at the end of the 1940s, the Cliff group could plausibly describe itself as "the world's smallest mass party" by the 1980s. By the time that Cliff passed away in 2000, the SWP had decisively outpaced its rivals on the British left and established a network of like-minded groups in a couple of dozen countries. Over the past decade, however, the party has undergone a series of faction fights and splits, with further bloodletting to come. Ian Birchall, a veteran member of the SWP and its

KENT WORCESTER *is the author or coeditor of seven books, including* C.L.R. James: A Political Biography *(1996), and, more recently,* A Comics Studies Reader *(2009) and* The Superhero Reader *(2013).*

predecessor, the International Socialists, recently published a thoroughly-researched biography of Tony Cliff that memorably captures Cliff's eclectic political methods and engaging personal style. It is indicative of the depth of the current crisis that Birchall, along with many other long-time cadre, have attached their names to severely critical opposition documents. (My favorable review of Birchall's book appeared in *NP* #52; I was less impressed by Cliff's autobiography, which I reviewed for *NP* #32.)

The first book to address the implosion is David Renton's *Socialism from Below*, available from either amazon.com or the publisher's website. Other tracts and memoirs will presumably follow in its wake. Renton, who joined the party in the 1990s, is an attorney who lives and works in London. A historian by training, he is the author of numerous books, including a biography of C.L.R. James, a study of the British Communist Party, and a history of the Anti-Nazi League. His latest project consists of nearly two-dozen essays culled from his blog, *Lives; Running*, on various aspects of IS/SWP history and culture. Insightful, humane, and crisply written, Renton's posts from the past couple of years make for interesting reading. As a high-profile member of the opposition, his blog has become a go-to place for late-breaking information on the party's crisis. Judging from recent posts he may be on the verge of tearing up his membership card. The ranks of embittered former dues payers has always been larger than the network of loyal SWP supporters and members, but lately the ratio between the two seems to be growing wider.



TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

While *Socialism from Below* addresses a variety of topics, from deindustrialization and public sector unionism to anti-fascist organizing and socialist morality, the book is centrally concerned with three questions. The first has to do with the leadership's botched response to the formal complaints advanced by the two women who charged Comrade Delta with in one case rape and in the other persistent sexual harassment, as well as similar charges raised by an undisclosed number of women against less prominent members of the organization. Drawing on his experience as a labor lawyer, as well as on general feminist principles, Renton offers a number of suggestions for how the group might have responded to these allegations. In an essay titled "The Missing Letter," he offers a template for a full-throated public apology that is yet to be written:

> For a long time, we thought that if we tried hard enough to pretend that there was no problem, it would go away. It has not. We now realize that this stain will not be removed unless the party undergoes a serious, and systematic, period of reform. For this reason we have decided to: Apologize to the women who put in complaints…. Suspend from membership

> of the party all individuals subject to serious sexual complaints…. Release those members of the organization from full-time roles who have been exhausted by the experience of defending the indefensible…. Elect a new Central Committee, Disputes Committee and National Committee…. Begin a discussion within and outside the organization as to what it was about our procedures that enabled us to continue on such a destructive path for so long…. Begin a second discussion within and outside the organization as to how we can learn from the contemporary women's movement…. Make the party transparent by publishing in future a public note of all meetings of all our elected committees.

It is instructive to compare the ambitious proposals and contrite tone offered in Renton's "missing letter" to the rather lawyerly gloss provided by Alex Callinicos and Charlie Kimber in their official statement on "The Politics of the SWP Crisis" that was recently posted on the *International Socialism* website:

> Controversy over the case then became surrounded by a fog of gossip, innuendo, distortion and plain lies—all perpetuated on the internet and in the mainstream media, and reinforced by the shocking willingness of others on the left to believe, without any knowledge of the facts, the worst about the SWP. There is little point in trawling through the vast volume of nonsense that has been written about the case, and in any case we are constrained by the obligation of confidentiality towards the parties involved that others have so shamefully ignored.

As Renton himself has pointed out, the very phrase "the case" disguises the fact that more than one woman stepped forward to file a complaint against Comrade Delta, and that on at least a couple of occasions the party's Disputes Committee took on unrelated cases that it was in no way equipped or qualified to handle. Callinicos and Kimber reluctantly accept that mistakes were made ("no one in the SWP leadership thinks that, with the benefit of hindsight, we would address the issue in exactly the same way"), but nevertheless insist that the time has come to "move forward." From the outside, it is difficult to see how the organization can push on without jettisoning either its heterodox minority or its stale bureaucratic reflexes.

Speaking of bureaucracy, the second topic that Renton tackles is the question of democracy and leftist organization. As he recognizes, developing genuinely democratic structures and practices is a challenge that faces a variety of institutions, from trade union locals and single-issue campaigns to food co-ops and feminist magazines. Rigid hierarchies, self-selected cliques, and top-down command structures are recurrent problems for all kinds of formations, not just *soi-disant* vanguard parties. Renton's initial effort to distill his own vision of "Democracy in a Small Party" is almost haiku-like in its brevity. The entire essay, in fact, consists of five short points:

> 1) The determined obsolescence of leadership roles
>
> 2) Having the politics to comprehend which decisions are suitable for majority decisions and which are not
>
> 3) Avoiding front-ism
>
> 4) Full exchange of information
>
> 5) Maximizing opportunities to contribute

Renton helpfully expands on these compact formulations in subsequent essays, but the distinctively libertarian vision—in the English sense—that they express is never more aptly summarized than it is here. As he rightly points out in a concluding essay titled "Our Goal is Democracy," "nobody wants to be ordered around anymore; the method of command just doesn't work." The book closes on a suitably rousing note:

> Democracy begins with the way in which we speak to ourselves; in that moment of self-realization that no one is better than you, and you are not better than anyone else. Democracy begins with teaching others to address each other and you with respect. Democracy begins

with regime change at home.

With its pointed reference to "regime change at home," it seems unlikely that this essay, or others like it, will endear Renton to his own Central Committee. But then again, Renton doesn't seem to care what Kimber, Callinicos, and their colleagues think, either about his criticisms or his libertarian-socialist ideals. As it happens, in recent weeks he's been posting long excerpts on his blog from back issues of *Women's Voice*, the socialist-feminist magazine that the party sponsored (and eventually closed down) between 1972 and 1982. This will no doubt be seen by the apparatus as yet another provocation.

All of this raises the obvious question of why Renton remains, for the time being at least, a member of a Leninist sect, imploding or otherwise. Why doesn't he just quit? The answer has to do with the enduring appeal of the very "IS tradition" that Callinicos and other party leaders, as well as dissidents like Renton and Birchall, seek to defend. The book's final topic is thus this laudable but deeply problematic tradition, which (as the book's subtitle indicates) Renton quite reasonably regards as "unfinished." In making the case for the contributions of somewhat neglected figures from the group's halcyon days of the 1960s and 1970s, including David Widgery, Peter Sedgwick, Michael Kidron, and Alasdair MacIntyre, Renton draws an implicit and frankly discouraging contrast between the intellectual ferment of this earlier period and the rather humdrum output of today's leading post-Trotskyists. Anyone with an interest in leftist intellectual history will find valuable material in these well-crafted biographical essays, which were written with the current crisis in mind but with one eye on the longer view.

Getting Marx Backwards

GREGORY SMULEWICZ-ZUCKER

Karl Marx:
A Nineteenth-Century Life
JONATHAN SPERBER
New York: Liveright Publishing, 2013,
648 pp., Hardback: $35.00

FOR THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, it would be safe to say that Marx's thought seemed very distant to all but a minority of scholars and leftists. Despite ever increasing economic inequality and the extreme concentration of wealth at levels not seen since before the Great Depression, the collapse of the Soviet Union and economic prosperity were said to have relegated Marx to the past. Marxists were at the bottom of a daunting uphill public relations battle. Today, with an ongoing financial crisis and daily revelations of corporate wrongdoing, the general public has become more aware and critical of global elites and capital. Marxists now receive some attention from movements and the media, albeit still very little. Whereas before the crisis, right-wing groups and pundits could only concoct nightmares out of "radical Islamists," they now warn that Marx's specter possesses the Democrat currently in the White

GREGORY SMULEWICZ-ZUCKER *is the Managing Editor of Logos: A Journal of Modern Society and Culture (www.logosjournal.com).*

House. For his admirers, detractors, and many who were altogether agnostic, Marx has become more relevant than he has been in years. Indeed, the last time Marx's work was reconsidered in the midst of a crisis by a non-Marxist was in David McLellan's 1974 *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought*. In his new biography, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, Jonathan Sperber agrees that it is time to reconsider Marx. Yet, Sperber thinks we ought to see Marx anew precisely by understanding him as a man of a bygone age: a legatee of the upheavals of the late eighteenth century and a participant in and analyst of nineteenth-century politics.

One of the leading historians of nineteenth-century Europe, if not the leading contemporary historian of the 1848 Revolutions, is eminently qualified for the task of situating Marx in his age. Sperber does a fine job of sympathetically introducing Marx to an audience of laypeople. Despite this, Sperber simply does not understand the depth of Marx's thought. This makes for a very uneven biography. At times, Sperber plays on his readers' neophytism by presenting old debates as new revelations and oversimplifying complex texts. For all his dismissiveness of Marx scholars (he has a particular bone to pick with Marxologists), Sperber does not serve his readers by thrusting scholarship aside. He should know that there are people who both take Marx seriously and are not dummies. Further, it is questionable if placing Marx's life in context does Marx's thought justice and, more importantly, if doing so means anything for Marxism's future. Sperber thinks it does:

> The view of Marx as a contemporary whose ideas are shaping the modern world has run its course and it is time for a new understanding of him as a figure of a past historical epoch, one increasingly distant from our own: the age of the French Revolution, of Hegel's philosophy, of the early years of English industrialization and the political economy stemming from it. It might even be that Marx is more usefully understood as a backward-looking figure, who took the circumstances of the first half of the nineteenth century and projected them into the future, than as a surefooted and foresighted interpreter of historical trends. (xiii)

These premises are likely meant to incite Marx's admirers. Sperber is not the first to try to add another mound of dirt to the tomb at Highgate. Like so many others, he fails. He is not, however, motivated by the same vitriol as others. Even if he reserves his condescension for Marxists, Sperber seems to respect Marx. Sperber is trying to be a good historian by understanding Marx through his context. There are strong scholarly justifications for adopting this approach. As Sperber rightly points out, the historical understanding of the nineteenth century has changed dramatically. Everything from the origins of imperial expansionism to the inner workings of the households of every social stratum has undergone thorough reexamination. It is well worthwhile to reintegrate Marx into this world since he had so much to say about every aspect of it.

There is a second, more dubious justification for Sperber's biography. The book jacket advertises that Sperber was given "unlimited access to the *MEGA* (the Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe*, the total edition of Marx's and Engels' writings, only recently made available)." Vaunting this as an impetus for reevaluating Marx's life is less persuasive given that Sperber's "unlimited access" yielded "no smoking gun" and "hundreds of small details" (xiv). The small details are fascinating, but they do not radically transform Marx. Even odder is the fact that Sperber acknowledges that the *MEGA* remains incomplete and that, for some materials, one has to turn to "less comprehensive and less scholarly text editions" (563). At the very least, the reader should be alerted to the publisher's hyperbole and the fact that Sperber himself does not put much stock in the claim that his book's originality lies in some privileged access.

Given his expertise, it is unsurprising that Sperber is at his finest when discussing nineteenth-century political struggles. This comes through in the book's first two-thirds. Sperber really does not have anything entirely new to say about Marx. The outline of the story of Marx's family background through to his years as an émigré was covered well by great Marx biographers going back to Franz Mehring. Still, Sperber provides a detailed account of how the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era shaped both the political views of Marx's father, Heinrich, and political life in the city of Marx's birth, Trier. The Napoleonic Code, for example, still served as the basis of law in the Rhine Province up until 1900. All this is well known, but Sperber makes it clear that Marx's family and city were both very much the products of the Enlightenment and radical European politics. Marx's connection to the first generation of Hegelians is also recast. Even if Eduard Gans has largely become a forgotten figure, he was Hegel's most prominent student and interpreter after Hegel's death. It is significant to learn that he was an early mentor to Marx and recognized Marx's promise at the University of Berlin. Another Hegelian, the more incendiary Bruno Bauer, who desultorily shifted from right to left and back (Bauer's right-wing attack on David Friedrich Strauss prompted Strauss to draw the distinction between left and right Hegelians), ultimately became Marx's mentor (Gans died abruptly) and early supporter of Marx's journalism. The fact that Marx began to learn Hegel from Gans suggests that the Young Hegelians alone did not mediate Marx's engagement with Hegel. Learning that Marx was exposed to very different currents of Hegelianism comes as a relief and gives Marx's Hegelianism a more interesting pedigree.

After losing his teaching position at the University of Bonn, Bauer entered journalism and initiated Marx into this world. Far from being a mature theoretician and revolutionary, Marx, the editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, was a young radical embracing a number of revolutionary positions in opposition to the Prussian regime. Such a chapter in Marx's life particularly speaks to Sperber's keen ability to navigate the terrain of radical political positions open to a budding opponent of the reactionary Prussian state. Sperber situates the *Rheinische Zeitung* in the contentious print culture of nineteenth-century Prussia in which authorities and reactionary newspaper editors sought to silence writers attacking the political and religious establishment. Sperber repeatedly emphasizes that the paper's supporters and readership were primarily German liberals. Marx himself was sympathetic to liberal positions and gained early financial support from liberal admirers. He often worked to moderate the tone of the newspaper in order to circumvent censors. But Marx's tenure as editor of the paper was short-lived, lasting from late 1842 to the banning of the paper by Prussian authorities in 1843. Being a liberal sympathizer in 1842 Prussia was a radical position and does nothing to asperse Marx's revolutionary credentials. Indeed, as so many biographers before him have noted and maybe even exaggerated, Sperber points to Marx's articles on wood theft as indicators of the radical revolutionary yet to emerge.

Sperber's discussion of Marx's émigré years remains strong so long as he continues to deal with Marx's political contact with the networks of radicals in Paris, Brussels, and Cologne, including Engels, and his work on the *Deutsch-Franzosische Jahrbucher* and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. As the reader sees Marx develop into the mature theoretician, Sperber begins to show his weaknesses. Once he is forced to contend with Marx's early writings, he begins to slip out of his league. The problem is only exacerbated when he is confronted with Marx's more difficult later writings. Given over a century's worth of excellent literature on Marx's texts, directed both at the scholar and layperson, Sperber's exegesis proves facile. The account of *On the Jewish Question*, the first serious Marx text engaged by Sperber, waivers between a poor summary and a discussion of nineteenth century anti-Semitism. It glosses over Marx's critique of liberalism, which constitutes the greater half of the work. In turn, Sperber misses the point of Marx's 1844 *Paris Manuscripts*, only mentioning the concept of alienation briefly and focusing on the texts' sources in Scottish, British, and French political economy.

The issue of Marx's anti-Semitism recurs throughout the biography. It is soon joined by the question of Marx's racism. Ferdinand Lassalle was the most frequent target of anti-Semitic remarks and in a letter to Engels was described as "nigger-like" (411). Despite this, Marx permitted his daughter, Laura, to marry Paul Lafargue, a man partly of African descent. Further, it is clear that Marx cannot be placed in the camp of the nineteenth century's most infamous race theorist, Arthur de Gobineau. Sperber notes that Marx "read Gobineau's book with some care and remarked that 'to such people it is always a source of satisfaction to have somebody whom they think themselves entitled to despise'" (410). Even if Sperber admits that Marx was no partisan of Gobineau, one cannot help but sense that Sperber relishes a good scandal. Sperber tries to pin on Marx charges of anti-Semitism and racism by dredging old debates, but there is no "smoking gun." This is not to suggest that the old debate is not worth continuing. The second, much shorter, half of *On the Jewish Question* has undeniably repugnant things to say about Jews. Still, it should not be forgotten that the text was written in reply to the far more inflammatory work of Bauer. As for the comments Sperber uncovers in the letters, Marx continually comes off significantly better than his contemporaries during a period when entire theories were built on racial taxonomies and hierarchies. Marx should not be excused his comments, but he never made anti-Semitism or racism an integral part of his thought. At the same time, details about Marx's financial woes and his relationship to his wife Jenny, and children, become more prominent. Such may be the result of the precedent set by Mary Gabriel's inanely tender *Love and Capital*. This sets the book on a trajectory in which politics gradually fades away in favor of familial drama.

In chapters five through nine, Sperber is once again in his element discussing the radical émigrés, the formation of political organizations, such as the Communist League, and factional strife. Given the skill with which Sperber treats Marx's political activism, it is strange that he tells us,

> Countless twentieth-century Marxist activists, including Lenin, eagerly adopted the hallmarks of the professional revolutionary, continuous single-minded conspiracy and agitation, but Marx never did. Neither Marx's professorial demeanor, nor his scholarly interests, nor his family commitments and the financial demands they made upon him fit these requirements. (157)

Marx may have not been a Lenin, but these chapters portray a very politically engaged intellectual. Marx worked hard to forge revolutionary organizations, create political alliances, keep abreast of global political affairs, and engage in debates. Participation in the politics of the International Workingmen's Association was a bit more than the pastime of a scholar. All of this actually delivers on Sperber's promise that we can learn something new about Marx by placing him in the context of nineteenth-century politics. Marx's political activism may not be forgotten and several Marx scholars for over a century have reminded us of it, but it still often all too easily recedes into the background amidst scholarly disputes. Although the particular struggles that Marx engaged on a daily basis may be those features of Marx's life that are most distant from our own, Sperber bestows a picture of Marx as activist; a picture that may not be so inconsequential for modern political activists as Sperber himself might think. Herein lies one of the virtues of Sperber's nineteenth-century lens. But as politics became less a part of Marx's daily affairs (though never entirely absent) and theory became more central, Sperber's account lulls. Part Three, "The Legacy," with its tortured explanations of Marx's economic theory—a task better left to the various scholars with very different interpretations of *Capital*, such as Paul Sweezy, Ernest Mandel, David Harvey, and, more recently, Michael Heinrich—that, ultimately, only emphasizes Marx's debt to Ricardo (something we already know) and its focus on sentimental discussions of Marx's family life, is particularly tedious. For Sperber, Marx the economist, is, in the final analysis, an extension of the political economists he read and, as a result, Sperber says nothing new, misses Marx's originality, and says nothing of exploitation.

Throughout the book there is a tension between Sperber's strengths as an historian of the nineteenth century and his weaknesses as an interpreter of Marx's thought. More frequently than not, there is a disjointedness in the narrative when Sperber jumps from Marx's life to his texts. For all the fascinating details about Marx's life and context, Sperber still cannot connect that man to the author of what remains one of the most sophisticated critiques of capitalism. Perhaps, in adamantly insisting that Marx was a mere mortal whose world conditioned his vision and was not some omniscient deity, Sperber demeans mortals. He has forgotten that even mortals are able to recognize that their conditions often constrain their ability to know and that one must exert to extract oneself from his or her context in order to understand. Is that not one of Marx's most fundamental lessons?

Only the most obtuse reader of Marx's work would entirely ignore Engels' famous injunction to understand Marx in light of German philosophy, British economics, and French politics. Yet, Sperber seems to think he does something novel when he emphasizes these as the sources of Marx's texts. Sperber's whole book might be read as an exercise in taking Engels' assertion far too seriously; except with details added about Marx's personal life that are, in turns, mawkish and licentious. Marxists of all stripes, Bernstein and Luxemburg alike, have long known that reducing Marx to his context belies ideas that invite renewal and reinterpretation. They never took Marx whole hog and, rightly or wrongly, tried to move beyond Marx. Marxists have rarely been blind to the distinction between Marx and Marxism—the man himself knew the difference. When Sperber suggests that he is trying to disabuse readers of the notion that Marx was a "prophet," who are these readers? Are they the victims of totalitarian regimes that plastered Marx's visage everywhere? Are they party devotees proselytized by propaganda? Or, are they simply people in search of a messiah? To many of Marx's admirers, Marx was no prophet. His work is the basis of a system of ideas or method (depending on the tradition of Marxism one comes out of) that has long since developed beyond the man and serves as a tool for diagnosing an exploitative and alienating economic system.

Sperber is not naïve. He anticipates such criticisms of his book. He recognizes the distinct projects of Marxists and Marxologists, but is dismissive of both. Of Marxologists, he states that their efforts to study "Marx's own ideas, so that revisions and later accretions can be erased and Marxism can be returned to its original purity" is "a project more suited to adherents of revealed religion than proponents of a purportedly secular and rationalist theoretical framework" (xviii). This acerbic repartee is ironic. The requisite Quineans or Wittgensteinians dominating philosophy departments are seldom accused of being "adherents of revealed religion." It is bizarre because Sperber sets himself the task of getting to some originalist understanding of Marx via his context. He is kinder to Marxists, stating, "I am struck by the differences—between Marx's world and the contemporary one, or between his system of thought and his political aspirations and those of his twentieth-century successors, who called themselves 'Marxists'" (xix). To this Marxists can only reply, "so are we, but we are also struck by the continuities and therein lies the rub."

As a biography of an acute observer of

nineteenth-century politics and participant in some of its epochal episodes, Sperber's *Karl Marx* is a fine study. There are prominent flaws, but it is a good work of nineteenth-century history and Sperber is a good historian. The project of understanding Marx's age is served by Sperber's expertise. And, the book is far stronger as an account of the age than of the man. Marx's admirers will easily identify the book's many shortcomings and questionable interpretations. They should still appreciate the enterprise and forgive Sperber his misinformed assaults. Despite Sperber's choice of terms, there is something to be said for seeing Marx as "a backward-looking thinker" insofar as this means that Marx's link to the Enlightenment and the heritage of democratic revolution can be reestablished. The release of a new, accessible, and sympathetic study of Marx for a popular audience should be applauded. Even if Sperber does not grasp Marx's ideas or their usefulness, he tries to be sensitive to Marx the man. The book is no vulgar smear campaign. He shows a popular readership that Marx was not a demon. He sheds Marx of many twentieth- and twenty-first-century biases, which may actually do more to disabuse those with common misconceptions than to disillusion his admirers. Nevertheless, the book does not attain the greater goal it sets itself. Sperber does not consign Marx to his age. The problem for Marxists has never been that Marx died in the nineteenth century, but that capitalism has persisted into the twenty-first.

Double Secret Privatization

KENZO SHIBATA

What's Going on at UAardvark?
LAWRENCE S. WITTNER
Albany, NY: Solidarity Press, 2013, 243 pp., $14.95

I REMEMBER AS A FRESHMAN in college making a boneheaded move. I didn't feel like I had enough stuff. I was broke, and I had enough stuff to keep me alive and entertained, but I could never say no to acquiring more of it. I was fortunate enough that one day while exiting my dorm's food court, some guy I never met—who looked like he was in his late 20s—offered me stuff and this of course piqued my interest.

This tale is not salacious. The "stuff" was not anything illegal or even unethical.

What kind of stuff was it? I don't even remember. I assume there were t-shirts with beer company logos on them. There were probably CDs, maybe some video cassettes.

All that he asked was that I fill out some applications for credit cards. There were tiers. If I filled out one to two applications, I got one unit of stuff. If I filled out three to five, I get two units of stuff, six to ten earned three units. I do not remember how many I filled out, but I filled out the maximum number so I could get the most stuff plus the

KENZO SHIBATA *writes, organizes, and teaches in and around Chicago. Follow him on Twitter @KenzoShibata.*

bonus stuff.

I really thought I knew how credit cards worked. I receive them, I tear them up, and then I get to keep this ton of free stuff. After months of receiving cards and tearing them up, I noticed that I needed more stuff. The stuff I got for free was old stuff now. I needed new stuff.

I flipped through my weekly batch of new credit cards and found a Bank of America card that was emblazoned with my college's logo. This would be the one that I kept and used to buy more stuff. Clearly I could pay it all back. I worked two to three jobs at a time in college and could never seem to get ahead, but for some reason I thought that magically I could pay off credit cards a month later for a hamburger today.

Looking back on this episode, I was very fortunate to find a steady job (and a steady side job) after college to pay off my debt. This was not the case for many of my friends, who watched themselves go into deeper and deeper debt as they started their careers in the thick of the Great Recession.

It was extremely irresponsible for a university that educates and houses thousands of 18-year-olds to allow financial predators on campus like that. It's just as irresponsible for the same university to lend its logo to Bank of America, which gives credit cards to young people knowing that most will be driven into intractable debt.

Lawrence S. Wittner's largely witty *What's Going On at UAardvark* is a must for anyone attending or teaching college in the neoliberal world. UAardvark is a university that after an intense branding campaign allowed corporations to name schools on its campus and pump ads into the lives of students on a daily basis.

This might seem like a cartoonish concept if you haven't set foot on a college campus in twenty years, but for Generation Yers, Millennials, and those who teach us, the "reforms" of UAardvark seem just like next logical steps.

The corporatization of the school did not stop at advertising. The military in collusion with corporations and the university administration hatched a plan to use the new "technology center" of the university to store nuclear waste. Wittner, possibly critiquing the new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) craze, has the administration moving to eliminate all liberal arts departments of the university while opening the new technology center. STEM is popular among education "reformers" who invoke the "yellow peril" in mouthing the tired talking point that U.S. students lag behind our Asian counterparts in science and math. They use this new yellow peril to make the case that if we don't invest in science and math, the Little Yellow Men will beat us, striking a blow against American Exceptionalism.

In Wittner's novel, the military fully supports this New Technology Center, which is really just a Trojan horse for externalizing military costs to the university. Dump nuclear waste in the school and tell everyone it's a good thing. Then, fire anyone who would be opposed to it in the name of "reform."

One piece that I found entertaining was the chapter on the executive board of the faculty union. The leadership had become bedded with management, and the union president speaks highly of the dim-witted, corrupt university president after the announcement that he would erect a statue of her. She claimed that the honor would be a great thing for the union. Wittner takes a nice jab at craft unionism in his depiction of the collusive faculty union president refusing to stand in solidarity with other university workers in another union.

Yes, the novel is quite humorous in spots but ham-fisted in others. Take Wittner's rendition of the protagonist's back story. He is a leftist professor version of *The Wire*'s McNulty. He was a ruggedly handsome, dedicated English professor who became a total mess after neoliberalism reared its ugly head at his once sacred academic grove. He drinks, he misses classes. The author says his union involvement is what keeps his job secure, which I find deeply problematic as it feeds into the narrative that tenure saves bad teachers. Then his wife leaves him to become a "committed lesbian" and a massage therapist. I find it troubling that the author had to follow the trope of a woman "becoming gay" on account of a failed relationship with a man.

Then there's his characterization of the students, who are unfailingly apathetic, dim, and obsessed with consumerism. It's another tired trope, and one used against every generation. Of course, there was one standout student, and a handful of admirable faculty.

In truth, I was underwhelmed by the depiction of Wilma, the union president, posed simply as power-hungry and using the union purely as her instrumentality. With collusive union leaders, the story is usually more complicated than that. I would have liked to see her character slowly compromise her way to becoming corrupt.

One aspect I found interesting was how Wittner described the maintenance workers as being highly politicized and the professors as being largely apolitical, using their union meetings to discuss *administrivia* while the janitors studied Marx and discussed building union power.

Had the workers organized across job category as part of the education industry, instead of isolated into job classifications, there could have been push back. The arrogance and apathy of the academics kept them from organizing with the people who cleaned their rooms. Wittner drops hints that had solidarity really existed on campus between professors, maintenance staff, and even students, there could have been real resistance to the corporatization of the university. The divisions between all of these people kept the status quo.

After the outdated, toothless union showed no signs of life, the protagonist and his poker buddies decide to start a sort of alt-labor "rebellion" group that would cause chaos on campus and attract media attention.

The revolt resembles college comedy hijinks à la *Animal House* and *PCU*. Hopkins, the dim-witted President of the UAardvark becomes much like the hapless Dean Wirmer.

One part that I found particularly entertaining was the jab at sectarianism where a group called the "League of Revolutionary Workers and Peasants" criticize the rebellion as being counter-revolutionary. It makes me think of the armchair critics who criticize people working for real change.

Although I found many of the characters and situations contrived, the caricaturing allows for Wittner's ideas to flow. At bottom, in his prose Wittner militates against privatization and for solidarity among all working people. That alone makes the book valuable for people who don't quite understand the dangers of privatization. It could easily serve as a springboard for discussion. I could see teaching this book to high school students who are about to attend college. Many of these concepts give students some context to the corporatization of universities.

WORDS & PICTURES

Amy Pryor

KENT WORCESTER

WITH THIS ISSUE OF *New Politics*, "Words & Pictures" marks its tenth anniversary. From the outset, *NP*'s editors hoped that this back-of-the-book feature could showcase the work of interesting political cartoonists, past and present, and add a touch of visual interest to the magazine. The feature was introduced just as the magazine itself was undergoing a comprehensive makeover, starting with cover art by Bob Gill and, more recently, Lisa Lyons.

Over the past decade W&P has cast its net over a wide range of graphic styles and formats, and has included book reviews, interviews, and guest essays. It has recovered the work of neglected twentieth-century cartoonists, such as Carlo and Laura Gray, and has called attention to up-and-coming cartoonists, including Greg Cook, Chris Hutchinson, Tom Kaczynski, Gary Martin, and Sharon Rudahl. Several of the featured artists—Sabrina Jones, Peter Kuper,

New Free World Map, 2007

KENT WORCESTER *is the author or coeditor of seven books, including* C.L.R. James: A Political Biography *(1996), and, more recently,* A Comics Studies Reader *(2009) and* The Superhero Reader *(2013).*

Daily, Non-Stop, 2011

Kevin Pyle, Nicole Schulman, and Seth Tobocman—are regular contributors to the graphic magazine *World War III Illustrated*. A number of those spotlighted are visual humorists—most notably Ruben Bolling, Gan Golan, and Nick Thorkelson. Other featured creators include Steve Brodner, Dan Clowes, and the legendary Harvey Pekar. While the emphasis has been on U.S.-based artists, W&P has reprinted the work of the English socialist cartoonist Tim Sanders and the radical Mexican cartoonist El Fisgón. Readers are invited to suggest the names of political artists we have thus far overlooked.

The term Words & Pictures is somewhat misleading in that the distinction between "words" and "pictures" is not always clear-cut. Words can be drawn as well as spoken, and in the process become pictures themselves. While we tend to associate the phrase with comics and cartoons, fine art is also implicated in the interaction of words and pictures. As the art historian W.J.T. Mitchell has observed, "textuality" can be found in paintings that represent texts ("like an open book in a Dutch painting"), in paintings that have words inscribed on the canvas ("as in Chinese calligraphic landscape"), in paintings that depict "an episode from a verbal narrative," and in paintings in which words "disrupt the image," such as in the work of Magritte. "An obvious entry to the 'text in painting'," writes Mitchell, "is the question of the title." Even a painting that is labeled "Untitled" is not exactly detached from the world of language. Mitchell discusses these and related issues in *Picture Theory* (1995), *What Do Pictures Want?* (2006), and elsewhere.

Epic, 2011

A number of fine artists are interested in the role of text in art, often from an explicitly political perspective. Some of their work closely resembles and overlaps with the kinds of leftist cartooning that has appeared in W&P. Sue Coe, for example, is an established painter whose subject matter is usually either capitalism or the exploitation of animals or both. Many of her paintings use heavily loaded terminology, such as the word "cruel" formed out of the blood of the abattoir. She is represented by a New York gallery, but often contributes illus-

Free Drawing, 2010

trations to *WWIII Illustrated* and *The Nation*. She could easily fit the W&P profile. Another artist whose work blurs the boundaries of art, illustration, and politics is Raymond Pettibon, who is sometimes pegged as an anarchist or a punk or both. Jenny Holzer uses large-screen displays, massive projected images, and other unconventional media as conduits for outbursts

Free Fall, 2011

of text. Barbara Kruger satirizes consumerism and the patriarchy by way of collage, sarcasm, and photography. "I work with pictures and words," she says, "because they have the ability to determine who we are and who we aren't." Christopher Wool paints oversized stenciled letters on stark canvases that highlight the fierce power of language; Mel Bochner generates exquisitely colored paintings and monotypes that only slightly muffle the underlying anger of the wordplay. The contemporary art world is in fact full of people who combine words and pictures

Landslip, 2013

in provocative, self-consciously political ways.

The emerging artist Amy Pryor makes collages and paintings that are relentlessly political without being obvious or didactic about it. Her inclusion here reminds us that the W&P mandate is sufficiently elastic to encompass artists whose imagery does not normally show up in magazines or newspapers. Her work joins an interest in landscape and geometric abstraction with the recognition that the language of advertising and commerce is all around us. Many of her pieces thus resemble maps that have been colonized by bar codes, starbursts, prices, and/or adjectives. They present us with a world that has been scarred and disfigured by the logic of commodification. W&P is about political art even if it typically emphasizes editorial cartooning, comic strips, comic books, and graphic novels. Pryor's paintings and collages remind us that fine artists can share the formal and social concerns that motivate the kinds of cartoonists who show up in the back pages of *New Politics*.

Eternal Life is a Free Gift, 2012

New Politics
155 West 72 Street, Rm. 402
New York, NY 10023 USA
Address Service Requested

IN THIS ISSUE

We are facing the breaking point for people, the planet, the economy, and our democracy. It's our job, our privilege, and perhaps our destiny, to turn that breaking point into the tipping point, and take back the peaceful, just, green future we deserve.

Jill Stein
ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION—THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE

What is clear, however, is that unless a mass movement of resistance develops, the future of austerity's many victims in Britain, especially women, will be grim.

Susan Pashkoff
WOMEN AND AUSTERITY IN BRITAIN

Part of the popular appeal of Chávez has to do with the exuberant hatred he inspired in his enemies. The latter's frothing at the mouth tended to stoke the loyalty of his supporters.

Susan Spronk and Jeffery R. Webber
SABANETA TO MIRAFLORES: AFTERLIVES OF HUGO CHÁVEZ IN VENEZUELA

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PEORIA, IL
Permit No. 6000