Contents

CLINTON'S ENEMIES, Marvin Mandell 5

FALLING THROUGH THE SAFETY NET, Betty Reid Mandell 10

MISUSING CLASS-BASED AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, Stephen Steinberg 28

THE CONTINUITY OF U.S. IMPERIALISM, Stephen R. Shalom 33

THE THREAT OF GLOBALIZATION, Edward S. Herman 40

CLASS & RACE IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION, Nancy Romer 47

ISRAEL: THE UPHILL STRUGGLE FOR PEACE, Adam Keller 57

RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IN GERMANY, Martin Oppenheimer 70

MEXICO: MALAISE AND SOCIAL CONFLICT, Phillip Smith 77

BUILDING ON THE STRENGTHS OF THE SOCIALIST FEMINIST TRADITION, Sue Ferguson 89

WOMEN AND THE THIRD WORLD: EXPLORING THE DANGERS OF DIFFERENCE, Meera Nanda 101

A FLAWED HISTORY OF THE POPULAR FRONT, Frank A. Warren 112

IS BUREAUCRACY "BEST" FOR UNIONS?, Kim Moody 126

WALTER REUTHER IN BLACK AND WHITE: A REJOINDER, TO HERBERT HILL, Nelson Lichtenstein 133

LICHTENSTEIN'S FICTIONS REVISITED: RACE AND THE NEW LABOR HISTORY, Herbert Hill 148

BOOK REVIEWS: 164
Margaret Willig Crane • Mark Dow
John Ehrenberg • David Roediger
Kent Worcester • Barry Finger • Dominique Frager

FILM REVIEW: SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, Kurt Jacobsen 188

CORRESPONDENCE: ON ALBERT SHANKER, John E. Chiaradia 192

Clinton's Enemies

Marvin Mandell

We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

"Thoughts on Various Subjects"
Jonathan Swift

And thus I clothe my naked villainy
With odd old ends stol'n forth of holy writ...

Richard, duke of Gloucester in William Shakespeare

NO, HE DIDN'T INHALE, AND NO, HE DIDN'T PENETRATE, but, for radical fundamentalists, the now-impeached William Jefferson Clinton has become everything they hate and fear, the very embodiment of the 60s Dr. Spock-poisoned generation, those counter-culture baby boomers whose permissive upbringing can only lead to moral rot.

Who are these fundies? Well, for starters, let us look at some cornerstones of their beliefs and modi operandi.

• rigid moralism: a Manichaean belief in absolute good and absolute evil;

• sudden death: lock 'em up, inflict capital punishment, strike the enemy with military force (whether the enemy of the moment is Ho Chi Minh, Khomeini, Qaddafi, Noriega, or Saddam Hussein);

• anti-rationalism (how can you argue with, say, an Israeli settler who claims God has given him the land?):

• conspiracy theory (conversely, this is extremely rationalist, as conspiracy theorists assume that there are no accidents, that everything fits into place and has been planned by the centrally directed and very well-coordinated enemy);

• maintenance of tight controls, suggesting that fundies feel powerless in a world spinning off out of their control;

• a return to the supposedly simpler days before the corruption of modernism (e.g. the days before the U. N., integration, feminism, and gay rights);

• adherence to a literally interpreted holy writ (religious or secular);

• an expectation of Armageddon.

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Of the paranoid style in politics, Richard Hofstadter has written:

> ...[T]here is a vital difference between the paranoid spokesman in politics and the clinical paranoid: although they both tend to be overheated, oversuspicious, overaggressive, grandiose, and apocalyptic in expression, the clinical paranoid sees the hostile and conspiratorial world in which he feels himself to be living as directed specifically *against him*; whereas the spokesman of the paranoid style finds it directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others.[1]

According to Hofstadter, in times of depression, dissent usually takes the form of reformist programs (viz. legislative proposals), whereas in times of relative prosperity — his examples are the 20s and the 60s — dissent becomes grousing.[2] The rage of the radical fundies is probably always there, I might add, but, during prosperous times, finds public support significant enough for national expression. (The McCarthyite madness of the early 50s might be another example. In January, 1954, 50% of Americans polled approved of Joe McCarthy, although McCarthyism was a phenomenon of much broader significance than the far right.)

Hofstadter also points out that movements employing the paranoid style are not constant, but come in successive waves, and "this suggests that the paranoid disposition is mobilized into action chiefly by social conflicts that involve ultimate schemes of values and that bring fundamental fears and hatreds, rather than negotiable interests, into political action."[3]

Are there such conflicts? Abortion, gay rights, and affirmative action, surely, but I think we should cast a wider net.

Just as the geographical frontiers were closed some time ago, the frontiers of rage have been constricted, especially since the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Sure, there are external enemies who feel the force of it (Cuba, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan), but for radical fundies the main rage is directed at the internal enemy, that product of the 60s, Bill Clinton.

I shall not forget a network news program I saw during the 1972 McGovern vs. Nixon election. Exiting a poll booth, a man from my own former union, the U. A. W., told a reporter, "Never did I think I would vote for a Richard Nixon, but I did because the kids and the blacks need a kick in the ass." And this following the Chicago police riot in 1968 and the killing of four and wounding of nine Kent State kids in 1970. Clearly integration and the counter-culture had become major targets.

IN THE SUMMER ISSUE OF *NEW POLITICS*, I PONDERED THE MYSTERY of why Clinton is so despised by the radical right, since he has become such an effective activist for much of their agenda (e. g. the derailing of single payer health plan,GATT, NAFTA, and welfare "reform"). While I offered some conclusions, it seems to me that subsequent developments in the Starr inquisition point to the single overriding factor of radical fundies' hatred of the '60s counter-culture. Over 35 years ago, Daniel Bell pointed out that the modern right wing feels dispossessed: America has been taken away from them and they are determined to repossess it and prevent the final act of subversion.[4]

The foot troops of the right wing's conquest of power in the 1994 Congressional election were spearheaded by radical fundies. Imagine the frustration of the Republican leadership when, after capturing Congress, they could not smash the advancing feminist, gay rights, counter-culture movement. They could not deliver to their best troops. Gays and abortion doctors have been murdered, yet abortion rights and gay rights remain, as do separation of Church and State in the classroom, contraception, clean needle exchange, provocative dress, divorce, single parenthood, rock and roll's fist in the face of the bourgeoisie, etc., etc. Modernism is here to stay ... and to push forward to depths of depravity which even Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell cannot imagine.

For Hofstadter, much of the radical right rage has to do with the rootlessness of American life, "the scramble for status and secure identity."[5]

He makes much of status politics: there are those who are sliding down the social ladder and those who are climbing up and both are susceptible to reactionary politics. It is true that for some, prestige in their community depends on combating sexual freedom. It seems obvious that they are mainly worried about their own family: what Hofstadter and other historians seemed to have missed is the extent that radical fundies are concerned for their children. (One of the first anxieties raised in the Lewinsky affair was that of "How do I explain this to my child?" and that surely suggests a wider anxiety.) When one looks at the drugs, the crime, the pornography, the media's sexual titillation, the insecurity of modern marriage, one can feel something beyond scorn for the anti-modernists, perhaps even sympathy. Unfortunately, they arm themselves with "Thou Shalt Nots" and with William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*, and neither offers any understanding of modernism.

In the middle of *The Battleship Potemkin*, Sergei Eisenstein confronts his audience with the word "SUDDENLY," and perhaps this is the moment to use it. Suddenly, the '98 election collapsed the radical right like a punctured Thanksgiving Day float. Newt Gingrich is overthrown and politicians, like Rep. Joe Scarborough (FL), who yesterday foamed at the mouth, are now conciliators. The leaders, scampering for survival, have cut adrift their radical fundies.

They are down, but they are by no means out. Some of their grousing resonated — and probably still resonates — with many Americans. Recall the success George Bush had with the Willie Horton scare in the 1988 election. In 1995, 62% of the American people approved imprisonment for flag desecration; in 1996, 79% declared themselves in favor of capital punishment, even though the leading proponents no longer claim it is a deterrent and quite frankly just want revenge. By now, everyone knows that the drug war has failed utterly, yet a majority of American people support it and apparently approve of the fact that the number of people now doing prison terms of more than a year is over a million, and over half of them (overwhelmingly black and hispanic) are in for possession or sale of drugs. And there have been no great popular outcries against those maximum security prisons that do not pretend to rehabilitate, but aim to drive men crazy (e. g. Pelican Bay, CA, Marion, IL, the Departmental Disciplinary Unit at Walpole, MA). Eric Sterling, the former Congressional lawyer who wrote the federal minimum sentencing legislation in 1986, now acknowledges that the law was a mistake,"a complete failure."[6]

Can Clinton be faulted by radical fundies in this domain? Hardly. As Arkansas governor, in January, 1992, just when he was poised to run for the presidential primary, he refused to stay the execution of a retarded man (Ricky Ray Rector). In 1996, he signed the Sex Offender Law requiring authorities to notify a community when a sex offender has been released. He has continued the drug war in earnest. Despite his rhetoric about racial harmony, he has done his share in locking up black men. African-American men stand a one out of three chance of being jailed at some point in their lives.[7] Those sentenced for crack — 90% of them African-American — face sentences 100 times longer than those guilty of powder cocaine offenses. And thanks to the Welfare "Reform" law that Clinton signed in 1996, thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of women and children — predominantly black and hispanic — will be out on the streets when their time limits run out and they find themselves unable to find work that pays enough for daycare, housing, and food.

Nor can Clinton be faulted by fundies in his international actions. Clinton has not blocked funding of Reagan's pet Star Wars project which continues to show zero results, as expected. Clinton has continued the embargo on Cuba, which has now gone on for 38 years and has succeeded only in bringing misery to the people and in consolidating the Communists in power. And the sanctions in Iraq have been equally ineffective in removing Saddam Hussein and have killed over a half million children to date. Where in the world has Clinton's line been less hard or less ineffective (in terms of achievement of stated goals) than Reagan's or Bush's?

A strange convergence: Clinton may act in accordance with most radical fundie desires, but in their hearts they know he is the Enemy lurking; conversely, Clinton's actions may be contrary to many liberal desires, but *in their hearts* they know he is their Friend who is prevented from doing what they (and he) want. He is Zelig for all times and places, but an extremely shrewd one. To paraphrase Shakespeare's Hamlet, he is a politician who would circumvent God.

THE FACT THAT CLINTON'S PROGRAMS AND POLITICS — with a few exceptions such as pro-choice — are similar to those of the radical fundies points again to their hatred of the 60s counter-culture, their irrational resistance to modernism. What has caused their great anxiety and mobilized their politics? To look at the milieu of this anxiety, let us date the beginning in 1973. Defeat in Vietnam, the oil "crisis," then wild inflation, frustration during the Iran hostage taking, all culminating in Reaganism and eventually Savings and Loan scandals, junk bonds, hostile takeovers, downsizing and our current globalization problems. These past 25 years have seen mass anxiety reactions:

- channeling and other bizarre practices;
- cult murders and suicides;
- "abduction" by UFOs;
- proliferation of horror fiction and films (Stephen King has been the best selling novelist of this time);
- the rise of both televangelism and angry talk shows and the tabloidization of the mainstream media;
- Salem-like witchhunts of "child-molesting Satanists" in daycare centers;
- frenzied action by parents of Little Leaguers and cheerleaders (including choking and shooting umpires and parents);[8]
- the growth of armed militias, now estimated to number over 100,000, and of course armed resistance, such as the Oklahoma City bombing.

And this is surely a partial list.

How strong are the radical fundies? Southern Baptists have increased from a little over two million in 1936 to over 16 million today. Needless to say, not all Southern Baptists are right-wing fundies, or even political, and not all right fundies are Southern Baptists. Even William Kristol shares many of their views and has been vehement in expressing both the needs to impeach Clinton and to make abortion illegal. (Those of us who remember his father long before Irving Kristol's sharp turn to the right may weep in silence.) Perhaps the 1968 election offers the best gauge of their national political strength (at least at that time): George Wallace then polled 13.5%. Of the 27 million who voted for Barry Goldwater in 1964, about one-fourth (5.4 million, 9.6% of the national total vote) could be counted as hard-core Goldwater enthusiasts.[9] Some historians reassure us by reminding us that the Ku Klux Klan numbered between four to four and one-half million in the 1920s and have since dwindled considerably. In France, as a general rule of thumb, a far right vote of anything over 15% nationwide would be a danger point, so one Socialist politician maintained to me. Hitler received nearly 38% of the national vote just before being appointed chancellor. Of course I do not mean to paint the religious right with the brush of either the KKK or the Nazis, although their similarities to LePen's National Front are evident.

For people on the Left to support Clinton's impeachment or forced resignation should be unthinkable: they cannot depoliticize impeachment or resignation, for such an act would be a powerful victory for radical fundies; and after the 1998 election it would snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Just as strongly as we oppose most of Clinton's policies, we must condemn his impeachment and oppose his forced resignation; as John K. Galbraith and others have pointed out, the far right is attempting a coup and must be stopped. Those who are trying to oust him are not doing so because he is mostly responsible for the death of a half-million Iraqi children. They are doing so because they are out to get all of us.

NOTES

1. Hofstadter, Richard, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (N.Y.: Vintage, 1964) p. 4.
2. *Ibid.*, p.53.
3. *Ibid.*, p.39.
4. Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (N. Y.: Doubleday, 1963) pp. 1-38.
5. Hofstadter, p. 51.
6. Quoted in Matthew Brelis, "A Big Time Bust," *Boston Globe*, 11-8-98, p. D-3.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *International Herald Tribune*, 7-30-98.
9. Hofstadter, p. 137.

Falling Through the Safety Net: Women and Children First

Betty Reid Mandell

WELFARE IS THE SCAPEGOAT DU JOUR. If Social Security is the third rail of politics (touch it and you die), welfare is the golden goose of politics (touch it and you win). Ever since the beginnings of industrialization, welfare recipients have been stigmatized and blamed for the problems created by capitalism, but the current period is the breeding ground for a particularly pernicious form of the anti-welfare virus in the United States.

Using time-tested divide-and-conquer strategies, beefed up by modern technology, both conservatives and liberals — and even sometimes radicals — have managed to depict the welfare recipient as the "other" — not one of "us" and not our problem. True to the formula, these "others" have been isolated and rendered powerless, often coming to share the belief that they are the worthless people demonized by the media. They are thus stripped of all consciousness of having a right to basic human needs, and therefore not likely to demand those rights. The potentially turbulent poor have been pacified.

Once more, the theory of Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward has been illustrated — that welfare expands in times of civil turmoil to pacify the restive population (as during the Great Depression and the civil rights movement), and when the turmoil passes, welfare is tightened up in order to enforce work discipline. Without a safety net, the poor will be forced to work at any job under any onerous condition and for any wage in order to survive. When that happens, wages will go down.

The divide-and-conquer strategy was built into the original Social Security Act of 1935 by separating the program for retirees from the program for single parents, mostly mothers. What we commonly call "Social Security" (Old Age, Survivors, Disability, and Hospital Insurance) was the "respectable" program for workers, paid for by their own

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contributions, available to all wage earners. The Aid to Dependent Children program (ADC, later called AFDC, Aid to Families with Dependent Children) was means-tested, only for the poor, and paid for out of general revenues. Social Security recipients are automatically considered "deserving"; AFDC recipients are divided into the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, and white widows have always had pride of place in the "deserving" category. People of color and unmarried mothers, particularly unmarried teens, tend to fall into the "undeserving" category. But at the end of the day, they are all considered less deserving than Social Security claimants. (The very terminology sets them apart. People who receive Social Security benefits are *claimants*; people who receive welfare are recipients.)

The framers of the Social Security program purposely stigmatized ADC in order to gain support for Social Security. Thus were mothers penalized for their work of caretaking, which has always been undervalued, and thus were they and their children separated politically from waged workers, removing them from more powerful allies. There are about 3 million children and their parents (mostly mothers) who receive benefits from the Social Security program, but few people even realize they are there. But everyone has been aware of AFDC and has an opinion on it, most often negative.

The progressive women who created the first program for single women and their children, called Mothers' Pensions, were ahead of their time in recognizing that caring for single mothers and their children should be supported, but they were also distrustful of the poor and thought they should be supervised by their more enlightened and affluent Progressive sisters (they assumed greater affluence brought greater wisdom). They built this distrust into the ADC program, and ever since the program was formed in 1935, the behavior of welfare mothers has been the object of suspicion and intensive scrutiny.

Racism was added to this mix. The Progressives originally left out black mothers in the Mothers' Pension program, and black families were not included on any large scale in the AFDC program until the civil rights and welfare rights movements fought successfully for their inclusion. From then on, the program began to be perceived (incorrectly) as being primarily for black families, which made it even more vulnerable to attack.

This brief excursion into history is to explain why politicians were able to end a 60-year federal commitment to guarantee support for poor mothers and their children. Politicians are dancing gingerly around Social Security, aching to cut it, but they know that old folks are a powerful political constituency and they tread lightly. They had no such compunctions with the unpopular AFDC program, and just for good measure, they added immigrants to the chopping block.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRA) was passed in August 1996, with the stated intention of forcing welfare mothers into waged work in order to end their dependence on the dole, make them more responsible, and to give them the dignity they presumably lacked when they were only caring for their children. The rationale for cutting benefits for immigrants was more straightforward — immigrants were using too much of the country's resources.

How has it been working out? Conservatives are chortling that it's a success because the welfare rolls have dropped precipitously. Nationwide, the rolls went down from a high of 14.3 million people in 1993 to under 10 million in September 1997, a 30% drop, as President Clinton repeatedly boasts. And the rolls continue to drop. But why? Have all those people found jobs that lift their families out of poverty? We don't know for sure because the federal law didn't require follow-up studies, and states are reluctant to do them. But there are some ominous reports coming in from the states that give us cause to worry.

Workfare

ONE OF THE SCARIEST REPORTS COMES IN FROM NEW YORK CITY where they have implemented the largest workfare program in the nation. Workfare, officially called "community service," is what welfare recipients have to do if they can't find a paid job. They work off their grants in the public or private non profit sector. But people in community service programs working off their grants do not have the same status as regular workers. They are not paid the minimum wage. They can't join a union. They don't get paid vacations. If their grant were figured on an hourly basis, they get paid a little over $2 an hour.

Many unions oppose workfare because it often displaces regular workers and lowers wages for everyone. Many towns oppose it because it violates labor contracts. However, conservative politicians argue that it instills the work ethic into welfare recipients, improves their work skills, and eventually gets them off the rolls and into a job. But this hasn't happened in actual practice.

The New York Times assigned four reporters to study the workfare program in detail. They visited more than 50 work sites and spoke with hundreds of participants and supervisors. Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and his staff refused to be interviewed, and refused to release information about what happens to people after they leave welfare, on the grounds of confidentiality. *The New York Times* has sued to get the information, promising they will not print identifying names of participants, and in April 1998, a State Supreme Court justice ordered the city to release the information. The City has appealed the decision.

Headlines of four *NYT* articles summarize their findings:

• "Evidence is Scant that Workfare Leads to Full-Time Jobs" (Alan Finder, 4-12-98)

• "Many Participants in Workfare Take the Place of City Workers" (Steven Greenhouse, 4-13-98)

• "Mothers Poised for Workfare Face Acute Lack of Day Care" (Rachel L. Swarns, 4-14-98)

• "Tough Workfare Rules Used As Way to Cut Welfare Rolls" (Vivian S. Toy, 4-15-98)

The reporters found no indication that many people have been able to use workfare as a springboard to a real job. A New York state survey showed that of those who came off the rolls in New York City from July 1996 through March 1997, only 29% made more than $100 in the first three months after leaving welfare. Critics of workfare point out the futility of the one-size-fits-all approach, and say the city should be teaching people new skills to make them more marketable. Many workfare participants say they already knew how to push a broom or pick up trash and are mystified at how workfare will lead them to a permanent job.

In recent months the city has quietly begun to make some changes that seem to acknowledge that work experience, by itself, is not enough to move people from welfare to work. Now they have started to tailor programs toward some single mothers' educational and work history, and have allowed mothers who lack a high school diploma or English-language skills to enroll in programs in which they alternate between a week in workfare and a week of studying. About a quarter of the mothers in workfare are now enrolled in work-study.

A New York state welfare law prohibits communities from using workfare participants to perform a substantial portion of the work normally performed by regular employees, and prohibits using them to replace regular workers who have been laid off. Yet the 34,100 people in the city's Work Experience Program constitute a low-cost labor force that does a substantial amount of the work that had been done by municipal employees before Giuliani reduced the city payroll by about 20,000 employees, or about 10%. The painters' and the carpenters' unions have sued the city, charging that workfare has taken jobs from regular city workers.

Stanley Hill, the leader of New York City's largest municipal union, representing 120,000 municipal workers, was closely allied with the Giuliani administration and was slow to oppose workfare. At first he said he could stomach the workfare program as long as the city did not lay off any civil servants. However, when the city announced its plan to lay off 900 municipal hospital workers, Hill's union, District Council 37, and one of its units, Local 420, representing many of the city's hospital workers, filed suit in State Supreme Court to block the layoffs, charging that union hospital workers were to be replaced by workfare participants in violation of the state's social service law. Hill said, "You just can't have workfare workers with nowhere to go. That to me is slavery. If you're not prepared to give these people meaningful jobs, you're not really helping."

For the mothers on workfare, finding day care for their children is an almost impossible task. New York City lacks child care for 61% of the children whose mothers are supposed to participate in workfare this year. A study by the Human Resources Administration, which runs the city's welfare programs, says the city needs 29,000 more day care slots in order to move welfare mothers into work. Yet welfare case workers are threatening mothers that if they do not find day care, they will lose their benefits, and many mothers in desperation place their children in substandard care.

Mayor Giuliani brags that the workfare program has worked because the rolls have dropped more than 30% between 1995 and 1998. But an examination of workfare shows that this was not accomplished by people getting jobs, but by tough workfare rules that forced people off the rolls. In the first eight months of 1997, about 16% of workfare participants were cut from the rolls for infractions that ranged from showing up late to refusing a work assignment. The Mayor and his aides say that a big stick is needed to teach the discipline of work. But advocates for the poor argue that the city has overzealously enforced often technical rules without sufficient regard to the lives and dignity of the truly needy — but with considerable attention to the political benefits of trimmer welfare rolls.

Trimming the Rolls

SOME OF THE DRAMATIC DECLINE OF THE WELFARE ROLLS is probably due to a strong economy and an improved labor market. Most of it is not due to welfare reform. A 1997 University of Oregon study found that 78% of the decline can be attributed to the business cycle and only six percent to welfare reform efforts by the states. This suggests that when the next recession comes, states can expect a large increase in caseloads.

Much of the trimming of the rolls has been done by tough rules and intimidation of clients by state welfare departments. The new laws are complicated, and case workers often don't understand them. Sometimes different workers in the same office will tell clients different rules; sometimes the same worker will tell different rules to different clients. Welfare departments close offices, forcing clients to travel long distances for appointments.

The eligibility review process of New York City's welfare department not only requires recipients to submit to one eligibility review at the local welfare centers, but they have to go for a second eligibility review at a central location in Brooklyn. It requires travel of over an hour each way from many parts of the city. At the review in Brooklyn, applicants and recertifying recipients are grilled by people wearing badges who often try to persuade them to withdraw their applications or close their cases voluntarily. Afterward, investigators conduct unscheduled visits to the home of every applicant and often people are denied aid on the grounds that they must not live at their addresses because they weren't in during a home visit — even if they were out participating in a mandatory work program! These practices are being challenged in court.

The "midnight raids" that were so frequently used against African-American women in the 1940s and 1950s seem to be coming back. In Hartford, Connecticut, city police have conducted early morning raids on the homes of recipients in a sweep to catch "deadbeat dads." Considering how hard it is for women to get officials to pay attention through the routine bureaucratic channels when they report the whereabouts of non-supporting fathers to officials, it is hard to believe that such terrorist tactics are necessary.

Fingerprinting recipients has become a popular method of harassment by officials in many states. EMPOWER, a welfare rights group in Rochester, New York, responded with a tactic of desperation: putting their fingerprints, in blue paint, all over the welfare office walls.

In Massachusetts, recipients are required to come to the office every month to review their situation and to be reminded that the clock is ticking and they had better get a job by the time the two-year time limit expires on December 1, 1998. If they are unable to keep the appointment, they are often cut off welfare, even if a work or training program prevented them from keeping the appointment.

A study of Massachusetts welfare case closings compared case closings before welfare reform with those after, and found no significant difference in the percentages of families who left the welfare rolls due to earned income. After reform only 24% of cases were closed for increased income, while 40% were closed due to sanctions. This is similar to federal statistics, which showed that in one three-month period in 1997, 38% of the recipients who left welfare did so because of state sanctions imposed for a variety of infractions that ranged from missing appointments with caseworkers to refusing to look for work.

A General Accounting Office report in May 1997 found that 32.1% of administrative case closings were reopened on appeal, either because families were indeed eligible and had been incorrectly sanctioned, or because they corrected the problem which had led to case closure. Of the families who remained on the rolls, 74.4% did not continue to receive food stamps and 41.5% did not continue to receive Medicaid, even though it would appear that they were entitled to both. Of the families located after being cut off, 23% were earning wages that averaged $540 a month, well below the poverty level.

In the face of such harassment, and in the face of the widespread stigma against welfare mothers, many mothers who are eligible for benefits do not apply, and many recipients do not appeal unjust decisions — which is exactly what officials want.

The Five-Dollar-an-Hour Ghetto

IN 1991, SOCIOLOGISTS KATHRYN EDIN AND LAURA LEIN INTERVIEWED 400 low-income single mothers in Boston, Charleston, Chicago, and San Antonio — half in waged work and half on welfare — and published their findings in a book called *Making Ends Meet*. They found that working mothers were stuck in "the five-dollar-an-hour ghetto." No matter how long they stayed in a job and no matter how diligently they worked, these women were seldom able to get better jobs over time. The jobs offered a carousel rather than a career ladder.

Edin and Lein also found that after expenses working mothers received on average $65 less per month than welfare recipients. This was so for three reasons. First, going to work increases clothing, transportation, and child care costs substantially. Welfare recipients receive Medicaid and, if they are in an education or training program, subsidized child care. One-fifth of them are in subsidized housing. When mothers go to work, they have to pay for their own child care and medical care. The jobs they get generally don't cover health insurance, and they have to pay their own child care.

Second, the survival strategies that low-income mothers use to provide for their families take time. Finding low-priced food and clothing, going to the laundromat, getting around without a car, taking care of children, all take time, time that working mothers don't have.

The third reason has to do with the volatility and inflexibility of many low-wage jobs. Many jobs in the low-wage (and indeed high-wage) sector are not stable — they could be "downsized," "temporized," or have hours changed (turned into full-time, part-time, or variable weekly hours) at a moment's notice. Each of these changes poses difficult problems for single mothers with child-care responsibilities.

Nine state studies conducted by the National Governors' Association found that most jobs held by former recipients pay between $5.50 and $7 an hour, not enough to raise a family out of poverty.

The Wisconsin "W-2" program was initiated by Governor Tommy Thompson and has been much touted by conservatives as a national model, but a study by the University of Wisconsin found that 75% of those who found jobs lost them within 9 months. Only 28% received annual earnings of $10,000 for two consecutive quarters. Just one in six of those who lost their benefits had incomes above the poverty level, and a third had no earnings whatsoever.

A welfare monitoring project in Los Angeles surveyed 308 women in thirty emergency shelters between April and early August, 1998. They found that 71% of the women had not found employment. The main barriers to employment were lack of housing (43%), lack of child care (35%), lack of job skills (24%), and lack of transportation (21%). They were not given much assistance with any of these problems by their caseworkers.

Another follow-up study tracked 1,600 Maryland families whose cases closed between October 1996 and June 1997. A little more than half of the respondents reported earnings in the quarter after leaving welfare. The median earnings for those was $2,082 (about $8,300 a year). One out of ten reported earnings of more than $4,296. That means that only one out of twenty recipients whose cases had been closed was earning above the poverty level for a family of four.

Considering how low the welfare grants are — about 40% below the poverty level — you wouldn't believe that you would be worse off if you worked. But you would be. And of course the official poverty line ($13,650 for a family of three, $16,450 for a family of four) is way below what is needed to provide even a modest standard of living. Ever since President Reagan in 1981 stopped the Bureau of Labor Statistics from estimating what it really costs to live, we don't have a poverty line that reflects the true cost of living. Some people have estimated what a more realistic poverty line would be. Paul Kleppner of Northern Illinois University and Nikolas Theodore of the Chicago Urban League figured a basic budget of household expenses and concluded that in order to cover this, a job that would support a three-person family would have to pay at least $25,907 a year. To earn this wage, a person would have to work full time at thirteen dollars an hour. Kleppner and Theodore figured that the odds against a former welfare recipient finding a livable-wage job in the Midwestern labor market between 1997 and 2000 were 97 to one.

Wider Opportunities for Women gives an even higher estimate of the cost of living. They estimated that in Boston, a single parent with one preschool-age child needs to earn $15.28 per hour ($2,690 a month), and with two children, she needs to earn $18.54 per hour ($3,263 a month). Even in rural western Massachusetts, the single parent with one preschool-age child would need to earn a wage of $11.68 an hour.

In their study, Edin and Lein found that for most mothers on welfare, food and shelter alone cost almost as much as they received from the government. For more than a third, food and housing exceeded their grants. There was only one mother who was making ends meet on her grant, and she had been charged with neglect by the state child welfare department, which was placing her children in foster care. All the mothers except this one supplemented their grants by help from relatives and friends, social agencies, or by unreported work.

Except in Boston, where there were more food pantries, about one-third of the families had run out of food during the past year and about 15% had actually gone hungry. If these figures are representative of welfare recipients nationwide, roughly two million children receiving welfare went hungry for lack of money each year in the early 1990s. Twelve percent of the mothers said they couldn't afford winter clothing for their children and sometimes kept their children out of school in cold weather because of it. Nine percent said their landlords had evicted them because of nonpayment of rent. Sixteen percent said they had experienced some sort of homelessness during the past year. About one-fourth had doubled up with a friend or relative for financial reasons. All the mothers said their grant ran out long before the month was over.

Welfare mothers have always worked for wages, but they have “packaged” a combination of welfare and wages in order to survive. LaDonna Pavetti, who has studied the dynamics of welfare use for almost a decade, testified to Congress that the majority of families leave the welfare system within a relatively short period of time. About half leave within a year; 70% within two years and almost 90% within five years. But many return almost as quickly as they left — about 45% return within a year and 70% return by the end of five years. Even though most welfare mothers want to work outside the home, they return to welfare because they find that their low wages and lack of benefits can’t support their family. Or they get laid off because of the temporary nature of the jobs, or they get fired because they had to take time off from work to care for sick children.

The majority of welfare recipients do not have the skills necessary for jobs that pay high wages. About half of them do not have a high school education. Most are women, the majority are young and have young children, and a disproportionate number are minorities — all factors leading to low-wage jobs. A recent long-term study looked at the barriers to employment for AFDC recipients ages 27 to 35 and found that 90% had one of five potential barriers: low basic skills, substance abuse, a health limitation, depression, or a child with a chronic medical condition or serious disability. Many mothers have learning disabilities; a study in the state of Washington showed that 36% of the caseload have learning disabilities that have never been remedied.

A recent study by the Radcliffe Public Policy Institute of 105 women in the Boston and Cambridge area found that eight out of 10 women have children with persistent physical and mental-health problems that require frequent medical care. Many of the ailments, such as asthma, lead-paint poisoning, and chronic ear infections leading to hearing loss and developmental delays, have been found to be more common among children living in poverty.

Many of the welfare mothers have been victims of domestic violence. A Massachusetts study found that about two-thirds of all adult recipients had been subject to domestic violence at the hands of a former or current husband or boyfriend — 20% within the past twelve months. A Family Violence amendment to the 1996 welfare bill allows states to identify victims of battering, refer them to counseling and waive any requirements that unfairly penalize them. By 1997, twenty-four of the forty states that had submitted welfare plans adopted part or all of this provision or mentioned domestic violence. The National Organization for Women organized a campaign to get all states to adopt the Family Violence Option, but even states that have adopted that option are often reluctant to grant women waivers. Victims of domestic violence will return to their batterers when they lose their benefits.

Where Is the Child Care?

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT DOES NOT PROVIDE ENOUGH MONEY for child care for working parents. Under the previous law, the Family Support Act of 1988, child care funding was guaranteed to every adult who participated in education while on welfare, as well as for a year after the recipient was no longer eligible for AFDC but was employed. Under the new welfare program, called TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), however, the federal government sends child care money to the states in a block grant. The Urban Institute predicts that under block grants, states will receive $5.3 billion less over six years than they would have received under the old law. There is no longer any entitlement to child care, even though it is an absolute necessity if parents are to enter waged work.

No states offer enough quality child care for recipients entering the work force. Massachusetts is one of the best states in child care provisions, but it currently suffers a critical shortage of subsidized child care slots. In a recent analysis, the Campaign for Children found that there are l0 times the number of infants on waiting lists as there are available spaces, 7 times the numbers of toddlers and two times the number of pre-school and school-aged children. Head Start currently has long waiting lists, and since many programs are part-day, they cannot meet the needs of women who will need full-time child care.

According to a 34-city survey by the US Conference of mayors, there are not enough state funds to cover child care for welfare mothers joining the work force. Edin and Lein found that while mothers who managed to get day care subsidies feel fortunate, even when they could get their children into subsidized day care, the center's hours and the mother's work hours did not always coincide. Many low income working mothers who lack subsidized child care are forced into makeshift arrangements for their children, with all too many being left virtually unsupervised from very early ages. Other mothers try to arrange their work hours (e.g., they work the "graveyard shift") so that they can be with their children after school, but this may mean leaving their children alone at night; in other cases, mothers must try to work extra hours in order to gain more income, but this results in their being unavailable to their children who may suffer intellectually and emotionally, as well as being exposed to potentially dangerous situations without an adult present. Mothers with young children who could not get a subsidy were hard-pressed to stay at their jobs unless they could find someone who charged substantially less than the market rate. Cheap providers were often hard to find, and often unreliable. The use of family members and friends as child care providers often required mothers to find work that accommodated their child's schedule. This sometimes limited a mother's ability to take a better job. Many of the jobs offered unpredictable or limited hours, required workers to take shifts at odd or irregular times, provided few if any vacation or sick days, and did not allow mothers to take or make personal calls to check on children left home alone. In sum, the nature of their jobs often made it difficult for mothers to fulfill their parenting roles satisfactorily. Many mothers take a job that pays less in order to have time with their children, which makes it even harder for them to keep up with living expenses.

Quality of child care is a problem. Parents who are unable to find or afford good quality child care are often forced to make do with inadequate arrangements. A study done by the Families and Work Institute of children cared for in about 225 homes of relatives and non-relatives in Los Angeles, Dallas and Charlotte, N. C. rated only 9% of the home-based care as high quality. More than half of the care was rated as merely custodial and 35% was judged harmful to the children's social and educational development.

Where Are the Jobs?

THERE AREN'T ENOUGH LOW-WAGE JOBS FOR THE FOUR MILLION WELFARE RECIPIENTS who will be forced into the low-wage labor market. While the economy is generating jobs at the high end of the wage scale, it is not producing enough work for people in the unskilled segment of the labor market. Some areas have a lot of low-wage jobs, but areas that have high concentrations of poverty and large welfare caseloads will be especially hard pressed to provide jobs.

A survey by the Mayors' Conference reports that their local economies are not generating enough low-skilled employment to comply with the work participation requirements of the PRA. This is confirmed in a study by Mark Weisbrot of the Preamble Center for Public Policy, who found that the U.S. economy will create only about one new low-skilled job for every two adults entering the labor market because of welfare reform.

Furthermore, the entrance of large numbers of welfare recipients into the low-wage job sector will push wages down for all low-wage workers. I suspect that this was one of the reasons that the business sector wanted welfare reform. An Economic Policy Institute study found that if the low-wage labor market were to give jobs to former welfare recipients without displacing current workers, pay would fall by nearly 12% for the bottom 30% of workers — the 30 million earning less than $7.19 an hour. To put it another way, welfare, the basement level of the wage structure, may have bolstered wages by at least 12% by keeping the recipients out of paid work. Pay for low-wage workers in states with relatively large welfare populations would fall even more — 17.8% in California and 17.1% in New York. New competition from former welfare recipients would cost low-wage workers about $36 billion a year in income — about $8.5 billion more than federal expenditure on welfare in 1994.

Peter Edelman (a Clinton administration official who resigned over "welfare reform") points out that many cities have actually lost jobs over the past five to ten years. The New York metropolitan area lost 227,000 jobs between 1990 and 1997. The National Employment Law Project estimates that "at the current rate of job growth, it would take 21 years for all adults on public assistance to be absorbed into the economy if every newly available job went to a welfare recipient."

Studies show that large proportions of former recipients (40 to 70%) have no work. The National Governors' Association study found that 40 to 50% of families who left welfare did not have a job. A New York state study reported that 71% of former welfare recipients did not have employer-reported earnings.

The stereotypes that conservatives had created returned to haunt them when they wanted to persuade businesses to hire welfare mothers. How could you ask a CEO to hire people whom you had previously described as lazy, undependable, unmotivated, and oversexed? An effort to erase the stigma of welfare is being coordinated by the Welfare to Work Partnership, which was established in 1997 with President Clinton's encouragement. It includes corporate executives and aims to persuade business leaders to hire welfare recipients. It is conducting an advertising campaign with the slogans, "Welfare mothers make responsible employees" and "Welfare to work is a program that creates independence." The welfare recipients who conservatives had demonized are now being rehabilitated by politicians and corporate executives, with the help of the media.

But the hype isn't working very well. By now, businesses seem to have reached their limit in hiring welfare recipients. Gary Jefferson, vice president of public affairs at United Airlines, which has hired more than seven hundred people from the welfare rolls, says that these people are the "cream" of the adult welfare population. They are people with enough education and work experience to move easily into the waged work world. But Jefferson says that this "top tier" has already been absorbed by the job market. "You evaporate that and you get into the second and third tiers. We simply cannot employ those individuals."

The National Alliance of Businesses and the Welfare-to-Work Partnership estimates that only a quarter of the country's four million adult welfare recipients are "work ready" and capable of what Jefferson calls an "easy transition." A 1997 survey by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found that three-quarters of the country's hundred largest firms had no programs to hire people off welfare. Small companies are even less likely to hire them, as they generally lack the resources for recruiting and training recipients.

Robert Solow, writing in *The New York Review of Books* (11/5/98), sums it up: "Without some added ingredients, the transformation of welfare into work is likely to be the transformation of welfare into unemployment and casual earnings so low as once to have been thought unacceptable for fellow citizens."

Where Is the Transportation?

MUCH OF THE JOB GROWTH HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE SUBURBS, far from where many welfare recipients live and difficult to get to if one does not have a car. Many welfare recipients don't have cars, and if they do, they are old clunkers that are constantly breaking down. If people own a valuable car, they won't be eligible for welfare, as the value of a car is counted against their allowable assets. Until recently, Massachusetts did not allow a recipient to own a car on which the book value was more than $1,000. Recently, that has been raised to $5,000.

A study by the National Conference of Mayors highlighted the difficulties welfare recipients face in getting to what work is available. Eighty-four percent of cities surveyed cited transportation as a problem, particularly because of the migration of jobs from the city center to the suburbs.

According to a Department of Transportation study, two-thirds of entry-level jobs in high-growth areas in the Boston area cannot be reached from the central city by public transit in less than two hours, and only one in six such jobs can be reached in an hour or less. Although almost all welfare recipients live close to public transportation, most of the newer jobs, in service, retail trade and health industries, are located on the Route 128 "loop" and beyond, areas beyond the reach of public transit. For example, to get to North Waltham, which has over 3,000 entry level jobs, a central city resident has to take three buses, and travel one hour and 40 minutes — and then is still a mile from the area with the greatest concentration of jobs. (The travel time does not, of course, count the time required to take a child to and from day care.)

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT HAS A NARROWER DEFINITION of work and training than the previous program. It does not allow higher education, and allows only 12 months of vocational training. Officials prefer really short training programs; in Massachusetts, the Bay State Skills agency says that they are urged to complete training in six weeks. States can allow more education to count for training, but by 1998, 35 states did not count education and training as a work activity, or counted it on a very limited basis.

There have been many experiments in job training for welfare recipients, and they have had minimal success in raising levels of earnings or in placing people in full-time permanent jobs. Peter Edelman says that even when public service jobs are created for welfare recipients, it is costly to provide the training and support needed for women who have few marketable skills and little employment history. A well-designed project in Kansas City was able to put 1,409 out of 15,562 welfare recipients to work. After two years, only 730 were still at work. A project in Chicago's Cabrini-Green public housing project provided intensive individual support to women through successive jobs until they found one they were able to keep. They placed 54% of the clients in year-round jobs at the end of five years. This is an unusual success rate, but it also shows how unrealistic is a structure that offers only a 20% exception to the five-year time limit.

Since the PRA was passed, there has been a precipitous drop in college enrollment among welfare recipients. For example, between 1995-97 Massachusetts' fifteen community colleges recorded an average drop in the enrollment rate of welfare recipients of 46%. There was also a decline in the number of transfers to four-year colleges. Enrollment of welfare recipients at the City University of New York City fell from 27,000 in 1994 to 14,000 in 1998; at Milwaukee Area Technical College in Wisconsin, the number plummeted in four years from 6,455 to 274.

This massive exodus of recipients from college does not bode well for their future ability to climb out of poverty. People with college degrees have less than a 1 in 50 chance of being poor compared to 1 in 5 for those without. One study found that 87% of recipients who graduated from 2- or 4-year colleges in New York, Illinois, Washington, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming were still off welfare six years later. And the average salary of someone with a one-year or two-year degree from Milwaukee Area Technical College ranged between $20,000 and $24,000. Stories are emerging of women who were forced out of college to become minimum-wage bartenders, waitresses, and sales clerks.

Time Limits and Behavioral Requirements

THERE HAD BEEN NO TIME LIMIT ON WELFARE UNTIL THE Personal Responsibility Act set a lifetime limit of 5 years that people could receive assistance. Some states have set shorter time limits. Massachusetts, for example, set a two-year time limit which became effective in December, 1998. On the other hand, states are free to set no time limit at all if they want to pay for the program out of state funds after the federal time limit is up, and Michigan and Vermont have done that. California and Rhode Island have a five-year time limit for adults, but no time limit for children.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that between 2.5 million and 3.5 million children could be affected by the law's five-year time limit. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services predicts that if all states were to adopt a two-year time limit, 5.5 million children would be denied aid by 2006.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, families began to reach time limits in nine states in 1997. Families will begin to reach time limits in five more states in 1998, and four more in 1999. Arizona's time-limit clock began in November 1995, and reportedly about 3,400 families had the adult portion of their assistance eliminated in November 1997. In Massachusetts, it is expected that up to 6,000 people will lose their benefits by December 1. There is widespread panic and, despite the frantic efforts of recipients and their advocates, the legislature and the welfare department have stubbornly refused to extend the time limit, even though it is virtually certain that thousands of children will be harmed.

A study by the Urban Institute, commissioned by the Department of Health and Human Services before the PRA was passed, estimated that the legislation would move 2.6 million people into poverty, including 1.1 children. This included those who would lose Food Stamps and SSI income. The study also predicted that one million families would lose all welfare funding. These were low estimates because the authors of the study made the optimistic and probably unrealistic assumptions that two-thirds of long-term recipients would find jobs and all states would maintain their current levels of assistance.

When recipients hit the time limit without a job, they will be left without any income. That is when the shelters for the homeless will begin to turn away people because they have no more beds, and food pantries will turn away people because they have no more food.

WELFARE REFORM IS NOT JUST ABOUT GETTING PEOPLE TO WORK; it is also about enforcing certain behaviors. For example, in a misguided effort to control substance abuse, the PRA stipulates that people convicted of drug felonies are prohibited from receiving a welfare block grant or food stamps for life. Even before the federal law was passed, states received waivers to enforce certain behaviors on welfare recipients. These rules reveal a profound distrust of the poor, their parenting abilities, and their sexual behavior. As of 1998, twenty states had implemented a "family cap" policy, which prohibits benefits from being increased when a recipient has another baby while she is on welfare. Many states have imposed other laws to control parenting and child behavior, including "Learnfare," which reduces the grant if a child is truant from school and "Shotfare," which reduces the grant if a parent does not get her children immunized.

State officials seem so doggedly determined to defend the correctness of these policies that they ignore research that shows them to be incorrect or harmful. Wisconsin, the first state to institute "Learnfare," continues the program despite a study showing it had no detectable effect on school attendance. When a $1 million study by Rutgers University showed that in New Jersey, the first state to implement a family cap program, the cap had contributed to an increase in abortions, officials tried to ignore the study by calling it a "draft." Catholics and anti-abortion groups in New Jersey were upset about the increase in abortions. The American Civil Liberties Union and the National Organization for Women sued the state in 1997 charging that the family cap is discriminatory and violates women's privacy and reproductive rights.

POSTERS OF "DEADBEAT DADS" ARE A FEATURE OF THE STREETS AND SUBWAYS of the 90s. States had always tried to get child support money from the fathers of children on welfare, but now they have become more aggressive about it.

The PRA required states to impose on families harsher sanctions than allowed under previous law when the parent does not "cooperate fully" in establishing paternity and collecting child support. States must reduce by at least 25% the payments made to any family not "cooperating fully," as well as eliminate assistance for an entire family if the head of the family declines to assign support rights to the state. The definition of "cooperating fully" is subject to various interpretations. For a time, Massachusetts was dropping families from the rolls if the mother was unable to provide such information as the father's Social Security number, his whereabouts, and place of employment, even when the mother did not have this information. A class action suit brought by legal services stopped the practice.

This requirement may be life-threatening for women who are fleeing from battering husbands or boyfriends. These women may be in great danger if they give information about their batterer to the welfare department, as there is no guarantee that the welfare worker will not inform him of her whereabouts.

It is certainly reasonable to expect children's fathers to support them, but it is not reasonable to expect to recoup large amounts of money from men who have little or no money. Women who are poor are likely to have husbands and boyfriends who are also poor. The inflation-adjusted weekly wages of male high school graduates fell by 19% between 1973 and 1995.

Privatizing Poverty and Its Consequences

BUSINESSES MAY BE RELUCTANT TO HIRE AND TRAIN WELFARE RECIPIENTS, but they are panting to get state funding to run the welfare programs. There is a virtual feeding frenzy of corporations at the welfare trough. The PRA allows states to contract out all or part of their program to private companies, and many have done so. In fact, as Barbara Ehrenreich noted in *Harper's* (August 1997), the privatization effort was well under way even before the PRA was passed. The defense contractor BDM International Inc. won a contract to automate New Mexico's welfare system as early as 1988; Lockheed was in the business of collecting child support and fingerprinting recipients in various states; Curtis & Associates and the job-brokerage firm America Works were placing recipients in jobs in Buffalo, San Francisco, and other cities. A brochure advertising a conference on privatization that Ehrenreich attended promised that the gathering would be an ideal setting for companies seeking to: "Capitalize on the massive growth potential of the new world of welfare reform/Gain a leading edge in the market while it is in its early stage/Profit from the opportunities available."

Worse, the PRA cleared the way for privatizing the determination of eligibility. The states will still set eligibility levels, but it will be up to the private contractors to determine which individuals fit them. Defense corporations are particularly interested in funds for "information technology," a specialty of high-tech, defense-oriented firms. Time limits on welfare will require a vast investment in technology to track individuals, through name changes and geographical moves, for decades on end. Ehrenreich predicts that it will create "a veritable Foucaultian panopticon of surveillance and a growth industry for the finger-imagists and information technologists."

There are few comprehensive studies of privatization, and it is hard to get information because, unlike the public sector which can be forced to give out information through the Freedom of Information Act, corporations keep information private. But we can guess where the corporations will make their profits: by cutting back on services to clients.

PRESIDENT CLINTON, ECHOING GEORGE BUSH'S PREDICTION OF "a thousand points of light," called on churches, social agencies, and businesses to solve the welfare problem, yet they cannot begin to make up for government cutbacks. Private charities are already reporting that they are stretched to the limit, and charitable giving has been dropping off for the past six years.

Nonprofit agencies report a rise in the demand for emergency services such as shelter, food and clothing. Large numbers of former recipients (both families and single individuals) are turning to soup kitchens and food pantries. More than one in eight out of those receiving emergency food between January and May of 1997 had been discontinued from public or general assistance in the previous two years.

Food pantries have had a sharp increase in demand. The Greater Boston Food Bank supplied emergency groceries to nearly 23% more needy people in the first six months of 1997 than the previous year. Other food banks report similar growth. The increase is attributed to changes in welfare laws and the swelling ranks of low-wage and part-time workers. Immigrants, who have had their food stamps cut by the federal welfare law, are particularly hard hit. There has also been an increase in demand for food in the suburbs, particularly by laid-off middle managers unwilling to work at minimum-wage jobs.

Catholic Charities in Massachusetts saw requests for emergency services leap 61% between 1995, when welfare reform began, and 1997. Much of this increase is accounted for by the working poor, many of whom have left the state's welfare rolls but can't make ends meet on meager salaries.

Shelters for the homeless report an increased demand. The Travelers Aid Society in Boston saw a threefold increase in families needing shelter in just one year and for the Central Massachusetts Housing Authority the numbers doubled.

Ironically, shelters for the homeless in the 57 counties of New York state outside of New York City have had to turn people away because the financing of shelters for the homeless is tied to the number of welfare recipients in the state. As the number of welfare recipients has dropped, so has the shelters' financial support. Some have had to close. (A court order prevented similar problems in New York City.)

Studies across the country have documented widespread hunger and homelessness among former welfare recipients, often far worse than under the old welfare system. And children appear to be the disproportionate victims of homelessness, particularly those from families formerly on welfare.

Child abuse and neglect have also increased. According to some advocates for children, recent changes in state welfare law have caused the number of children in Massachusetts who were abused or neglected to jump by 10% in 1997. There will be an increase in foster home placements, and what we know about the foster care system leads us to question whether most children's life situation will be improved by entering the system. There is a serious shortage of good foster parents. As more women entered the work force, the supply of foster homes nation-wide decreased 32% in the last decade, while the number of children in care has increased 69%. The system is already overburdened and unable to care adequately for the children in its charge.

Stories are coming in about mothers who have given up their babies for adoption because the family cap made it impossible to care for them. The Adoption Promotion Act passed by Congress in 1997 will make it harder for poor families whose children have been taken from them on charges of neglect or abuse to get their children back. The law pays a bonus to states to get children adopted — $4,000 per adopted foster child and $6,000 if that foster child is categorized as having special needs. It also calls for states to hold hearings on faster termination of parental rights.

Victims of domestic violence will return to their batterer when they lose their benefits. Despite the federal law that allows states to exempt victims of domestic violence from certain provisions of the law, relatively few women are actually getting these exemptions.

Children's poverty will increase. Child poverty is common in the United States — 21% of all children were classified as poor in 1995. One child in three spends at least one year in poverty over his or her lifetime, and for more than 5% of children, poverty lasts 10 years or more. Welfare reform will increase those numbers dramatically.

Increased poverty will have harmful long-term effects on children. Children who grow up in chronically impoverished households are at greater risk for cognitive developmental delays. Poor children are more likely than others to experience a number of undesirable outcomes including poor health, death (including high rates of infant mortality), stunted growth, failure in school, out-of-wedlock births, and violent crime. Poor children have a higher incidence of low birth weight, which is associated with an increased likelihood of subsequent physical health, cognitive, and emotional problems that can persist through childhood. Poor children suffer from emotional and behavioral problems more frequently than do others, including both externalized behaviors such as fighting and acting out, and internalized behaviors such as anxiety, social withdrawal, and depression.

Parents who are poor are likely to be less healthy, both emotionally and physically, than those who are not poor. And parental irritability and depressive symptoms are associated with more conflictual interactions with adolescents, leading to less satisfactory emotional, social, and cognitive development for the children. Poor parental mental health is associated with impaired parent-child interactions and less provision of learning experiences in the home.

The pressures currently being exerted on welfare recipients cause enormous stress on them; these stresses will worsen as time limits approach and are likely to be extreme at their implementation. Stress has been correlated with harsh and erratic parenting behavior on the part of some poor parents, particularly those who are socially isolated. Thus, the added difficulties faced by mothers nearing time limits may lead, in some cases, to instances of child abuse which otherwise might not have occurred.

Looking Toward a Better System

IT DOESN'T TAKE A CASSANDRA TO PREDICT DISASTER unless some changes are made. Yet there are some hopeful signs on the horizon. The main line media are beginning to look beyond the stereotypes and tell the true story about welfare. City mayors are getting nervous about the problems they are having to face as more people become homeless, and are beginning to put political pressure on state governors and legislators to relieve their problems. Legislators who were formerly intransigent about changing the laws are beginning to at least realize the importance of education and training and child care.

Some of the cuts affecting immigrants, such as Supplemental Security Income and food stamps, have been partially restored by Congress, due largely to political pressure from the Hispanic Caucus and Hispanic voting constituencies.

Some labor unions are getting into the fight against workfare, realizing that it threatens the jobs and wages of union members. An alliance of unions and welfare advocates in Massachusetts, called Working Massachusetts, is lobbying and doing grassroots educational work at workfare sites. They have mounted a contingent worker campaign to gain rights for temporary and part-time workers.

Churches have been powerful advocates for justice and have lobbied on both the national and state levels. In looking for allies, one might think that social agencies, who are in the front-line trenches of helping the poor, would be fighting against welfare reform. However, most of them have not engaged in the struggle because they are getting state contracts and don't want to endanger their funding.

Welfare advocates have had limited success in persuading middle class feminists that welfare reform affects all women and feminists should be engaged in welfare rights struggles. While the leaders of the National Organization for Women have been exemplary in their fight against welfare reform, most of their members — in fact, most feminists — are nowhere to be seen at the rallies or lobbying efforts of welfare advocates. Gwendolyn Mink has written an insightful analysis of the failure of feminists to support poor women. The feminist movement has always been predominantly middle class and white. Except for the very small Wages for Housework contingent, white middle class women have been more interested in getting out of the home and into the job market, and they have not made caretaking work in the home one of their priorities. In fact, many of them agree that poor women should be in the labor market. Black feminists are more likely to support a welfare program that makes it possible for poor women to stay home to care for their children. They have a history of having to work in order to survive, and want to have the choice of staying home.

It may seem utopian to fight for that choice for all parents (fathers as well as mothers), but the choice is available to middle class parents and it is unjust to deny the choice to poor parents. Most Americans believe that welfare mothers should be in the waged labor market. However, most Americans have not been given the real facts about welfare and poverty. A poll taken before the PRA was passed showed that 80% of Americans didn't want the law to harm children. If the media give them the facts about how welfare reform is harming children, they may put pressure on their legislators to change the law.

Peter Edelman says that we have been reduced to the politics of the waitress mom. She says, all too legitimately, "I bust my tail. I don't have decent child care. I don't have health coverage. Why should 'these people' get what I don't have?" Advocates say to this waitress, "You are right. You deserve to have a job that pays enough to support a family, and you deserve good child care and health coverage. Join us in working for these things for everybody." The waitress mom is often the same woman as the welfare mom, but neither the waitress mom nor the welfare mom is making it in America today.

Confronting The Misuse of Class-Based Affirmative Action

Stephen Steinberg

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY WAS FORGED OUT OF THE CAULDRON of black insurgency. It was the mobilization of black protest, beginning with the civil rights movement and the ensuing upsurge of black militancy, that engendered the political pressure for the policy initiatives that came to be known as "affirmative action."

The most important of these initiatives was the Philadelphia Plan which was originally drawn up by Lyndon Johnson's Department of Labor, but shelved after Hubert Humphrey's defeat in 1968. A year later it was resurrected by Arthur Fletcher, the black Assistant Secretary of Labor, with the backing of Charles Shultz and Nixon himself. Why Nixon, who got elected by openly appealing to the racial backlash, backed the Philadelphia Plan has been the subject of much speculation. This is less mystifying when placed in proper historical context. During the summer of 1969 there was an outbreak of highly publicized protests against discrimination in the construction trades. Hugh Davis Graham, author of *The Civil Rights Era*, provides the following description:

> In Chicago, job protests launched by a coalition of black neighborhood organizations shut down twenty-three South Side construction projects involving $85 million in contracts. . . . The demonstrations in Pittsburgh were more violent than in Chicago, but were similarly organized and focused on job discrimination in construction. One clash in Pittsburgh in late August left 50 black protestors and 12 policemen injured. . . . Racial violence over jobs also occurred in Seattle, and black coalitions announced job protest drives for New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Boston (pp. 334-335).

It is true, as Davis and others have claimed, that Nixon had little to lose by "sticking it" to the Democratic unions. But it is also true that, given the war in Vietnam, Nixon had political reason to defuse black protest, lest he find himself confronted with a "second front" at home. Whatever the political calculations that led Nixon to back Fletcher's

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proposal to resurrect the Philadelphia Plan, one thing is clear: without the pressure from below, the Plan would have remained in the Labor Department's trash bin where it had been deposited by the previous Democratic administration.

No such claim can be made with respect to class-based affirmative action. This proposal did not evolve out of a mobilization of working-class people or their unions to combat the blatant classism that restricts their access to higher education and to many white-collar jobs. Rather, the idea of class-based affirmative action is the brainchild of armchair theorists and political pundits with no political leverage or constituency. Worse still, the suggestion that affirmative action should be class-based rather than race-based was advanced, not for its own sake, but as a second line of defense against the right-wing crusade to gut affirmative action. It provided a rejoinder to the contention that it was unfair to give preference to the child of a black doctor over the child of a white miner or garbage collector. Class-based affirmative action never had a chance of being enacted as policy, but served only as a rhetorical foil in the affirmative action debate.

This explains why the idea of class-based affirmative action has been embraced by the very conservatives who spearheaded the crusade against affirmative action: Clint Bolick, Dinesh D'Souza, Clarence Thomas, Charles Murray, Richard Herrnstein, and Newt Gingrich.[1] Essentially they have used the "class card" to trump the "race card." They feign compassion for the working classes only to provide ideological cover for their assault on affirmative action.

Of course, the "class not race" stance has ideological resonance on the Left. Social democrats, including Bayard Rustin, actively opposed the Philadelphia Plan because it threatened to create a rift between labor unions and the civil rights movement. Forced to choose between "race" and "class," they opted for the latter, even though this meant that the racist unions who were the targets of the Philadelphia Plan would go unchecked.

It was another self-declared social democrat, William Julius Wilson, who introduced the "class not race" position into more recent discourse. In his 1987 book, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, Wilson wrote that "programs of preferential treatment applied merely according to racial or ethnic group membership tend to benefit the relatively advantaged segments of the designated group" (p. 115). No matter that most of these individuals owe their "relative advantage" to affirmative action! Wilson's demurral has been widely quoted by liberals who have capitulated to the escalating racial backlash and have withdrawn support from affirmative action.

IN A SUBSEQUENT ARTICLE ENTITLED "Race-Neutral Programs and the Democratic Coalition," published in the Spring 1990 issue of *The American Prospect*, Wilson resurrected Rustin's position on "coalition politics." As he wrote:

> An emphasis on coalition politics that features progressive, race-neutral policies could have two positive effects. It could help the Democratic Party regain lost political support, and it could lead to programs that would especially benefit the more disadvantaged members of minority groups — without being minority policies (p. 81).

Alas, political principle and racial justice were to be jettisoned in the name of a coalition that was never more than a chimera and a Democratic Party that rewarded political expediency by conspiring in the dismantling of the welfare state.

The proposal that affirmative action should be based on class instead of race has received renewed attention with the 1996 publication of *The Remedy*, by journalist Richard Kahlenberg. An excerpt was featured in a cover story of *The New Republic* (April 3, 1995), under the title "Class Not Race." What purpose, one might ask, did the editors of the *New Republic* have in featuring Kahlenberg's article? The answer is embedded in the subtitle: "A Liberal Case for Junking Old-Style Affirmative Action in Place of Something that Works."

Unfazed by the fact that the steady evisceration of race-based affirmative action has brought us no closer to his vision of an even more far-reaching affirmative action based on class, Kahlenberg has recently recycled his argument for the Spring 1998 issue of *The New Labor Forum*, published by the Labor Resource Center of the City University of New York. Precisely because the invocation of "class" has such visceral appeal to those on the Left, it behooves us to subject his argument to close examination.

Kahlenberg predicates his position on three sets of premises:

1) normative: by instituting a system of racial preferences, affirmative action contradicts the ideal of a colorblind society and loses its "moral force."

2) political: a class-based affirmative action will avoid the political fissures that open up when affirmative action is based on race.

3) pragmatic: since blacks are disproportionately poor, they will receive much of the benefit of a class-based affirmative action anyway.

At least at first blush, this line of argument resonates with central tenets of liberal-left politics. It seems to broaden the impact of affirmative action "beyond race," and attack the structures of inequality that unfairly restrict opportunity to those born outside the middle classes. It attacks the class structures that, it is assumed, are at the root of racism. And it upholds the shining ideal of the civil rights movement: a color-blind society.

The problem is that none of this seductive logic stands up to close scrutiny. Let me attempt to parry each of Kahlenberg's core suppositions.

1) From the standpoint of abstract logic, it may seem contradictory to employ racial classifications and racial preferences in the struggle against racism. In the real world, however, this is a logical and necessary step to counteract the effects of two centuries of slavery and a century of Jim Crow, compounded by an entrenched racism that continues to restrict minority access to jobs and opportunities.

The whole point of affirmative action is to drive a wedge in the structure of occupational segregation that has existed, literally, since slavery. Furthermore, affirmative action is chiefly responsible for most of the "progress" that we celebrate. The black middle class is concentrated precisely in occupations where affirmative action programs have been in place for over two decades — not only in the professions and in corporate management, but in major blue-collar industries and in government where over one-quarter of all blacks are employed.

Kahlenberg is willing to trade away all of this for the sake of what he considers logical consistency. The problem, though, is that he is unable to grasp the difference between using a racial classification to subjugate an entire people, and using a racial classification for the purpose of remedying some of the lingering effects of that very system.

2) Kahlenberg bemoans the fact that affirmative action is unpopular, and he is all cut up over the split between blacks and labor. He thinks that a class-based affirmative action would restore interracial unity under the umbrella of the labor movement. Kahlenberg turns a blind eye to the long and sorry history of racism within the labor movement. Indeed, affirmative action has its origins with the Philadelphia Plan, which was aimed at the lily-white unions in the construction trades. Instead of calling upon organized labor to break with its racist past, he asks blacks to forgo opportunity for the sake of a non-existent black-labor alliance.

In pressing his case for a class-based affirmative action, Kahlenberg dredges up the hackneyed argument that it is unfair to give preference to “the son of a black doctor over the son of a white garbage collector.” Think about it. How often is it that the son of a black doctor finds himself vying with the son of a white garbage collector? Presumably, Kahlenberg has in mind competition for admission to Berkeley or to Yale. But that son of a black doctor is likely to find himself in competition with, not the sons of white garbage collectors, but the sons of white doctors, who have not had to cope with the psychological liabilities and material disadvantages of being black in a white society. This is the rationale for giving a leg up even to the son of a black doctor.

Now let us think about that son of the white garbage collector. Granted, he has many liabilities to cope with in a society highly stratified by class. On the other hand, as a white man in a *racially* stratified society, he has access to coveted jobs in the blue-collar world that historically were the exclusive domain of white men. Indeed, in cities where garbage collectors were protected by union contracts, blacks could not even get hired as garbage collectors, much less as policemen or plumbers or assembly line workers.

In short, affirmative action is designed to address inequities of caste, not class. It gives recognition to the fact that, as an oppressed minority, blacks have had to deal with the impediments of race in addition to those of class. This is not to deny that there is a dire need to address the inequities of class as well as those of race. Clearly, we need both class-based and race-based affirmative action, but Kahlenberg asks us to substitute the one for the other.

3) Kahlenberg’s rejoinder is that blacks will benefit disproportionately from a class-based affirmative action since they are disproportionately poor. But is this really the case? Remember that blacks are only a minority of the poor, and to make matters worse, they are concentrated among the poorest of the poor. The higher one goes up the income ladder, the smaller the proportion of blacks at any given rung of the ladder. Therefore, it is likely that most of the advantages of a class-based affirmative action would go to whites and to other minorities. Andrew Hacker has quipped that the group that would benefit most are the white children of divorced parents.

Besides, Kahlenberg acts as though we have a *choice* between a race-based or a class-based affirmative action. Fact is that there is no prospect of a significant class-based affirmative action being enacted in the foreseeable future. Indeed, the reason that this “radical” idea has been endorsed by the likes of Newt Gingrich is to provide cover for the retreat from affirmative action, and to stoke the resentments of white backlash by suggesting that it is not “fair” to help only blacks. This is the political equivalent of the “bait and switch” tactics used by sleazy retailers. Make no mistake: the end of affirmative action as we know it will not be replaced by an even more far-reaching class-based affirmative action.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION — WHETHER RACE-BASED OR CLASS-BASED — does nothing to attack the structure of class inequality, and in the final analysis, only substitutes minorities and women in places that were once occupied exclusively by white males. Nevertheless, affirmative action addresses one of the most odious aspects of inequality in America — the segregation of occupations along racial and gender lines. Whatever its limitations, affirmative action counters racism and enhances democracy, and therefore deserves the support of progressives. The alternative is to join the national crusade against affirmative action, and this is no less contemptible when it is done in the name of the working class. Which is to say, the white working class.

NOTES

1. See David P. Bryden, "The False Promise of Compromise," *The Public Interest* (Winter 1998), p. 55, and Richard Kahlenberg, *The Remedy* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), pp. 118-119. Among the others whom Kahlenberg cites as supporting a class-based affirmative action are Jack Kemp, George Pataki, Christine Todd Whitman, and Bill Clinton.

The Continuity of U.S. Imperialism

Stephen R. Shalom

AS I WRITE, COURTS AND COMMENTATORS are debating whether Augusto Pinochet, the head of Chile's bloody dictatorship from 1973-90, should be turned over for trial on charges of crimes against humanity.

Conservative pundits complain that Pinochet was just doing his job and worry how any tyrant could feel safe if the Chilean strongman is brought to justice. Liberals reply that it is important to establish the principle of no immunity for gross violators of human rights. Some go further and urge the Clinton Administration to provide assistance to any court trying Pinochet. Since the U.S. Government was heavily involved in the 1973 coup which overthrew Salvador Allende, secret files in Washington contain many documents that would be of value in any prosecution of Pinochet.

Few, however, have drawn the logical conclusion. If international courts should place in the docket killers whose own countries cannot or will not bring them to trial, and if the United States helped to depose the legally and democratically elected government of Chile, then there are other criminals at large aside from Pinochet. Richard Nixon is dead, but Henry Kissinger, the key U.S. foreign policy official at the time, is still around, seemingly immune from prosecution. And the list of war crimes that might be charged to Kissinger, of course, goes far beyond Chile: there was the unspeakable horror of Indochina; East Timor (where Kissinger and Ford gave the Indonesian invasion a green light in December 1975); Bangladesh (where U.S. policy "tilted" toward the Pakistani military as it raped and massacred); Iraq (where Kissinger betrayed the Kurds because "covert action should not be confused with missionary work"); and on and on.

To be sure, U.S. military power makes it difficult to actually bring Kissinger and other U.S. war criminals to justice. But what is striking is how such calls for justice are so rarely heard nowadays, even from progressives. The reality of U.S. imperialism seems to have been forgotten or treated as a historical oddity of no relevance to the current post-Cold War world. Many seem to believe that an undemocratic U.S.

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foreign policy of militarism and interventionism, if it existed at all, was a response to the Soviet Union, and the Soviet collapse has rendered that sort of foreign policy — and any opposition to it — obsolete.

In fact, however, the Soviet Union was never the exclusive force behind U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War and the absence of the Soviet empire today has not ended U.S. militarism or interventionism. This does not mean that the end of the Cold War is of no consequence. The U.S.-Soviet nuclear confrontation — with the potential to incinerate the entire planet — was a great danger during the Cold War years that thankfully is reduced today. Everyone certainly hopes that the lunacy in Washington and Moscow that nearly triggered a nuclear exchange during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 will never be repeated. But the bitter struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union was never all that was going on during the Cold War years. This can be seen most clearly by examining U.S. foreign policy in the aftermath of the Soviet break up.

DURING THE YEARS OF THE COLD WAR, there were two main theories for explaining U.S. foreign policy. The conventional view held that Washington's huge military budget and its many foreign interventions were driven by the Soviet threat. Liberal versions of this view thought Pentagon spending higher than necessary and some interventions ill-advised, while conservative renditions considered the military spending inadequate and some interventions insufficiently ferocious. But what was common to both versions of the conventional view was the exclusive focus on the Soviet Union as the impetus for U.S. policy.

The radical view, on the other hand, doubted that the Soviet Union alone could account for Washington's international behavior. That the Soviet Union was a horrific dictatorship was not disputed by principled radicals, nor that it ruled over its East European empire with an iron hand. But, from this perspective, these evident evils were not the crucial determinants of U.S. policy. Rather, according to this view, U.S. officials have sought to construct and maintain global arrangements favorable to the interests of the major corporations that dominate the U.S. political system. This means control over crucial resources and access to investment and trade opportunities on terms advantageous to — if not dictated by — the United States. The Soviet Union interfered with this "world order" and thus was an enemy of the U.S. government — a major one, the best armed one — but not the only one. U.S. policymakers focussed on at least two other major adversaries: Third World nationalists and First World competitors. The nationalists of the global South, who hoped to reduce their countries' grinding poverty and subordination, had to be subverted, crushed, or contained, and the advanced capitalist countries had to be tied into a system of dependency under U.S. hegemony.

Even during the Cold War there was a great deal of evidence showing that the radical view was closer to reality than the conventional view. For example, U.S. policymakers moved to eject the European powers from the Middle East with its stupendous oil resources long before the Soviet Union was a player in the region. Or, to take another example, rather than trying to weaken the ties between the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and Moscow, as might be predicted by the conventional view, U.S. policymakers attempted to do exactly the opposite — that is, increase Managua's dependence on the Soviet Union — which makes sense from the radical view if the real enemy is Third World nationalism that must be discredited to justify waging war against it. (And, of course, the same phenomenon took place on the other side: Moscow used the excuse of Western aggression to rationalize its interventions in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan.)

Despite the plentiful evidence showing that the Soviet threat was not the sole determinant of U.S. foreign policy, the fact that the Cold War was characterized *both* by U.S. hostility to the Soviet Union *and* U.S. efforts to assert its global preeminence made it difficult to conclusively sort out these separate motives. But now that the Soviet Union has collapsed, we have a natural experiment of sorts, a way to test the separate importance of each of these two factors. If the Soviet threat drove U.S. international behavior, then we would expect that the demise of that threat would lead to a drastic reduction in military spending and an end to military interventions, nuclear weapons development, and foreign military bases. On the other hand, if the Soviet Union was just one source of U.S. policy, then we would expect Pentagon spending to remain high and the interventions and other features of U.S. Cold War foreign policy to continue.

Consider the following:

1. **Military spending**. As a former Pentagon official in the Reagan administration recently noted, military spending (after correcting for inflation) during Clinton's first term in office was only 12% below the average level from 1976 to 1990 (Lawrence J. Korb, *Boston Globe,* 21 Jan. 1998). President Clinton and the Congress have just agreed on a new military budget — felicitously named (with Clinton's endorsement) the "Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999" after one of the Senate's leading militarists — which increases Pentagon funding in real terms. Russia and the other Soviet successor states together in 1997 spent one tenth of what they spent on the military in 1988. That the disintegration of the Soviet Union — which in the mid-1980s had 199 army divisions, 52,000 main battle tanks, 6,135 tactical aircraft, 287 principle surface combatants, 380 submarines, and tens of thousands of nuclear warheads — has had so little effect on the U.S. military budget strongly suggests that Pentagon spending derives from other motives.

One motive has been to subsidize defense industries (the leading military contractor, Lockheed-Martin, has major facilities located in the district of recent House Speaker Newt Gingrich). A second motive has been to subsidize high-tech industries in general. But one further motive — during the Cold War years and today — has been to ensure U.S. global hegemony. The key U.S. objective, said a 1992 Pentagon planning document (later revised into more diplomatic language after much criticism), was to prevent the emergence of a new superpower — only the United States is entitled to this status. "We must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role" (*NYT*, Mar. 8, 1992).

2. **Interventions**. The U.S. invasion of Panama in December 1989 took place two months after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Described as a mission to thwart narco-trafficking, Panama has played a larger role in the drug trade following the invasion than it did under Noriega. In January 1991, Washington

went to war against Iraq. The announced purpose was to demonstrate that it was unacceptable for nations to occupy foreign territory — a noble principle, but one conveniently ignored by Washington in the case of East Timor or occupied Palestine. U.S. officials resisted all efforts to resolve the situation peacefully, determined to demonstrate, in George Bush's words, "that what we say goes" (see Noam Chomsky in *Collateral Damage*, ed. Cynthia Peters, South End, 1992). At the end of 1992, after the demise of the Soviet Union, Bush sent U.S. troops to Somalia, ostensibly to save people from starvation, but, since the famine was essentially over by the time Bush acted, the real motive was far more likely a public relations operation for the Pentagon, which feared post-Cold War downsizing (see my articles in *Z*, Feb. 1993, and *New Politics*, #17). In 1993, the Clinton administration launched missile strikes on Baghdad, claiming self-defense against an earlier unsuccessful Iraqi assassination attempt on Bush — legally preposterous and, as Seymour Hersh showed (*New Yorker*, Nov. 1, 1993) based on dubious evidence. In 1994, U.S. troops landed in Haiti, restoring President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to office. U.S. benevolence, however, was rather suspect, given Washington's connivance with those who had overthrown Aristide and Washington's refusal to institute effective sanctions against the junta. And just this past August, Clinton rained cruise missiles on targets in Afghanistan and Sudan, allegedly in response to bombings at U.S. embassies in Africa, though the evidence connecting the Sudanese pharmaceutical plant to the terrorism dissolved on the merest inspection (see Seymour Hersh, *New Yorker*, Oct. 12, 1998).

In 1994, a study for the Congressional Research Service worried that the United States was a victim of "self-deterrence" — refusing to engage in an adequate number of military interventions. Unfortunately, there is no need for worry. Washington seems to have few hang-ups in this regard.

3. **Nuclear Weapons**. Given the huge nuclear arsenal deployed by the former Soviet Union, if the Soviet threat were the exclusive source of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War then Moscow's implosion should have had its most dramatic impact on U.S. nuclear posture. But despite the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which commits the United States and other nuclear-weapon states to move toward full nuclear disarmament, and despite the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, designed to freeze nuclear weapons technology, Washington has been working on the modernization of its nuclear arsenal, violating the spirit if not the letter of these agreements.

U.S. nuclear doctrine has been no better. In 1995, Clinton told Third World nations that the U.S. would not use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear-armed state that was not allied with a nuclear-weapon power (reaffirming a 1978 pledge by President Carter in order to encourage countries to indefinitely extend the NPT). But, as Hans Kristensen has reported in a study for the British American Security Information Council, within months of Clinton's statement Pentagon planners were advocating the use of nuclear weapons against states using chemical, biological, or radiological weapons. Three years earlier, Pentagon officials noted that nuclear hardware and software had generally been configured for the Northern Hemisphere only, limiting U.S. capability south of the equator. The officials called for the development of a "global capability" by the late 1990s. Nor were these just abstract plans. In 1996, the Assistant Secretary of Defense noted that conventional weapons could not take out Libya's alleged chemical plant at Tarhunah and that the B61-11 — a new generation nuclear warhead — "would be the nuclear weapon of choice." Public concern about preemptive nuclear strikes caused the Pentagon to back off, but Washington carefully would not rule out use of nuclear weapons in response to a chemical or biological attack.

Does this mean that the use of U.S. nuclear weapons is imminent? That depends on what one means by "use." When we speak of someone robbing a bank "using a gun", we mean not only robbers who fire their weapons, but those who threaten to fire as well. Likewise, as Daniel Ellsberg has noted, nuclear weapons have been used in this sense many times during the Cold War — that is, to intimidate or threaten. And this ability to bully others is something the U.S. government clearly wants to retain. Indeed, Pentagon planners recommended (in a 1995 document released to Kristensen under the Freedom of Information Act) that the United States avoid appearing too rational or cool-headed. "That the U.S. may become irrational and vindictive if its vital interests are attacked should be part of the national persona we project."

4. **Foreign Military Bases**. If nuclear weapons are to remain part of the U.S. arsenal and if military interventions are still to be relied on, then Washington will continue to need foreign military bases. And sure enough, U.S. officials have continued their persistent effort to secure military access wherever they can. Thus, though the U.S. Navy was thrown out of Subic by a nationalist Philippine Senate in 1991, the Pentagon has been working with compliant Philippine officials to find some back-door way to obtain some form of basing rights. In Japan, despite the overwhelming opposition of the people of Okinawa, the Pentagon and Tokyo politicians are intent on maintaining U.S. military facilities. And military access agreements have been concluded with Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Such U.S. bases serve two principle purposes. First, they allow Washington to intervene, to threaten intervention, or simply to act provocatively wherever it chooses. Of course we are told that these bases help to maintain regional stability. But consider, for example, the case of North Korea. Washington reached an agreement to provide the North Koreans with civilian nuclear power technology and oil in return for assurances that Pyongyang would end its nuclear weapons program. Emboldened by its regional military bases and its stepped up military exercises in South Korea, the United States has simply refused to keep its side of the deal. When North Korea responded to U.S. bad-faith with reckless cruise missile tests, U.S. saber-rattling escalated. And, tellingly, Secretary of Defense William Cohen has declared that there will be a U.S. presence on the Korean peninsula even when there is a unified Korea (remarks to World Affairs Council, Los Angeles, June 29, 1998).

A second purpose of foreign bases is to ensure the dependence of Washington's major allies. Ostensibly defensive alliances, such as NATO and the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, have been intended to keep potential rivals in a state of military — and thus political and ultimately economic — dependency. The United States has been trying to get its allies to pick up an increasingly larger share of the costs of the U.S. bases, but Washington has resolutely blocked any effort for independent action on the part of its partners. Thus, Washington has refused to turn over any part of NATO's southern command to a European, and rejected any peacetime European planning within NATO. Military action by the allies in support of U.S. interests is welcome — in fact, the U.S. has continually pressed Japan to ignore its constitutional prohibition on war — whether in the Middle East or in defense of Pacific sealanes. Independent action, however, is unacceptable.

5. **Unilateralism**. Throughout the Cold War, unilateralism was the hallmark of U.S. foreign policy. U.S. officials argued that the Soviet right of veto in the Security Council made multilateral action unrealistic. But while it is true that Moscow cast its veto with great frequency in the first decades of the United Nations, in the later years of the Cold War it was Washington that far and away made greatest use of the veto. From 1981-86, the United States vetoed 36 draft resolutions to the Soviet Union's two. In any event, with the collapse of the Soviet Union the conventional view of U.S. foreign policy might lead us to expect the U.S. government to have dispensed with unilateralism. This has hardly been the case.

Twice this year, the United States nearly went to war against Iraq, insisting that it alone had the right and authority to decide whether Baghdad was in compliance with Security Council resolutions. The United States attacked Sudan and Afghanistan without any recourse to the United Nations or even to its allies. Washington continues its boycott on Cuba despite a disapproving 157-2 General Assembly vote. It rejected an International Criminal Court, joining Libya, Iraq, Israel, and three other states in voting no while 120 voted "yes." It is one of the few nations to refuse to sign the ban on land mines. It alone opposes an international ban on children under 18 serving in combat. Secretary of State Albright well summarized the U.S. view: the United States will act "multilaterally when we can, unilaterally when we must in an area important for our interests" — which is to say, the U.S. will act in violation of its solemn treaty obligations, including the UN Charter which prohibits the use or threat of force except in self-defense from an armed attack.

THE EVIDENCE, THEN, SHOWS CONVINCINGLY that U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War cannot be explained simply in terms of the Soviet Union. Rather, the U.S. goal was always U.S. economic, political, and military hegemony: over the Third World and First World, as well as over the Second World. In short, the problem was U.S. imperialism.

This is not, however, simply an historical observation. U.S. imperialism is still thriving. Understanding the continuities of U.S. foreign policy helps us to define where we should put our current efforts. During the Cold War, those concerned with peace and social justice had a clear agenda: oppose the arms build-up by the superpowers and their allies, oppose big-power foreign military interventions, oppose foreign military bases, oppose unilateralism, and oppose the economic domination of the South by the North. That same agenda is just as relevant today.

POSTSCRIPT

AS NEW POLITICS GOES TO PRESS, Washington has just ended four days of massive bombardment against Iraq. U.S. actions had active support only from England. The attack came as Security Council debate on the weapons' inspectors report was getting under way, drawing criticism from France, Russia, China, Sweden, and many Arab states; even Kuwait did not endorse the actions. It was also illegal since no Council member has the right to judge and enforce Security Council resolutions. Imagine if Russia bombed Israel for non-compliance with countless Security Council resolutions.

The U.S. claimed it acted to degrade Iraq's ability to produce weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, which Iraq, unlike other countries, had actually used. But when Saddam Hussein had employed chemical weapons against Iran and his own Kurdish population, he was backed by Washington which also supplied him with biological agents from labs in the United States. And to rain cruise missiles on a country for having the temerity to build ballistic missiles smacks of no little hypocrisy. To be sure, Saddam's primitive missiles were far more inaccurate than the U.S. high-tech variety which are, nonetheless short on precision (one struck neighboring Iran). But the most grotesque collateral damage comes not from explosives missing their presumed targets but from the economic sanctions on Iraq at U.S. insistence which have had negligible impact on Saddam but have led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians, mostly children.

Contrary to the impression given in the press, UN weapons' inspectors actually reported that Iraq's nuclear and missile programs have been largely dismantlesd, and even on the question of biological weapons there has been a degree of cooperation. In any case, the U.S. strikes did not significantly degrade Iraq's weapons' potential but they did play into Saddam's hands politically, not least being his ability to end all inspections. Predictably, Saddam's brutal dictatorship has not been undermined or even weakened; arguably, he is in an even stronger position as a consequence of the four-day assault. Those concerned with the production of devastating weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and throughout the Middle East should be pushing to implement the UN resolutions calling for regional disarmament — including Israeli nuclear weapons and Saudi missiles. Of course, such a rational agenda receives no backing in Washington which will, instead, tighten the sanctions (that is, kill more Iraqi civilians) and increase the number of U.S. troops based in the Gulf.

Some attribute the U.S. attacks to Clinton's impeachment troubles. But the near unanimity among policymakers, and the vociferous criticisms of Clinton in mid-November for not striking then, suggest that the operative motive was not impeachment, but that other “I” word: Imperialism.

The Threat of Globalization

Edward S. Herman

GLOBALIZATION IS BOTH AN ACTIVE PROCESS OF CORPORATE EXPANSION ACROSS BORDERS and a structure of cross-border facilities and economic linkages that has been steadily growing and changing as the process gathers steam. Like its conceptual partner, "free trade," globalization is also an ideology, whose function is to reduce any resistance to the process by making it seem both highly beneficent and unstoppable.

And as with free trade, while globalization may sometimes yield economic benefits, both the process and economic-political regime it is helping bring about threaten progressive ends, and should be recognized as such and fought at every level. Admittedly this is a formidable task, as the economic and political power of its beneficiaries, and its momentum, are great and contesting it seems an almost utopian undertaking. But globalization has its vulnerabilities, and attacking it intellectually, at the local level of plant abandonments and moves, as well as at the national political level, can help build understanding and support for a larger oppositional movement.

Globalization is just one of an array of concepts and arguing points that have been mobilized to advance the corporate agenda. Others have been deregulation and getting government off our backs, balancing the budget, cutting back entitlements (non-corporate), and free trade.

Like free trade, globalization has an aura of virtue. Just as "freedom" must be good, so globalization hints at internationalism and solidarity between countries, as opposed to nationalism and protectionism, which have negative connotations. The possibility that cross-border trade and investment might be economically damaging to the weaker party, or that they might erode democratic controls in both the stronger and weaker countries, is excluded from consideration by mainstream economists and pundits.[1] It is also unthinkable in the mainstream that the contest between free trade and globalization, on the one hand, and "protectionism" on the other, might be reworded as a struggle between "protection"—of transnational corporate (TNC) rights—versus the "freedom" of democratic governments to regulate in the interests of domestic non-corporate constituencies.

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As an ideology, globalization connotes not only freedom and internationalism, but, as it helps realize the benefits of free trade, and thus comparative advantage and the division of labor, it also supposedly enhances efficiency and productivity. Because of these virtues, and the alleged inability of governments to halt "progress," globalization is widely perceived as beyond human control, which further weakens resistance.

The Economic Failure of Globalization

AS THE GLOBALIZATION PROCESS HAS BEEN ENGINEERED BY CORPORATE ELITES, and serves their interests, they have successfully conveyed the impression that globalization is not only inevitable but has been a great success. This is fallacious. Even ignoring for the moment its distributional effects, globalization has been marked by substantial declines in rates of output, productivity, and investment growth. Under the new regime of enhanced financial mobility and power, with greater volatility of financial markets and increased risk, real interest rates have risen substantially. The average rate of the G-7 countries (U.S., Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Canada and Japan) has gone from 0.4%, 1971-82, to 4.6%, 1983-94[2]. This has discouraged long term investment in new plant and equipment and stimulated spending on the re-equipment of old facilities along with a large volume of essentially financial transactions—mergers, buybacks of stock, financial maneuvers, and speculative activities. This may help explain why overall productivity growth.[3] in the countries that are members of the OECD fell from 3.3%, 1960-73 to 0.8%, 1973-95, or by some 75%. Gross fixed investment fell from 6.1%, 1959-1970, to roughly 3.1% thereafter, or by half. OECD country annual rates of growth of real GDP fell from 4.8%, 1959-1970 to 2.8%, 1971-94, or by 42%.

But the elites have done well despite the slackened productivity growth. Because globalization has helped keep wages down, while increasing real interest rates, the upper 5% of households have been able to skim off a large fraction of the reduced productivity gains, thereby permitting elite incomes and stock market values to rise rapidly. But it was a different story for the global majority. Income inequality rose markedly both within and between countries. In the United States, despite a 35% increase in productivity between 1973 and 1995, the median real wage rate was lower in the latter year. Inequality rose to levels of 70 years earlier, and underemployment, job insecurity, benefit loss, and worker speedup under "lean" production systems all increased.[4] Insecurity is functional. As Alan Greenspan complacently explained to Congress in 1997, wage rates were stagnant in this country because worker insecurity was high.[5] That this high insecurity level reduced the well-being of the affected workers did not bother Greenspan, or Congress and the mainstream media.

The gap in incomes between the 20% of the world's population in the richest and poorest countries has grown from 30 to 1 in 1960 to 82 to 1 in 1995, and Third World conditions have in many respects worsened. Per capita incomes have fallen in more than 70 countries over the past 20 years; some 3 billion people—half the world's population, live on under two dollars a day; and 800 million suffer from malnutrition.[6] In the Third World, unemployment and underemployment are rampant, massive poverty exists side-by-side with growing elite affluence, and 75 million people a year or more seeking asylum or employment in the North, as Third World governments allow virtually unrestricted capital flight and seek no options but to attract foreign investment.[7]

The new global order has also been characterized by increased financial volatility, and from the Third World debt crisis of the early 1980s to the Mexican breakdown of 1994-95 to the current Asian debacle, financial crises have become more and more threatening. With increasing privatization and deregulation, the discrepancy between the power of unregulated financial forces and that of governments and regulatory bodies increases and the potential for a global breakdown steadily enlarges.

Only an elite perspective permits this record to be regarded as an economic success.

Globalization as an Attack on Democracy

THE GLOBALIZATION OF RECENT DECADES WAS NEVER A DEMOCRATIC CHOICE by the peoples of the world—the process has been business driven, by business strategies and tactics, for business ends. Governments have helped, by incremental policy actions, and by larger actions that were often taken in secret, without national debate and discussion of where the entire process was taking the community. In the case of some major actions advancing the globalization process, like passing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or joining the European Monetary Union (EMU), publics have been subjected to massive propaganda campaigns by the interested business-media elites. In the United States, public opinion polls showed the general public against NAFTA even after incessant propaganda, but the mass media supported it,[8] and it was passed. In Europe as well, polls have shown persistent majorities opposed to the introduction of the Euro, but a powerful elite supports it, so that it moves forward.

This undemocratic process, carried out within a democratic facade, is consistent with the distribution of benefits and costs of globalization, and the fact that globalization has been a tool serving elite interests. Globalization has also steadily weakened democracy, partly as a result of unplanned effects, but also because the containment of labor costs and scaling down of the welfare state has required the business minority to establish firm control of the state and remove its capacity to respond to the demands of the majority. The mix of deliberate and unplanned elements in globalization's antidemocratic thrust can be seen in each aspect of the attack process.

ONE OF THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF TNC MOVEMENT ABROAD HAS BEEN to tap cheaper labor sources. Labor is often cheapest, and least prone to cause employer problems, in authoritarian states that curb unions and enter into virtual joint venture arrangements with foreign capital, as in Suharto's Indonesia and PRI's Mexico. Capital moves to such friendly investment climes in an arbitrage process, shifting resources from the more expensive to the less costly locale, in a process that penalizes and thereby weakens democracy.

The actual shift of capital abroad, and the use of the external option to drive hard bargains at home, has weakened labor. Labor has also been weakened by deliberate government policies of tight money and restrictive budget policies to contain inflation, at the expense of high unemployment. These policies, and the incessant focus on labor market "flexibility" as the solution to the unemployment problem, reflect a corporate and antilabor policy agenda, fully institutionalized. There have even been more open and direct attacks on organized labor—both Reagan and Thatcher engaged in union busting, and the latter was quite explicit in her aim to weaken labor as a political force.[9] Democracy, according to pluralistic theory, is said to rest on the existence of intermediate groups, like labor organizations, that can bargain and work on behalf of an otherwise atomized population. The deliberate weakening of such groups is thus an attack on democracy.

IN THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN, CANADA, AND OTHER COUNTRIES the business community has also mounted a sustained ideological campaign to make their preferred policies part of common understanding. These campaigns have proceeded in parallel with globalization and have been remarkably similar, reflecting the global flow of ideology and overlapping sources of funding. The favored neoliberal ideology pushes the idea that the market can do it all, that government is a burden and threat, and that deregulation and privatization are inherently good and inevitable. It presses an extreme individualism and the value of "personal responsibility," which is highly advantageous to corporate power, leaving bargaining between large firms and isolated individuals. Collective and community values, the threat of externalities and ecological damage from unconstrained business growth, free market instability—all are shunted aside in this ideological system. This ideological campaign has been highly successful, because vast sums of business money fed to intellectuals and think tanks, and business domination of the mass media, have allowed their views to prevail. Heritage Foundation leader Edwin Feulner has described the strategy of his corporate-funded and globally linked think tank as analogous to Procter & Gamble's in selling soap—saturate the market with messages that overwhelm any that are less well funded.[10] But this is a corruption of democracy; it is a bought market of ideas, not a free market of ideas.

The business community has also mounted a powerful effort to dominate governments—either by capture or by limiting their ability to serve ordinary citizens. Globalization has contributed to this effort, partly by the arbitraging process mentioned earlier, which favors authoritarian rule. Apart from this, by enlarging business profits and weakening labor it has shifted the balance of power further toward business, so that political parties have been even more decisively influenced by business money in elections. In the United States, it is notorious that Mr. Clinton has sought and received enormous sums from business and serves their interests almost exclusively, with only token efforts on behalf of the major nonbusiness constituencies of the Democratic Party. The globalizing corporate media have added their growing strength to the advance of neoliberal ideology and opposition to any vestiges of social democracy, making social democratic policies difficult to implement. The Murdoch effect on British elections, and the current Murdoch-Blair connection illustrates the point.[11]

Another well-known and important antidemocratic force is the power of global financial markets to limit political options. Social democratic policies make for an unfavorable investment climate. Businesses will therefore respond to politicians and acts serving ordinary citizens with threatened or actual exit. Financial market effects on exchange and interest rates can be extremely rapid and damaging to the economy. Spokespersons for the new global economy actually brag about the ability of capital to penalize "unsound" policies, and the fact that money capital now rules.[12]

These business efforts, aided and validated by the IMF and by media support, regularly cause social democrats to retreat to policies acceptable to the rulers. Thus, in country after country social democratic parties have accepted neoliberalism, despite the contrary preferences of great majorities of their voting constituencies.[13] But this means that nominal democracy is no longer able to serve ordinary citizens, making elections meaningless and democracy empty of substance. This helps explain why half or more of eligible U.S. voters no longer participate in national elections.

Not satisfied with this level of political control, the business community has pushed for international agreements, and policy actions by the IMF and World Bank, that further encroach on the ability of democratic polities to act on behalf of their constituencies. These agreements and the demands of the international financial institutions invariably call for precisely the policies desired by the TNC community. The EMU conditions give primacy to budget constraints and inflation control, in accord with the neoliberal and corporate agenda. GATT, the WTO, and the NAFTA agreement also give top priority to corporate investor and intellectual property rights, to which all other considerations must give way. In the early 1980s, the IMF and World Bank took advantage of the Third World debt crisis and used their leverage with numerous distressed Third World borrowers to force their acceptance of Structural Adjustment Programs. These forced the borrowing countries to agree to give first priority to external debt repayment, private as well as government; it compelled them to adapt austerity programs of tight money and budget cutbacks focusing heavily on social expenditures affecting the poor and ordinary citizens; it forced a stress on exports, which help generate foreign exchange to allow debt repayment and that more closely integrate the borrower's economy into the global system; and it stressed privatization, allegedly in the interest of efficiency, but serving both to help balance the budget without tax increases and to provide openings for TNC investment in the troubled economy. The IMF is doing the same in Asia today.

A second characteristic of the new agreements and IMF-World Bank actions is their denial of democratic rights to non-corporate citizens and elected governments. These are subordinated to the rights of corporate investors, the superior class of global citizens with priority over all others and beneficiaries of the New TNC Protectionism. In the NAFTA agreement, governments are denied in advance the right to take on new functions; any not asserted now are left to the private sector and to the superior class of citizens. In these agreements, also, and even more aggressively in the Multilateral Agreement on Investment now under consideration, the global TNCs have no responsibilities and none can be imposed on them. They can fire people, abandon communities, fatally damage the environment, push local companies out of business, and purvey cultural trash at their full discretion. They can or will be able to sue governments, and disagreements are to be settled by unelected panels outside the control of democratic governments.

A third characteristic of the new agreements and IMF-World Bank actions is that they rest not only on neoliberal theory but on a false reading of recent experience and economic history. As noted earlier, globalization so far has been a productivity failure, a social disaster, and a threat to stability. The claim of its proponents that free trade is the route to economic growth is also confuted by longer historic experience: no country, past or present, has taken off into sustained economic growth and moved from economic backwardness to modernity without large-scale government protection and subsidization of infant industries and other modes of insulation from domination by powerful outsiders. This includes Great Britain, the United States, Japan, Germany, South Korea and Taiwan, all highly protectionist in the earlier takeoff phases of their growth process.[14] The governments and institutions bargaining on behalf of the TNCs today, through the IMF, World Bank, WTO and NAFTA, have been able to remove these modes of protection from less developed countries. This threatens them with extensive takeovers from abroad, thoroughgoing integration into foreign economic systems as "branch plant economies," preservation in a state of dependence and underdevelopment, and most particularly, an inability to protect their majorities from the ravages of neoliberal top-down development priorities.

Conclusion

IN SUM, WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF AN ANTI-DEMOCRATIC COUNTERREVOLUTION in which globalization and its imperatives are being used to weaken popular and elected authority in favor of a system of domination by super-citizens, the TNCs. This process sows the seeds of its own destruction, as it serves a small global minority, damages the majority, breeds financial instability, and exacerbates the environmental crisis. Its destructive tendencies are likely to produce an explosion if the process is not contained and democracy is not rehabilitated.

Halting this anti-democratic juggernaut will be difficult, not only because of the power of its beneficiaries, but also because it operates within the framework of nominally democratic structures and musters plausible arguments. But these arguments are self-serving and wrong, and should be vigorously contested. An agenda should be advanced that serves ordinary citizens rather than the TNCs and financial institutions. Negatively, this agenda will include strenuous opposition to all supranational arrangements that take power out of the hands of democratic governments to serve some alleged economic need. Positively, the agenda requires support for the imposition of serious limits and responsibilities on TNCs, including capital controls and other deterrents to financial speculation. Pursuit of this agenda is going to require a combination of understanding and effective organization of the large majority who are the victims of globalization.

NOTES

1. Many leftists also strenuously deny that globalization is having a damaging effect on the power of the state. This denial seems to be based mainly on fears that a pessimistic analysis will render workers apathetic and destroy the socialist project. The deniers stress that the state still works well in serving the transnational corporate community; they ignore the possibility that such efficient service is quite compatible with globalization

weakening the power of the state to do things that TNCs and the financial community oppose. For statements of the denial school, see Ellen Wood, "'Globalization' or 'Globaloney'?," *Monthly Review*, Feb. 1997; William Tabb, "Globalization is An Issue, the Power of Capital is The Issue," *Monthly Review*, June 1997; Linda Weiss, *The Myth of the Powerless State* (Cornell, 1998). For a rebuttal, see Richard DuBoff and Edward Herman, "A Critique of Tabb on Globalization, " *Monthly Review*, Nov. 1997.

2. The data in this paragraph is taken from David Felix, "Asia and the Crisis of Financial Globalization," in Dean Baker et al., *Globalization and Economic Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

3. More precisely, total factor productivity growth, which is the weighted average of growth in labor and capital productivity.

4. See Kim Moody, *Workers in A Lean World* (Verso, 1997), esp. chap. 5.

5. In his testimony on monetary policy before Congress on July 22, 1997, Greenspan noted that the proportion of workers in large companies fearful of layoffs rose from 25 to 46 between 1991 and 1996.

6. Ignacio Ramonet, "The Politics of Hunger," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Nov. 1998; UN Development Program, Human Development Report 1998 (New York, Sept. 1998).

7. On the underrated problem of uncontrolled capital flight in Latin America, see David Felix, "Debt Crisis Adjustment in Latin America: Have the Hardships Been Necessary?," Washington University, St. Louis, Working Paper 170, Sept. 1992.

8. Edward Herman, "Mexican Meltdown," *Z Magazine*, Sept. 1995.

9. See Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (Harper/Collins, 1993), p. 676 and passim.

10. Alex Carey, *Taking the Risk Out of Democracy* (University of New South Wales, 1995), pp. 106-7.

11. Rupert Murdoch, who controls a third of the print media circulation in Britain, was widely credited with the Tory election triumph over Labour in 1992, by virtue of his papers' frenzied attacks on the latter. Tony Blair, the new head of the Labour party, traveled to Australia to visit with Murdoch, persuaded him to reconsider his support, and succeeded in getting Murdoch's papers to support Labour in the 1997 election campaign. Blair unilaterally repudiated the Labour pledge to seek a decentralization of the media, and his policies have received accolades from the right: Margaret Thatcher's favorite think-tank, the Adam Smith Institute, described Blair's as a "remarkably promising start." (*Daily Mail*, Dec. 10, 1997). Canadian business columnist Peter Cook refers to Blair as "the man who made the country safe for Thatcherism" (*Globe and Mail*, May 15, 1998).

12. Walter Wriston, former CEO of Citicorp, has repeatedly stressed that 200,000 financial market monitors in trading rooms control national monetary and fiscal policies "through a kind of global plebiscite." "Decline of the Central Bankers," *New York Times*, Sept. 20, 1992.

13. William Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy, U.S. Intervention and Hegemony*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996; Jochen Hippler, ed., *The Democratisation of Disempowerment*, London: Pluto, 1995; Edward Herman, "*The End of Democracy*?," Z Magazine, Sept. 1993.

14. Alice Amsden, *Asia's Next Giant* (Oxford, 1989); Robert Wade, *Governing the Market* (Princeton, 1990).

The CUNY Struggle: Class & Race In Public Higher Education

Nancy Romer

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (CUNY), founded in 1848 as the College of the "whole people" and since 1970, the leading example of open admissions in the nation, has served to educate generations of working class, poor and immigrant New Yorkers.[1] Recent attacks on CUNY, the nation's largest urban public university system, with 20 campuses serving over 200,000 students, represent more than the standard cutbacks of public services. They constitute a new level of assault on the opportunity structure for the poor and working class in a city supposedly thriving under a mini-boom economy. The current moment reveals a confluence of political and economic gains by the wealthy and their defenders and the marked weakness of the traditional advocates of labor and community interests. This situation creates an environment ripe for either successful progressive political organizing or a terrible defeat of educational opportunity and political power for poor, working class and middle class people of New York City.

THE GLOBALIZATION OF CAPITAL AND THE PRE-EMINENCE of American capital interests have wrought many changes in the U.S. The rise of an increasingly emboldened right, as evidenced by the sharp decline of public assistance and the Clinton impeachment proceedings, plays out locally in varied ways. For example, in California the right successfully attacked affirmative action and bilingual education and, less successfully, targeted union participation in elections. In New York City, as in most major cities, the increasing income disparity between the wealthy and the poor is palpable and growing. The city's public schools continue to deteriorate, creating a separate and unequal state system: underfunded, inadequate public city schools for the poor and working class; private education for the wealthy and upper middle class; adequate suburban schools for the middle class. In the face of private accumulation of wealth, steady de-funding of public services except for the police creates a tale of two

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cities: one expanding, the other contracting. In this political climate, racism finds further expression in greater disparities of wealth, jobs and power between social and class-defined groups, and spawns a culture that blames the victim for social ills and hard times.

The *New York Times* reports that there is " ...deep recession and mass unemployment in Southeast Asia, political paralysis in Russia and Indonesia, huge bank failures in Japan, an incipient currency crisis in Brazil, but continued prosperity in Western Europe and the United States."[2] Despite a budget surplus in both the city and the state, New York political elites, viewing these ominous economic clouds on the horizon seized the moment to decrease the public domain while expanding opportunities for capital: that is, downsizing and privatizing public services. Following the national trend, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani slashed welfare without providing increased childcare or a meaningful jobs initiative. Giuliani, who is planning a run for national office on his "get tough on crime" stance (code for "get tough on people of color"), helped build his reputation by setting his rifle sights on CUNY.

Conservative political forces calculated that the time to strike for major changes is now. With the national polity willing to acquiesce to a punitive analysis of poverty, and the hungry information systems industry seeking new markets, the trend in local governments has been to move toward privatizing previously public education systems (e.g., the insertion of school vouchers and such privatization schemes as the Edison Project). Right-wing intellectuals in such think tanks and organizations as the Manhattan Institute, Change NY, the Olin Foundation and the National Association of Scholars have offered numerous ideologically-driven criticisms of CUNY, paving the way for NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani to begin his attack on CUNY.

In January 1998 Giuliani remarked in his State of the City address that so many of CUNY's incoming students required additional educational support in the form of remedial courses in basic skill areas that it had become "Remedial U." In reality, this situation was created by the constant cutbacks of both the K-12 NYC Public Schools budget (spending about $7,000 per pupil per year compared to nearby suburban districts and private schools spending about $14,000)[3] and by the growing immigrant/English as a Second Language population attending CUNY.[4]

While budget cuts to public education on every level continued unabated throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the administrations of Giuliani and Governor George Pataki deepened these cuts significantly. The failure of the public schools to prepare students properly presented colleges with a dilemma: Should they reject high school graduates who were under-prepared or should they admit them and rectify their academic deficits? Nationally, 80% of all public colleges and 63% of private colleges currently offer remedial courses for students.[5] Although many colleges give credit toward graduation for these developmental courses in math, reading and writing, CUNY does not.

Giuliani argued that CUNY should demand higher "standards" while he attacked the programs which would bring students up to the standards CUNY had set for its credit-bearing courses. He further ridiculed CUNY students for low graduation rates. In fact, CUNY students graduate at about the same rate as other public college students, but within a longer time frame. CUNY students are mostly older and employed, and many have extensive family and community responsibilities. Not receiving financial support from parents, they do not breeze through college on the 2- or 4-year express.[6] Moreover, the job market for college graduates is eroding. Giuliani and Pataki responded to this situation with downsizing and privatization of public higher education, which would negatively impact the poor and people of color (who don't vote for them anyway) while playing to their better-off, white constituency. This change would end a 30-year open admissions policy permitting anyone with a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) to attend a CUNY college, get remedial support and work her/his way through college.

By demonizing CUNY students — 65% people of color and over 50% of whom are immigrants — for requiring remedial courses and for their slow progress, the mayor scored points with his potential constituency in middle America and humiliated the students of CUNY into stunned inaction. Giuliani's argument went like this: Why should "we" (read "successful middle class folks") pay for the inadequacies of CUNY students (read "poor folks and people of color")? Giuliani, with tag-team partner Governor George Pataki proposed an end to all remedial courses at CUNY. What is unprecedented is that they leaned on the CUNY Board of Trustees, a body appointed by the mayor and governor but intended to be somewhat independent, to effect this policy change. The Trustees responded to this intense pressure with a plan to end all remedial courses at the system's eleven 4-year colleges, phasing this in over a 3-year period. They decided to wait until the next round to perform their surgery on the community colleges.

Giuliani's solution was to force students in need of remediation to seek out private colleges and educational institutions which they can ill afford. At the same time, a rash of applications for accreditation came in to the state from educational coaching entities such as Sylvan Learning Centers and Stanley Kaplan. Sensing economic opportunity, they proposed remedial courses for potential college students. Meanwhile, the NY State legislature approved increased financial aid to educational institutions per student per semester which would be a form of subsidy to private colleges by financing their higher tuitions. Thus, private colleges, most of which offer remedial courses for academic credit, were seeking CUNY's sizable and profitable student body. The increased financial aid will simply be a windfall to private colleges while further saddling poorer students with the increased burden (even though partially subsidized) for private college tuition.

According to CUNY's own management, the effects of the policy to end remediation will be to downsize the total student body of the 4-year colleges by 45%, including close to 75% of the students of color. This would dramatically cut the budget through decreased tuition and monetary allocations from the state. It would also produce a concomitant decline in CUNY's 8,000 professional full-time workforce (including 5,500 full-time faculty), 7,000 part-time faculty, and 20,000 non-professional workforce.

The Response

WHAT I HAVE JUST PRESENTED IS THE SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING. Unfortunately, the hand that met it — of students, CUNY workers and their political allies — lacked the strength and resolve to create powerful vibrations.

The overriding factor explaining the inadequate defense of CUNY is the absence of a broadly supported political perspective and the failure of an alternative, combative strategy to emerge. Academics, in the main, are not prepared to risk their jobs and students don't want to risk the opportunity for a share of American prosperity. Nevertheless, a militant minority of union insurgents and student activists are aware that what the capitalists and their sycophantic politicians want is not what labor or poor folks need.

While the most vocal faculty are opposed to the new policy, many prefer to teach only students who are fully prepared for college level work before they enter the CUNY system. Some professors long for a return to a more elite system of college education which would attract undergraduates eager and able to perform at the high level, with which they identify as middle class professionals. Many faculty also assume that the appropriate place for acquiring basic skills is in the high schools, and that if CUNY refused to admit under-prepared students, that would force high school personnel to prepare their students adequately. But high schools did not better prepare students before CUNY remediation was ended and the mass influx of funds necessary to improve the high schools has not been appropriated. Why should one believe the high schools will succeed now?

THE CUNY WORKFORCE IS REPRESENTED BY A VARIETY OF UNIONS: faculty and professional staff by the Professional Staff Congress (American Federation of Teachers), clerical and maintenance workers by District Council 37 (AFSCME), and skilled trade unions such as plumbers, electricians and carpenters. PSC and DC 37 are part of the city's Municipal Labor Coalition, primarily a vehicle for collective bargaining, and all are members of the AFL-CIO's Central Labor Council. Only the faculty and professional staff and its union participated in this crisis, despite the fact that all other workers at CUNY would be affected by a potential 45% downsizing of the majority of the university's units. Having devolved into service organizations which complain while capitulating to the city and state, the unions had no plans to alter their stance and risk the involvement of the rank and file.

The Professional Staff Congress (PSC) leadership has long followed the political model of AFT leader Albert Shanker which relies on a combination of Democratic Party loyalty, back channel maneuvering, acceptance of political "realities," and an uninformed and demobilized membership, in short, business unionism.[7] Moreover, the PSC, like many other college faculty and staff unions, allowed the teaching workforce to drift from 60% full-time in 1973 to 40% full-time in 1998—with some campuses having as many as 80% part-timers. Keeping a few choice privileges for the full-timers, who were continuing to age and were not being replaced by younger colleagues, the union chose not to organize part-time faculty into the union even though it legally represented them. Failing to enforce an agency shop for part-timers, the union could allow management to abuse them without much outcry. The usual panoply of anti-democratic tactics assured that no opposition to the 25-year leadership would be successful. For example, at the monthly Delegate Assembly meetings, the union leadership refused to discuss strategy to defeat the anti-remediation measures. It also disallowed discussion of politics and general strategy around contract issues. It refused to print chapter newsletters for those chapters led by New Caucus members — insurgent rank and file unionists critical of the top leadership — penalizing them for not following the line laid down by the union leadership. They summarily quashed all attempts by New Caucus members to introduce policy discussions.

The union leadership crafted a strategy that would leave its members out of the loop of the city's labor union movement, despite the fact that the vast majority of the city's unionized workforce either went to CUNY themselves and/or send their children there. They did nothing to invite other unions to participate as fellow workers or as students and family members of students despite the fact that the new policy would have an effect on the families of almost all union members in NYC.

The stance taken by the PSC leadership is consistent with the bureaucratic approach of much of the American labor movement during the last 50 years. Progressively eliminating debate and disagreement, the mainstream of the movement has become anti-democratic, bureaucratic and concessionary toward management. It has done little to build inter-union solidarity. Striving to keep their jobs as power brokers, the union leadership is determined to prevent a rank and file takeover.[8]

When the attacks on CUNY were mounted, PSC President Irwin Polishook claimed to be busy negotiating a contract that had expired two years earlier. He insisted he could not be embroiled in the struggle to save the university or unionized jobs until after the contract was settled. Many suspected that Polishook had struck a deal with CUNY management to lie low in exchange for a good contract— though there is no hard evidence of this. But, lie low he did. Asked at a union Delegate Assembly meeting about the union's plan of action in the face of impending layoffs, Polishook blithely said: "Layoffs are management's prerogative." When pressed by New Caucus members to create a plan of defense against the attacks, Polishook steadfastly refused. Although this crisis was specifically about downsizing the student body and thus the workforce, and about privatizing or outsourcing part of the workforce, the union chose to remain silent on the most important issues facing the international labor union movement today. It did little more than issue press releases and hold a few small press conferences. Mass mobilizations of any kind were actively discouraged in favor of "back channels" and leader-to-leader phone calls.

The New Caucus of the PSC

THE INSURGENT RANK AND FILE NEW CAUCUS was organized two years before the current crisis. A year later, it ran a first-time opposition slate and garnered one-third of the vote in an election with twice the voter turnout of previous elections. New Caucus candidates ran on a program of militant social unionism: an activist defense of both workers' rights and progressive social policy. They also made central the issue of casualization of the CUNY workforce: dramatically increasing numbers of super-exploited part-time faculty with falling numbers of full-time faculty. They demanded unity between full- and part-time faculty by raising the pay of part-timers, thus making part-time workers less of a bargain for administrators. Experienced progressive activists formed the core of the New Caucus; however, few had direct experience in union work. It was the New Caucus, without portfolio and without union dues, which led the mobilization that did occur. It articulated a class-based and race-conscious vision of union militancy and worked to establish a broad coalition among constituencies with shared interests, that is, other unionists, students, community and faith-based groups. Their concept was to fight for the dignity and opportunity of the students, the quality of the university, and their jobs as intellectual and educational workers.

The New Caucus managed to mobilize significant forces. With a core of about 50-100 activists, it was a more significant force than its membership total of 400 would suggest. It organized several small but successful demonstrations and news conferences in conjunction with students and community groups, held a conference attended by 200 members that discussed mobilization strategy, initiated the community-oriented organization CUNY is Our Future (see below), held teach-ins and forums on the campuses, and reached out to community groups and to labor activists.

The New Caucus played a key role in organizing large numbers of faculty, students, artists and literary figures to testify before the CUNY Board of Trustees. The three required public hearings of the Trustees became public pageants of support for CUNY, its mission and students. The official union leadership often sent one or two representatives to these events but did not actively support mobilization. New Caucus members also led a dramatic civil disobedience action during the final Trustees' meeting at which the vote was taken to end remediation on May 26. Once the policy was finally decided upon, individual New Caucus members pursued a legal strategy which won an injunction against any plan to implement the anti-remediation decision until the Trustees provided an open and public decision-making process as required by law.

The New Caucus drew a fair amount of media attention to CUNY policy despite a general news black-out of information other than that generated by the mayor. The most important role played by the New Caucus was developing a class analysis of the attacks and a strategy to mobilize collectively. A central problem it faced was the pessimism of the CUNY community that anything could beat back the forces of the powerful and aggressive right-wing.

The long-term strategy of the New Caucus is to create a coalition of rank and file unionists from many different unions with the support of community groups and public service recipients fighting for expanded public services. Such a coalition might well provide the impetus for a successful political challenge to the dominant forces of reaction.

The core of experienced, committed activists willing to give their all to the struggle was small and did not, at that time, have the political, organizational, and communication skills to overcome the lack of material resources and ambivalence among faculty, students, and community. New Caucus activists, while a bit younger than the average CUNY faculty and staff, were a relatively senior crew for a deeply committed activist group. Moreover, many of the New Caucus faculty and staff had other commitments, e.g., scholarly work, artistic endeavors, teaching and family responsibilities.

Academic Policy Faculty Groups

The University Faculty Senate (UFS), the academic policy representative body, played a major role in conceptualizing the educational integrity of remedial courses and the intellectual defense of the university's 25-year old open admissions policy. Led by activist academics, with fiery Sandi Cooper, feminist historian, at the helm, UFS did effective work in gaining media attention and was central to the fightback. Its role was primarily educational and informational. It led the lobbying efforts with state and city politicians, and recruited several Democratic Party leaders to champion CUNY. One of its ingenious moves was to create an e-mail listserve, CUNYTALK, which had at its height close to 1000 subscribers—mostly faculty but also silent administrators— and which generated upward of 100 posts per day, created active dialogue and informed subscribers of upcoming events.

Faculty from the 2-year colleges created a Community College Caucus (CCC) within the UFS, stressing the importance of community colleges for the education of students.[9] They were mainstays at the public hearings of the CUNY Board of Trustees. While UFS and CCC patiently cajoled the PSC leadership into participation, if only on limited basis, their alliance with the New Caucus was practical and productive.

The CUNY African American Network (CAAN) met to assess the damage the new remediation policy would impose on people of color. The group meeting was small in size but significant in the specific cast of activists with interlocking membership in other organizations, particularly the New Caucus, UFS and CCC. CAAN lobbied the Black and Latino Caucus of the state legislature, talked with CUNY trustees, and involved more faculty and students of color.

Relying heavily on the intellectual work offered by the UFS and the CCC, the New Caucus proceeded to build alliances outside of CUNY. The city labor movement's reluctance to work with union members other than official leaders, hampered the New Caucus outreach to the union sector. Leaders from other unions would meet secretly with the New Caucus, exploring ways to get PSC President Polishook to engage them in the CUNY struggles so their participation would be seen as legitimate by their fellow union leaders on the Metropolitan Labor Council. There was some support from other union leaders but it was always tempered by the careful rules of the fraternity which require the proper handshake and official credentials to join the party. Without the green light from Polishook, the city's union leadership was stuck in its own protocol.

Part-time faculty, organized through CUNY Adjuncts Unite! (CAU!), were key to the fightback. Their participation in all aspects of the struggle, from raising the issues of the casualization of the workforce and the lack of paid office hours, to organizing demonstrations, community coalitions, lobbying and making their presence felt at pubic hearings, made them highly valued partners. Their activism advocating for part-timers was extraordinary: they distributed 10,000 newsletters to part- and full-timers monthly, were leaders in building the International Congress of Adjunct Part-Time, Non-Tenure Track and Graduate Teaching Assistant Faculty (renamed the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor), and did a recruitment drive for part-time faculty to join the PSC (all with no assistance from the PSC leadership). Their goal was equitability between part- and full-time faculty.

As 60% of the teaching workforce, they had the most to lose with the new policy. From management's perspective, a part-time workforce with virtually no rights is perfect for impending downsizing. Less resistance is expected as full-time faculty breathe a sigh of relief knowing that part-timers are the buffer between the policy and their own jobs. Part-timers at CUNY are among the leaders of a growing movement of part-time college faculty organizing across the country since the casualization of the college teaching workforce has become a common practice.

CUNY Adjuncts Unite is led by a mix of older "career" part-timers as well as graduate students working to complete their PhDs and, hopefully, to obtain full-time academic jobs in the future. That full-time faculty throughout the nation, often through their union leaders, have failed to defend their professions and create an intellectual and economic space for the next generation of college teachers is a disturbing reality not so different from that confronting other skilled or professional unionized workers. In fact, permitting management to casualize the workforce leaves full-time faculty less powerful in the defense of their own interests in the long run. A passive, demobilized, cheaply bought-off full-time workforce finds few allies in a time of crisis.

Student Fightback

COMPARED TO THE SIZABLE AND PASSIONATE STUDENT MOVEMENTS OF THE PAST, students today are fairly timid and conflicted. In past struggles, tuition issues were often at the core. Ethnic studies and open admissions had also historically kindled strong student protest. But this new attack had a different flavor and political context.

Changes in the political and economic landscape threatened the hopes of CUNY students. A grim future seemed to hang above their heads and colored their visions for change. Giuliani and allies managed to humiliate students, publicly calling them unworthy of citizen support. Though close to half of our successful students entered needing some type of remedial course work, they were embarrassed to come forward and proudly claim their accomplishment. Nonetheless, some of these post-remedial success stories did emerge. This was particularly true at graduation exercises, many of which had valedictorians or student graduation speakers who came out as ex-remedial students. Some asked their fellow graduates who had started with remedial courses to stand up and be counted. These were dramatic moments. Some also spoke proudly and eloquently at public Board of Trustees hearings.

However, most students on the campuses hid in silence, hoping they would not be discovered. When asked, "What about your brothers and sisters? Don't they deserve a chance to go to the 4-year colleges like you did?", their responses were mixed. Some said, "Well, they are lazy" or "Let them start at a community college and then transfer." Many were unwilling to defend CUNY for future generations. This is understandable given the turn in the broader political culture that defines value through the bottom line of solitary achievement, that glorifies the lone efforts of the individual disconnected from a past or future group struggle. Success American-style is a lonely march to the next level that negates one's responsibility to others and one's reliance on others' past achievements. The loneliness of the culture and individualistic solutions popularly offered made the response to this attack ineffective. A collective effort striving for democratic rights through participatory efforts seemed too improbable for our overworked, overburdened, publicly attacked students.

Nonetheless, there was an important, articulate, even if small and dispersed, student movement that was an impassioned partner in this struggle. Groups existed on a handful of campuses, mostly though not exclusively on campuses with New Caucus-led union chapters. On campuses with both strong student groups and New Caucus chapters, the synergy was moderately effective—though never enough to kindle true mass participation. On the one campus in which the student group was strongest (Hunter College) there was no organized New Caucus chapter at the time. But there the student activist group was also, atypically, the elected student government and thus had significant human and financial resources at its disposal. These Hunter College students were central in the struggle and worked hard to revive a network of activists throughout CUNY— the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM).

The official student governments and their representative body, the University Student Senate (USS), were very late in realizing the importance of the struggle and tentative in their response. While small numbers of students ultimately expressed concern about the loss of significant opportunities at CUNY, the heat generated was luke-warm compared with fiery CUNY student movements a few years earlier.

Community Organizing

EARLY IN THE STRUGGLE, NEW CAUCUS MEMBERS RECOGNIZED THE NEED to involve community groups. Because CUNY is the major higher educational institution for working-class and poor people in NYC and has granted more degrees to people of color than any other institution in the U.S., the vast majority of the African-American and Latino leadership of community-based and non-profit organizations, public school teachers and administrators, officials and politicians were educated at CUNY. CUNY has shaped the future of aspiring poor and working-class New Yorkers. Thus, "CUNY is Our Future" was initiated at the New Caucus organizing conference in February 1998. The work was uphill as the shame and confusion experienced by the students was equally shared by community members. However, with extensive discussion and outreach, ultimately many supported the struggle.

The New Caucus and CUNY is Our Future mobilized community groups and religious organizations for demonstrations of support of CUNY. Upward of 30 community groups attended meetings, rallies, hearings, and over 6,000 signed petitions in support of keeping CUNY an open admissions institution with full remedial services.

As the Board of Trustees steamrolled to its final decision, a coalition of legal groups representing the city's African-American, Latino, Jewish, and Asian-American groups united to challenge the legality of eliminating remedial programs. The People of Faith Network, the Labor-Religion Coalition, the Same Boat Coalition, the Baptists Ministers' Conference and a handful of other progressive groups lent a helping hand. Some progressive politicians such as Congressperson Major Owens, State Senator Ed Sullivan, and City Council Representative Helen Marshall championed the CUNY cause and participated in press conferences, public hearings and CUNY Board of Trustees testimony. Sullivan even ended up getting arrested with faculty and students at a Trustees hearing on May 26.

The lack of community outcry for CUNY echoed the feeble protest against terminating public assistance, and to the cutbacks in school budgets, after-school programs, public housing and medical care. Internalizing self-blame exacerbated by the media, weakens self-confidence and resolve. With a few earlier noted exceptions, communities of color basically sat this one out.

A NUMBER OF LEGAL STRATEGIES WERE EMPLOYED to challenge the policy and buy time. A multi-ethnic legal coalition advanced the argument that it is discriminatory to create an educational policy which would weigh more heavily on people of color than on whites. Individual New Caucus faculty members and students successfully challenged the virtual denial of public access to Board of Trustees meetings and won a delay on the anti-remedial policy until a new vote can be taken in proper public format. Finally, the UFS lobbied the State Board of Regents, which oversees all public educational institutions, to call for a full review of the anti-remediation decision since it significantly alters the mission of the university. Completion of this review will probably not occur until April 1999, thus delaying the implementation of this decision. This gives pro-CUNY forces a chance to re-group and reverse the decision.

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9. Community colleges offer unique opportunities for students to get the support and structure that works well, particularly for under-prepared students entering with General Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs) or lower high school grade point averages. Classes tend to be smaller, faculty more specifically devoted to teaching, and more developmental skills services are readily available. However, statistically, according to Lavin and Hyllegard (see above), a student has a greater chance of graduating from a 4-year college if she or he begins at a 4-year institution compared with students beginning at 2-year colleges and attempting to transfer. This phenomenon is influenced by the non-transferability of some of the community college courses to the 4-colleges and the fact that students transferring to 4-year colleges must make up the requirements set for them upon transfer, often extending the credits and time beyond that typical of 4-year entrants. Requiring all students failing one or more basic skills assessment tests to begin college work at a 2-year institution limits their trajectory, experience and choice.

Israel: Uphill Struggle for Peace

Adam Keller

MAY 4, 1999 WILL MARK THE END OF THE FIVE-YEAR INTERIM PERIOD of Palestinian self-government. Under different circumstances — including a different Israeli government — it might have been possible to anticipate the end of a century-old conflict, after a more or less orderly transition from occupation to independence. In reality, May 4, 1999 may witness nothing more than a change in the form of an ongoing conflict.

Agreements, accords, protocols, memorandums and other diplomatic paraphernalia litter the uphill road traveled during the past 20 years; glib and deliberately ambiguous formulations which each side interprets differently taking their toll in human suffering and bloodshed. This has been true for all the agreements: Camp David, Madrid, Oslo, Cairo, Paris, Oslo-2, Hebron, and the latest diplomatic landmark, the Wye River Memorandum, reached after a year in which the whole process was more or less given up for dead. In most cases, the agreement was no more than a “Framework for Peace” or a “Declaration of Principles” with the all-important details, in particular the timetable for implementation, to be determined after months or years of grueling negotiations. In the meantime, Israeli occupation would remain unchanged, perhaps even tightened.

Many problems plaguing the Middle East peace process, the patterns of behavior promoting mistrust of processes supposed to build mutual confidence, can be traced back to Camp David. There, in 1978, Prime Minister Begin agreed to (and eventually implemented) a strict timetable for returning Sinai to Egypt and dismantling all Israeli settlements in the occupied Egyptian territory. But Begin’s signed agreement recognizing “The legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements” — over which he agonized — lacked any such precise timetable. The Camp David Accords contained many of the key concepts and elements later introduced into the Oslo scheme: a Palestinian Self-Governing Authority to be created in general elections by inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and equipped with “a strong local police force” for a five-year interim period; the Israeli military govern-

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ment to be "withdrawn" but not abolished, "the remaining Israeli forces" to be redeployed into "specified security locations"; and "negotiations to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza" to start in the third year of the interim period.

Menachem Begin signed all these elaborate articles — President Carter's fondly conceived brainchild — but he had no intention of implementing them, confiding to his aides "I have sacrificed Sinai in order to preserve Eretz Yisrael." Begin's plans envisaged giving the Palestinians no more than a limited "cultural and administrative autonomy," an "autonomy over persons, but not over the land." Far from redeploying the soldiers to specific locations, Begin intended them to continue having access to all parts of the land, to protect settlers in the process of "reclaiming" the Biblically-hallowed land which Begin, to his last day, continued to regard as the Jewish people's unquestioned and exclusive birthright. For several years after Camp David, Israel held round after round of futile "autonomy talks" with the Egyptians, under U.S. auspices. The Palestinians boycotted the proceedings, angry that Camp David had been signed without their consent, but the Egyptians discreetly informed Arafat of the proceedings, and hoped eventually to obtain a concrete implementation plan from Begin on terms which would tempt the Palestinians to join in. That never happened, and the projected five-year interim period never got to a start. It never had a chance, especially with the Israeli negotiations entrusted to Dr. Yosef Burg, a wise and humorous man but also the leader of the National Religious Party which is ideologically and organizationally close to the extremist settler movement. As a result, the "Autonomy Talks" meandered aimlessly, their final demise with the outbreak of the Lebanon War scarcely noticed.

Ronald Reagan's relaunching of the Cold War coincided with and abetted the Israeli "campaign against terrorism," and Secretary of State Alexander Haig gave the brutal Ariel Sharon a discreet go-ahead for a policy of naked force. For the next decade, official Israel abandoned negotiations with the Palestinians, instead, attempting to crush them, first with tanks sweeping into Lebanon to "destroy the terrorist infrastructure," later by soldiers ordered to "break the bones of troublemakers" in Gaza. Even peaceful dialogue by private Israelis was outlawed. Philanthropist Abie Nathan was twice placed behind bars for the "crime" of shaking Arafat's hand. Meanwhile, "Bulldozer" Sharon had more than a decade to dot the entire West Bank with armed settlement enclaves, including settlements where there had been none at the time Camp David was signed, thereby making the work of future negotiators immensely more difficult.

The 1987 London Agreement was the only significant Israeli diplomatic initiative during that period. It was reached secretly between King Hussein of Jordan and Shimon Peres, then Israeli Foreign Minister in the Government of National Unity joining Labor and Likud in an uneasy marriage of convenience which did not address itself to the Palestinians. On the contrary, it was designed to bypass them and restore some sort of Jordanian suzerainty over the West Bank. But the London Agreement was vetoed out of hand by Prime Minister Shamir who opposed any territorial concession to any Arab. Predictably, the Intifada erupted signalling the Palestinians' refusal to be bypassed. By 1989, faced with Israel's manifest inability to crush the Intifada, Shamir was forced to come up with the "Israeli Peace Initiative" of 1989, commonly known at the time as “the Shamir Plan,” though much of it was formulated by Defense Minister Yitzchak Rabin, Peres’ rival in the Labor Party leadership. The plan was unacceptable as a starting point for negotiations since it explicitly excluded the PLO from any role, and sought to supplant it by a council to be elected in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It also required the Palestinians to end the Intifada and “restore calm” on the eve of the elections. And only after the elections would the elected representatives find out what, if anything, Israel was willing to offer them.

Nevertheless, the Shamir Plan was the starting point for an intensive debate in the mainstream of Israeli politics, intense enough to cause the collapse of the Likud-Labor coalition over the issue of giving East Jerusalem Palestinians the right to be elected to the Palestinian Council. (Shamir claimed that conceding this point would undermine Israeli control of East Jerusalem and set up “a double sovereignty”; subsequent history was to prove him at least partially right.) Peres, Rabin and the other Labor ministers resigned (or, by another interpretation, were expelled), and Shamir headed a coalition with the extreme right. Yet, the Palestinians were still there; the Intifada went on; and in the wake of the Gulf War which entrenched U.S. dominance in the region, Shamir had to bow to James Baker’s insistent pressure, attend the Madrid Conference in October 1991, and embark on negotiations with a Palestinian delegation effectively — though not officially — nominated by the PLO. But Shamir was soon stymied by his coalition partners who regarded Madrid as the beginning of a slide down a slippery slope. His ideological resolve to make tactical gestures but in practice not give an inch, and the Bush Administration’s determination to use Israel’s financial dependence on the U.S. as a lever to stop Shamir and Sharon’s settlement activity further contributed to Shamir’s electoral defeat. The diplomatic process was then entrusted to the Rabin-Peres team now heading a Labor government.

During his first year in power, Rabin tried to continue Shamir’s policy of dealing with the officially “non-PLO Palestinian Delegation” and found it to be an exercise in futility. Only when Rabin decided to break a decades-old taboo and accept Yasser Arafat as his partner in peace, which gave him historical stature, did the ideas conceived 15 years earlier at Camp David start to be realized, even if significantly changed in the Oslo document, and even further changed in their implementation. First, the qualification, “local,” was removed from the original description of the Palestinian Police force, a critical revision, making it possible for Arafat to make his veterans of Lebanon the nucleus of the Palestinian Police. Changes of far more lasting significance were made in Camp David’s key stipulation: “A withdrawal of Israeli armed forces will take place and there will be a redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces into specified security locations.”

Taken at face value, this meant that Israel would have to give up most of the territory during the interim period, and that the remaining Israeli footholds would become “Israeli islands in a Palestinian sea.” This did not matter so much to Begin because, in any case, he never intended to carry out any withdrawal. But it did not suit Rabin who did intend to give up some of the territory but who, consistent with the traditional Labor Party doctrine of “Territorial Compromise,” intended to keep Israeli control over another part throughout the interim period which would be claimed as an integral Israeli territory when the permanent status was discussed. To facilitate making distinctions between different parts of the West Bank, the stipulated withdrawal and redeployment borrowed from Camp David were divided into stages, and in Oslo-2, signed two years later, these stages were further sub-divided.

Faced with the extensive network of settlements previously built throughout the West Bank, Rabin opposed dismantling any settlement during the interim period, not only to avoid heightening confrontation with the right-wing but also because Rabin, himself, wanted to preserve some of the settlements permanently. To achieve that end, he decided to use the other settlements as bargaining chips until the final status negotiations took place. This resulted in fracturing the Palestinian territory into separate enclaves thereby undermining the possible appeal of Rabin's strategy to Palestinians.

The Oslo deal, signed with the historic handshake on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993, distinguished between three stages: withdrawal, redeployment and further redeployment, borrowed from the above-mentioned article of Camp David, but often given a completely new meaning. "Withdrawal" was now construed to mean the initial Israeli evacuation of the Gaza Strip and Jericho Area scheduled for December 13, 1993, an interpretation which owed nothing to the heritage of Camp David, but rather to the Intifada years which made the militant and overcrowded strip a particularly undesirable piece of real estate to most Israelis. In addition there was Arafat's insistence upon getting, together with Gaza, at least a symbolic West Bank foothold. "Redeployment" was to be carried out on the eve of the Palestinian elections, set for June 13, 1994 with military forces to "be redeployed outside populated areas." However, nothing was said about the timing of the "further redeployment to specified locations" other than that it was to be "gradually implemented."

None of the timetables was kept. Negotiations on the exact modalities of "Gaza and Jericho First" dragged on until May 1994, with Rabin insisting that no move would take place until all details had been settled to his entire satisfaction. In the meantime, dozens of Gazan youths were killed in "last minute Intifada" clashes with soldiers who should not have been there, settler Baruch Goldstein carried out a massacre of Palestinian worshippers at Hebron's holiest site; and the initial enthusiasm and momentum of Oslo was further eroded. With the withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho on May 4, 1994, the "clock" of the five-year interim period at last began to tick, more than fifteen years after Camp David, and the end date of that period was thereby fixed for the same day in 1999, a fact whose enormous significance has been only gradually realized.

June 1994 came and passed with neither a sign of Palestinian elections nor of the Israeli redeployment which should have accompanied them. They finally did take place in January 1996 but Rabin did not live to witness them. Having started with an arrogant disregard of the stipulated timetable ("There are no sacred dates"), Rabin found himself the virtual prisoner of a retrograde process, with the Hamas taking revenge for Hebron in a series of suicide bombings of the Israeli population centers and the resurgent Israeli nationalist opposition, headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, taking advantage of the violence to discredit the Oslo process. Steps which could have been taken easily immediately after "the handshake," when enormous enthusiasm existed among the masses of both peoples, became extremely difficult. The Oslo-2 Agreement of

September 1995 was signed against a backdrop of violent opposition from the settlers and extreme right. What was essentially no more than a technical agreement — setting out the modalities of "redeployment" away from six West Bank cities and introducing the concept (without details) of three "further redeployments" to follow — became, as a result of the long delay, a focus of the opposition's offensive. It passed only by a bare parliamentary majority, and was denounced as "illegitimate" by the nationalist opposition which created the atmosphere leading to Rabin's assassination less than two months later.

The widespread public outrage at the murder forced the right-wing onto the defensive and allowed Shimon Peres — Rabin's rival and partner who inherited the job of Prime Minister on the night of his death — to carry out the evacuation of the six West Bank cities precisely on schedule; thus far, the only timetable in the Oslo process to be actually honored. The Palestinian elections, also took place on schedule in January 1996.

But the next stage, withdrawal from Hebron, set for March, ran into a serious snag. Hebron had been left for last because of the extremist settler enclave at its center, with the army controlling that part of the city; evacuation of the rest of Hebron was expected to be tricky, even under the best of conditions. As it turned out, conditions were far from the best because Peres had made the fatal mistake of authorizing the Israeli Security Service to assassinate a senior Hamas man in Gaza, precipitating a new wave of suicide bombings in Tel-Aviv and a new upsurge of right-wing opposition just before the Hebron redeployment was due. Peres was left too politically weak to implement it and since he went down to defeat in the Israeli general elections two months later, Hebron became the first order of business for the new Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to cope with upon assuming office.

FOR YEARS, NETANYAHU HAD ARRIVED AT THE SITE OF TERRORIST ATTACKS within hours of the explosions, holding on-the-spot-demonstrations, wildly inveighing against the Oslo Agreement and its originators, Rabin and Peres. But in the aftermath of Rabin's murder, he started to moderate his line, realizing that to win elections he needed a substantial number of votes from the political center as well as from the extreme right. Although a vague and elusive group, Israelis in the political center want a tough negotiator as their Prime Minister, one who would drive a hard bargain, get as much as possible for as little as possible from the Arabs, and then sign a deal. Shamir lost "the center" when he was perceived to be ideologically doctrinaire; Rabin and Peres suffered the same loss when they appeared to be "softies" who "gave land and got terrorism in return."

Netanyahu's main election slogan, designed to win over this crucial part of the electorate was "A Secure Peace." More concretely (but not much more), Netanyahu promised to continue the Oslo process, but also "to improve upon it." This campaign resonated with a substantial part of the political center but Netanyahu employed enough nationalist rhetoric to keep the support of the extreme right which enthusiastically flocked to him in order to topple the hated Labor government. His strategy worked well enough to get him elected by a narrow margin but the ambiguities inherent in a strategy to court the center without losing his base in the extreme right have characterized Netanyahu's policies as Prime Minister.

Netanyahu's first major test was indeed Hebron, the explosive issue inherited from Simon Peres. His first months in office were characterized by shifting back and forth between his commitment "to keep the previous government's international obligations" and the promises he had made to the Hebron settlers before the elections. To bolster a moderate image, Netanyahu decided to meet with Arafat and be photographed shaking his hand but he miscalculated the depth of Palestinian resentment over Israeli unilateral actions which occurred soon after in the Old City of Jerusalem, and particularly in the vicinity of the Temple Mount/Haram-A-Sharif mosques, Islam's third holiest site. The Israeli authorities' decision to open a tunnel in that area ignited widespread rioting throughout the Palestinian territories which soon developed into full-scale battles between the Palestinian Police and the Israeli Army. In three days of fighting 16 Israelis and 70 Palestinians were killed. Tens of thousands of Israelis took to the streets in furious anti-war demonstrations, a decisive factor in persuading Netanyahu to accelerate the negotiations on Hebron. With intensive American mediation, and a last minute intervention by King Hussein, descending on Tel Aviv in his personally-piloted helicopter, a creative compromise on remaining intractable issues was achieved.

In introducing the Hebron Agreement of January 1997 which, until recently, was Benjamin Netanyahu's sole slender claim to be a peacemaker, the Prime Minister congratulated himself for having renegotiated and "vastly improved" the arrangements for Hebron compared to those negotiated by Peres a year and half earlier. In fact, Netanyahu's main "improvement" — a wide "buffer zone" supposed to surround the settler enclave — proved impossible to maintain in a densely-populated urban area inhabited by tens of thousands of Palestinians. Aside from the army's evacuation from 85% of Hebron, carried out within hours of the Hebron Agreement's ratification in the Knesset, the agreement set an exact timetable for three "further redeployments" of Israeli forces on the West Bank: March 1997, September 1997 and "in mid-1998" (the last ambiguity being a compromise reached after prolonged haggling).

Nowhere in the agreement, however, was the extent of territory to be evacuated specified. Relying on an ambiguous key passage in the original Oslo Agreement, Netanyahu claimed that Israel had the right to define the withdrawal maps unilaterally "according to Israeli security needs as defined by the General Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces," after which the Palestinians would be "informed" of Israel's decision. A Netanyahu aide remarked, only half-jokingly, that Israel could discharge all its obligations by giving up "half an acre, half an acre, and ... half an acre." Predictably, this interpretation was unacceptable to the Palestinians. They pointed to another key passage in Oslo, derived from Camp David, according to which the areas evacuated in the three further redeployments must include all parts of the West Bank except for Israeli settlements and "specified military locations." But there was no definition of "settlement." Is it only the built-up area actually inhabited by the settlers, or does it include adjacent areas, in some cases more than ten times that which the military government earmarked for the settlement's future growth? Nor was the meaning of "military location" defined. By one interpretation, the area of the "location" was confined to military camps and installations; a contrary interpretation holds that military locations include "training grounds" which cover dozens of square kilometers, and the definition further stretched to include whole regions deemed to be "strategic" (such as the Jordan Valley and Judean Desert which together constitute a full one-third of the West Bank).

Given such conflicting interpretations of the agreement (in fact, "agreement" seems to be a rather misleading term in this context), a crisis was inevitable. When the time arrived for the "First Redeployment" in March 1997, Netanyahu was not so cynical as to offer the Palestinians "half an acre"; not quite. For after a night-long session, the Israeli cabinet proffered, "take it or leave it," one and a half percent of the West Bank. The Palestinians vehemently rejected it, all the more infuriated by Netanyahu's assumption that as a quid pro quo for his generosity they would tacitly acquiesce to the construction of the exclusively Jewish Har Homa neighborhood on confiscated Palestinian land in East Jerusalem's Jebl Abu Ghneim. Instead, the arrival of the first Israeli bulldozers on the site, shown on TV screens around the world, precipitated two immediate terrorist attacks in which ten Israeli citizens lost their lives, and a general crisis in Israeli-Palestinian relations lasting for the next 18 months and far from definitely resolved at the time of writing.

For nearly half a year, official contact between the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships approached the vanishing point. The Palestinians made its resumption contingent on stopping the Har Homa construction. The cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian security services, the bedrock of the relationships established by Oslo, was suspended. Along the "confrontation line" in Hebron there were daily violent exchanges between Palestinian youths and the soldiers guarding the settler enclave. Similar scenes were commonplace in numerous other "trouble spots" throughout the Palestinian territories where the military and settler presence directly affects Palestinian daily life.

Meanwhile, "Har Homa" became a household name and an international scandal as reflected in a succession of UN General Assembly resolutions, with the only opposing votes cast by Israel, the U.S. and the Pacific island nation of Micronesia. For Israelis, accustomed in the past to a Labor government with a more positive international reputation this sudden isolation was a bitter pill, and sarcastic jokes started to circulate about "Netanyahu's Micronesian Alliance." For its part, the U.S., while guarding Netanyahu's flank at the UN, promised the Palestinians that Washington. would prepare its own initiative to break the deadlock. The first U.S. attempts to resume a mediating role were disrupted by two successive terrorist attacks killing dozens of civilians in the heart of Israeli Jerusalem. The government retaliated with a series of harsh punitive measures against the Palestinian populace. The attacks also provided Netanyahu with a convenient pretext to put off indefinitely the Second Redeployment of military forces scheduled for September 7, 1997. Despite the inauspicious conditions, U.S. Secretary of State Albright made a highly-publicized visit to the turbulent region, making a great effort to appear even-handed, publicly addressing herself to the Israeli concern with terrorism but also taking note of the intense Palestinian resentment over land confiscations, settlement extension and the demolition of "illegal" homes by the Israeli army.

The Americans obtained an unannounced and inconspicuous suspension of the Har Homa construction from Netanyahu. And the Palestinians agreed to resume "security cooperation," but with this difference: now senior CIA operatives were involved in all meetings together with the heads of the Israeli and Palestinian security services, presumably acting as impartial umpires in the frequent disputes. It was the beginning of a trend which was to continue throughout the next year and reach its peak at the Wye Agreement. In the absence of any mutual trust between Netanyahu and Arafat, the two sides negotiated with the Americans, rather than each other. This was a far cry from the original 1983 Oslo negotiations, when Israelis and Palestinians met in secret and worked out the entire agreement, with no Americans present.

This lack of trust was far less a matter of clashing personalities than of incompatible plans for the future of the Occupied Territories, especially since Netanyahu's plan, far from being an abstract concept, was daily implemented by the unilateral creation of "facts on the ground" throughout the West Bank. Some of these came to public attention, as when they provoked a violent clash with Palestinian peasants who suddenly discovered that their ancestral fields had been declared "state lands," assigned by the military government to one or another settler group.

Many similar incidents passed almost unnoticed, such as the systematic and brutal expulsion of Bedouin tribes from the semi-arid parts of the West Bank which were detailed in carefully-compiled reports by dedicated human rights activists but are rarely acknowledged in the mass media. Under such conditions even a modest step forward, such as the overdue implementation of the Second Redeployment, seemed hopelessly out of reach. Between September 1997 and October 1998, countless items appeared in the press, repeatedly announcing yet another "definitive American peace initiative" or another "absolutely final" deadline when the elusive deal would at last be reached. After a while, weary supporters of the Israeli peace movement lost hope.

Netanyahu's alliance with the conservative Republicans on Capitol Hill was seen as an effective counter-balance to the Clinton Administration's efforts. On one occasion, Netanyahu actually threatened to respond to pressure by "setting Washington on fire under Clinton's feet." Many Israelis suspected the Lewinsky sex scandal was connected with this threat, especially since it gained notoriety at the very moment in January when Clinton was meeting with Netanyahu at the White House, about which there had been great expectations.

In Israel, even the peace movement's largest mobilizations (such as the November 1997 Rabin Memorial, attended by hundreds of thousands) seemed to leave Netanyahu unmoved. Among the Jewish Israeli population, the peace movement is mainly based in the Ashkenazi middle class, those whose pioneering grandparents came from Eastern Europe, adhered to Socialist Zionism and grappled with the inherent contradictions of that concept. Today a large part of this social milieu tends to support universalist and humanist values, paying only lip service to Zionism or discarding it altogether.

Though the peace forces comprise a substantial part of Israeli society, for Netanyahu they constituted "a known quantity" which he discounted as those who never did and never will vote for him. And to his own electoral base: the Oriental Jews, the Russian immigrants, the religious and ultra-orthodox — Netanyahu presented the peace movement's protests as expressing the frustration of a surpassed and displaced old elite, which to some degree was true. Faced with the frustrating and apparently endless deadlock, part of the peace movement's supporters sank into despair and apathy, some contemplating emigration, others engaging in increasingly bitter and angry forms of protest.

Youths shouting for hours "Bibi, danger to the country! Bibi leads to war" were a new phenomenon in the peace movement's generally tranquil tradition.

In retrospect, these protests were not as ineffective as they seemed at the time since the peace movement was instrumental in preventing a total collapse of the peace process which would have inevitably led to a military confrontation, certainly with the Palestinians, and possibly with several Arab states. And it is hazardous indeed for the Netanyahu government to risk military confrontation when it is completely alienated from a large part of the population, one that was and remains disproportionately well represented in the Israeli Army's officer corps and the elite units. This aspect of his situation was brought home to Netanyahu by the effective new tactic used by Arafat and the Palestinian leadership in response to the impasse: announcing that at the end of the five-year interim period on May 4, 1999, they would declare independence, preferably with Israel's consent, but unilaterally if need be. Numerous articles, commentaries, scenarios and predictions about "May 4" appeared in the Israeli press, nearly all unanimous in predicting widespread anti-war demonstrations should Israeli forces clash with Palestinians seeking independence or try to re-occupy Palestinian cities. Moreover, leaks of the army's feverish preparations, contingency plans and war games included the scenario of outright refusal by some soldiers, especially reservists, to fight and a "less than highly motivated performance" by entire units ("Reservations about the Reserves," Ha'aretz, 9/20/98). It has also become clear that even many of Netanyahu's own voters were less than sanguine about the prospect of fighting for "Greater Israel." According to all opinion polls the gung ho attitude of young settlers, who in the past decade flocked to military academies, seems to be a minority current at distinct variance with the mainstream of Israeli society, left and right.

Netanyahu also found himself subjected to sharp criticism from the Israeli business community, a particularly embarrassing position for a neo-liberal dévotée of a free market economy. The leaders of such influential organizations as the Association of Industrialists and the Confederation of Chambers of Commerce blamed the deadlock in the peace process for declining foreign investment and for the closing of many international openings which had resulted from Oslo. Concomitantly, Washington policymakers grew alarmed at the damage that the impasse was inflicting on the U. S. interests in the Middle East. In the past, U.S. inaction in the face of Netanyahu's oppression of the Palestinians and his open flouting of Israel's obligations under the Oslo Agreement was unfavorably compared throughout the Arab World with the U.S. tough stance toward "rogue" Arab states. Aware of growing discontent among the masses, even pro-American Arab regimes were wary of appearing to be "accomplices in Washington's double standard" with the result that the anti-Iraq coalition of 1991 dissolved and the U.S. had to back down in repeated confrontations with Saddam Hussein. The U.S. bombing of Sudan was strongly and unanimously condemned by the Arab League. Even staunchly pro-American regimes had no choice but to express at least verbal solidarity with the Sudanese Islamist regime, toward which they harbor few tender feelings.

In the estimates of State Department experts, this was a mere sample of what might follow in an armed confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians. The shock waves could well effect the Hashemite regime in Jordan, just across a narrow river from the turbulent West Bank, already in a delicate position due to King Hussein's serious illness. Egypt's government, able to contain but not to destroy the armed Islamic forces, could also be effected as could Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, already weakened by economic problems.

These international anxieties were fortuitous for President Clinton's domestic needs to counter the Republicans in Congress and overcome the negative impact of the Lewinsky affair by chalking up an impressive foreign policy success. So the negotiations did move ahead, though in barely perceptible slow motion. The Americans have set January as the fixed period for the Second Redeployment: evacuation of 13% of the West Bank. Though Arafat had originally expected much more, he decided to accept this American proposal in order to create a crucial, unprecedented American-Palestinian diplomatic front facing Israel. Although, for many months, Netanyahu vigorously repudiated "The Thirteen Percent" which he called "An American Diktat," at some point between May and August he felt obliged to retreat. (As a curious face-saving formula, he insisted that three percent of the thirteen be declared "nature preserves.")

Having reversed himself, the Prime Minister set about skillfully cajoling, fragmenting and eroding the hardliner opposition within his own party and governing coalition, as well as the nationalist settler movement. The National Religious Party, for many years the settlers' most staunch supporter, was gently reminded that much of its power and influence over the apparatus of Israel's Established Rabbinate depended on its control of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and that should the NRP make a principled alliance with the opposition, less principled religious parties would be happy to take over that lucrative ministry. Among the settlers themselves, Netanyahu succeeded in playing on an inter-regional rivalry, of settlers in each part of the West Bank scheming to let the impending withdrawal, if it must happen, take place in the vicinity of settlements other than their own.

To his friends' surprise and chagrin, Uri Elitzur, a long-time settler leader who played a central role in the unyielding opposition to Oslo during the Rabin period, went over to Netanyahu's side, accepting the key position of Prime Minister's Chef de Bureau. Elitzur now declared the Second Redeployment "inevitable."

Netanyahu's next move, a far more startling one, was to appoint Ariel Sharon as Foreign Minister which finally led skeptics to cautiously consider the possibility that Netanyahu was, indeed, about to make a deal which hardliners could be expected to oppose. Ariel Sharon, whose military and political career since the 1950s epitomizes the most brutal Israeli attitude toward Arabs, was the natural leader around whom all the hardline and extreme-right factions, religious and non-religious, could unite. Getting him on the team, and in no less capacity than that of chief negotiator with the Palestinians, secured Netanyahu's right flank, but at the price of bringing a clever, ambitious and unscrupulous man far closer to ultimate power. To Israeli peace activists, particularly those who had been politicized by the Lebanon War and the massacres at Sabra and Shatila, the idea of Sharon as peacemaker defied credulity. His part in the 1982 evacuation of Sinai had shown "Bulldozer" Sharon as ruthlessly capable of destroying settlements as of building them. At best, Sharon could be an ally with whom you would need a very long spoon to sup.\

AFTER MORE THAN TWO YEARS OF NETANYAHU, the Wye Conference was greeted with skepticism by the Israeli peace movement and by Israeli society in general. There was no mass peace rally on the evening before Netanyahu's departure, nothing like what preceded Begin's departure for Camp David, almost exactly 20 years earlier. The grassroots supporters of the peace movement would probably not have turned out for something in which the only possible message would have been "Netanyahu, we pin our hopes on you." Peace actions before and during the conference were limited to what could be mobilized by the dedicated hardcore: A few large banners at street corners, with the good old slogan "Peace is Greater than Greater Israel"; a large net placed at the porch of the Prime Minister's residence by Young Laborites, to remind Netanyahu of the opposition's offer of a "parliamentary safety net" to offset the hardliners in his own ruling coalition; a hastily mobilized demonstration to confront a group of fanatic settlers who — just as the Prime Minister's plane took off — established yet another armed enclave in the heart of Arab East Jerusalem; a small vigil by the American Friends of Peace Now outside the sealed conference site itself, facing a more vocal (and better-financed) group of Israeli right-wing nationalists; a desperate campaign of faxes sent to the Prime Minister at his temporary office in Wye when the talks seemed about to collapse (the Israeli delegation's fax number was obtained from an intercepted e-mail message issued by an extreme right group); the Gush Shalom ad in Ha'aretz, on the very last day, criticizing the Israeli delegation for playing "childish games."

We could not delude ourselves. At best, such actions had only a marginal affect on the outcome of the conference. But the long years of trying to influence the terms of political discourse in Israel might have played a role in creating the massive majority in support of an agreement — a majority made evident not only in the published opinion polls but also in the confidential polls which Netanyahu's aides conduct weekly and whose results were faithfully transmitted to the Prime Minister until the last day of the Wye Conference. During the nine tense days of Wye, we were primarily spectators striving to pierce the veil of secrecy around the sealed site and collect fragments of information from newspapers, radio, television and internet. We closely followed the ups and downs of the negotiations; and were passionately involved from a distance. We almost completely lost our initial reservations and became physically exhausted as we watched the White House signing ceremony.

As I write, three weeks later, the immediate outcome remains murky. Netanyahu dragged his feet over getting his cabinet to ratify the Wye deal, and is expected to do the same over its implementation which may therefore take more than the stipulated three months. Nevertheless, it is confidently expected that it will be implemented. There have been minor crises, and undoubtedly there will be others. Especially touchy is the important event scheduled at Wye for December 14, when the Palestinians are expected, once and for all, to dispose of that relic of the past, the Palestinian Covenant with its empty rhetoric about the destruction of Israel, and where President Clinton's presence is expected, much like a state visit to the about-to-be-created state of Palestine.

Since Wye there have been several terrorist attacks with relatively few casualties. as yet. Meanwhile, the settlers have started a campaign of last-minute land grabbing with the tacit connivance of the army, and Netanyahu has renewed the construction at Har Homa in order to placate his hard-liners. Most ominous, there is not the slightest agreement about what will happen once the implementation of Wye is completed. On the contrary, there is total disagreement. Netanyahu and Sharon insist that Wye is the very last concession, that the Third Redeployment will include "no more than an a single additional one percent," and that in the "Definite Status," more than half the West Bank will become part of Israel.

Thus, apprehension remains about what will happen on and after May 4, 1999. There is fear that the cause of Palestinian independence will have to bought with much blood and suffering, that unresolved issues and the accumulated bitterness could poison the relations between Israel and an independent Palestine. Yet, there is also reason for hope and a sense of satisfaction in reviewing the long and difficult road already traveled, and in comparing the small outcast minority in Israel which supported a Palestinian state 20 years ago with the estimated 150,000 who packed Tel-Aviv's Rabin Square following the Wye Conference, bursting into applause when the commitment to a Palestinian state was affirmed by speaker after speaker.

And hope is to be found in the words of Yisrael Zeira, one of the more clearheaded settler leaders: "We have lost the struggle for the hearts of the people. The Palestinian state is coming, and to deny it is like denying the sunrise. Netanyahu had no choice. He was afraid that in the next war half the people would desert him." (Ha'aretz, 11/6/98) The same argument will continue to be effective and it will force Netanyahu — or whoever replaces him — to go further. In the final analysis, it is the oppressed and dispossessed Palestinians who are willing to fight and make enormous sacrifices to have their state, while most Israelis —like the Americans in Vietnam and the Soviets in Afghanistan or the French in Algeria —do not really want to fight to deny Palestinians their right to statehood. One can reasonably hope, then, that Wye will not be the last in this series of documents which started at Camp David but one stage in a sequence of events leading to an historic agreement — the Peace Treaty Between The State Of Israel And The State Of Palestine. There can be no illusions about such a peace treaty since it will be drawn up by politicians and diplomats, not all of them with the highest motives. It will undoubtedly include some ugly compromises. Yet, such a document, though imperfect, will give reasonable satisfaction to the most basic aspirations of the Israelis and the Palestinians, laying the foundations for what should eventually become a harmonious relationship between the sovereign states of Israel and Palestine.

Postscript

It is the eleventh anniversary of the Intifada outbreak, and today's images on the tv news are virtually indistinguishable from what was shown then. In town after town of the West Bank, Palestinian youths confronted the soldiers of the Israeli occupation; two of these youths paid with their lives.

Even at the moment of signing, the Wye Agreement did not generate much confidence or good will between Israelis and Palestinians; what little existed soon dissipated in a whirlwind of mutual suspicion, accusations and violence. Immediately after his return from Wye, Foreign Minister Sharon called upon the settlers to “seize the hills” and lay claim to as wide tracts of land as possible, and they were quick to oblige him. Ever new “by-pass roads” were created by the government for the settlers’ use on confiscated Palestinian agricultural land. What finally set the territories on fire was Netanyahu’s wriggling out of his obligation to release 750 Palestinian prisoners. Technically, he kept to the letter of Wye but violated its spirit and intent when he released Palestinian thieves, drug traffickers and other common criminals instead of political prisoners as was clearly called for. Practically every Palestinian knows one or more prisoners personally; the prisoners issue, more than anything else, can rouse the Palestinian masses to fury which Netanyahu is finding out.

At a superficial glance, all seems doomed. However, such crises seem always to have been an inseparable part of Middle East Peace Process. Netanyahu can be seen as following in the footsteps of Menachem Begin who, immediately upon completing the evacuation of Sinai, launched the invasion of Lebanon, followed by the bombing of Beirut and the Sabra and Shatila massacres which make Netanyahu’s transgressions puny in comparison.

These see-saw patterns are rooted in Israel’s overwhelming military and economic superiority which repeatedly tempt the country’s decision-makers to reassert their dominance after having made a partial concession. Yet, manifestations of naked Israeli force inevitably come up against the basic constraints: not only international disapproval, but of the unwillingness of most Israelis, left and right, to bear the costs of unnecessary war — dramatically demonstrated at this very moment in the renewed upsurge of soldiers’ mothers demanding the return of their sons from Lebanon.

It is impossible to predict the details of all that may transpire before May 4, 1999. It is clear, however. that the first-ever state visit by a U.S. President to the Palestinian territories, against the discouraging backdrop of riots and bloodshed, is bound to strengthen the possibility of realizing Palestinians’ aspiration to statehood which is the precondition for achieving Israelis’ aspiration for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

December 9, 1989

Rightwing Extremism in Germany

Martin Oppenheimer

IF IT TOOK THE APRIL, 1995 OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING to awaken the U.S. public to the realities of right-wing extremism, the April, 1998 elections to the state legislature of the East German state of Saxony-Anhalt performed the same function for many Germans. Brown-shirted battalions of skinheads singing Nazi songs are not about to take power there, nor are they likely to set foot in the federal parliament, at least not yet, given the results of the September, 1998 federal election. Still, the number of votes cast for an extremist, proto-fascist party last April virtually panicked the established political parties, the media, and many ordinary people. Yet this apparent upsurge in ultra-right sentiment in the heart of the former German Democratic Republic was no surprise to old-time observers of the German extremist scene, any more than Oklahoma City came as a shock to U.S. watchdog groups. Moreover, the press had been reporting increasing "neo-Nazi" skinhead violence in the East for some time.

The German Folk Union (DVU), which had not previously run candidates in an East German state, garnered 192,000 votes (12.9%) on April 26, 1998, thereby entitling it to 16 seats in the 116-seat state legislature. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) increased its representation from 36 to 47 seats and again heads the state government, with the "tolerance" of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor party to the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the former ruling party of the GDR. The PDS gained votes and holds 25 seats. The SPD's former coalition party, the Greens, failed to clear the 5% vote minimum and is no longer represented. The Christian Democrats, the outgoing ruling party in Bonn, still holds 28 seats, but lost heavily, suggesting that a classical conservative program would hardly attract the protest voters of the right. In the September federal election, the SPD and the PDS continued to gain votes and the CDU to lose them in the East. The PDS did so well in the state of Mecklenburg that it now forms part of a "red-red" governing coalition with the SPD there, the first such state government in Germany. But the DVU's share of the vote in Saxony-Anhalt declined dramatically to "only" 3.2%, or around 48,000 hard core votes, a number not to be lightly dismissed. Overall, some 1,625,000 people (about 3.25% of

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all German voters) voted for one of three right-extremist parties in the September federal election.

One guess that explains the decline in the DVU vote is that when it comes to the federal level, even extremist protest voters become more practical and shift to those parties they believe will make a difference, in this case the governing party to be, the SPD. The PDS, also seen as a protest party by many, increased its share of the federal vote from 4.4% in 1994 to 5.1% in 1998, but did much better in the East, including East Berlin, as had been the case in 1994. In East Berlin districts, the PDS has typically been getting one-third of the votes, but even there the SPD scored the most gains. Another factor was image: spokespeople for right-extremist parties came across as blithering incompetents, lacking any sense of program. All in all, the September election was a slap in the face to those political forces playing the xenophobia card. In a crunch, it seems, most East German voters put what they see as their class interest ahead of nationalist sentiment especially when confronted with what seems a clear left-right polarization, and when the "right" appears either old-fashioned, or just silly.

Saxony-Anhalt, with its capital in the city of Magdeburg some 60 miles east of Berlin, has an overall unemployment rate of around 25%. One out of three in the under-31 age group is unemployed; one out of four in that group voted DVU in April. In some cities the unemployment rate is close to 30% and correspondingly the DVU vote went as high as 17% in a few places.

Most observers agree that the DVU vote is a protest vote by younger, mostly male Germans against the apparent hopelessness of their situation. The collapse of the GDR in 1989 and its virtual annexation by West Germany resulted in the takeover of state-run industries, many quite inefficient, by a federal trustee, their sell-off at bargain prices to West German investors, and subsequently their rationalization, which meant in many cases layoffs at best, and often total dismantling and closing, deindustrialization with a vengeance.

The response by a set of small, ultra-right parties has been a simple one. The DVU proclaimed two slogans: jobs for Germans first, and get rid of foreigners, who are depicted as taking jobs away, and as being responsible for rising street crime rates. This despite the fact that less than 2% of the population of Saxony-Anhalt is foreign-born.

ALTHOUGH THE DVU MADE MOST OF ITS INROADS AMONG YOUNGER, first-time voters, there is nevertheless considerable right-wing sentiment among broader segments of the population in the East. Nor is it insignificant in the "old" West German states. Right-extremists got 4.6% of the vote in the Southwestern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, just short of the 5% it would take to get them into the next state legislature.

Today's post-GDR insecurity has fostered a nostalgia (in German slang, "Ostalgia" — Eastalgia) for traditional family and work values, and above all for order, that is rooted in pre-Hitler times, and was promoted in both Nazi and GDR societies. Immigrants are used as scapegoats for rising criminality and for unemployment, and this feeds into the sense that a homogeneous German society would be a more secure society.

The sudden appearance of the DVU as an electoral force was in part a fluke that fell on fertile ground. The better-known extreme-right parties, the

Republikaner and the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) are riven by internal disputes. The NPD has a better grass-roots structure. But the DVU has access to the big bucks of a right-wing publisher, Gerhard Frey, who poured some DM 3 million ($1.6 million) into the April campaign, more than the asleep-at-the-switch SPD and CDU combined. And he reportedly spent millions more spread over five Eastern states for the September election with little result, however. The DVU has few members or party organizations anywhere. Its entire campaign consists of demographically-targeted direct mailings, and posters, lots and lots of them. "Junk-food politics," one columnist for the respectable Berlin *Tagesspiegel* said, meaning slogans with no programmatic content, and a party with no strategy for parliamentary activity. It was a vote, he said, that could be summarized as raising the middle finger of the right hand toward those "up there," the established political parties that had failed to honor their commitments to replace the GDR with a better society, or indeed simply to provide decent-paying jobs.

The DVU had earlier succeeded in gaining seats in two West German states, but internal conflicts and an inability to deal with an actual legislative situation led to rapid electoral demise. In the September election, the DVU did even worse in the Northeastern state of Mechlenburg-Western Pomerania than in Saxony-Anhalt, getting only 2.7% of the vote in a state whose economy is, if anything, in worse shambles than farther south. However, two other rightist parties picked up another 1.5% of the vote.

In four Eastern states, one Western state, and in Berlin the combined ultra-right got between 4.1% and 5.2% of the vote. In combination, they would have cleared the 5% hurdle required for parliamentary representation in seven East Berlin districts, receiving more than 7% in one district, close to 6% in four others, and not much worse even in West Berlin. A unified right-extremist party has a good chance for representation in several state legislatures besides Saxony-Anhalt in the next elections, including Berlin, Baden-Wuerttemberg, and, in West Germany, Saxony and Mecklenburg in the Northeast. Fortunately such a unification is unlikely for the time being. Moreover, no charismatic leader capable of uniting them and becoming a potential "Fuehrer" has yet appeared.

The sudden political cold bath of April, and the continued presence of a hard core right-extremist vote in September, is, however, only a symptom of much deeper, more dangerous currents which many Germans, especially the political and police authorities, would probably like to ignore or downplay, although they can no longer do so. Aside from the vote, there is the continuing incidence of criminal acts, often random but sometimes planned, aimed at individuals who do not fit into the image of what it is to be a real "German." In order of preference, more or less, the victims of attacks are presumed foreigners, people of color, Jews, Roma and Sinti ("Gypsies"), gays, lesbians, punks, vagrants, drunks, handicapped people, and Germans who appear to sympathize with or give aid to such victims. Nor are ordinary Germans exempt from physical attacks in certain cities (mainly in the East) in the evening when drunken skinhead hoodlums are about. All this is commonly lumped together under the rubric "right-extremist criminal acts." In a few places such as Brandenburg, which surrounds Berlin, specially trained police units have been set up to monitor (and harass) right-wing hooligans.

There are many such acts, as compiled by the *Verfassungsschutz*, the political security police of the federal republic. This agency also monitors activities on the left, and indeed was notorious for persecuting leftists of many variants during the rampant West German McCarthyite period of the 1970s and 1980s. The *Verfassungsschutz* recorded over 10,000 criminal acts by right-extremists ("neo-Nazis" are included in that term) in 1996, over 11,000 in 1997. This is a minimum figure, since many incidents are never reported. However, of this scary number, only (!) a bit more than 10% actually involve violence against persons or property, with the majority of violent incidents targeting "foreigners." A very small minority of physical attacks are directed against Jews, but concentration camp sites and Jewish memorials are regularly vandalized despite a visible police presence at many Jewish institutions, including museums, community centers, and synagogues.

The reason for the large difference between all right-extremist criminal acts, and violent acts, is that a wide range of behavior, much of which is protected as free speech in the U.S., is criminal in Germany. The largest category consists of so-called propaganda crimes: public display and ownership of Nazi symbols such as swastika armbands or flags, the use of the Nazi salute, possession and dissemination of Nazi and other racist and hate literature, racist and anti-semitic name-calling, singing Nazi songs, calling out "Sieg Heil," etc. Charges of resisting arrest and insulting the police are also common. Although the number of violent incidents is much smaller, they have been quite serious, ranging from the fire-bombing and murder of foreigners in a refugee home, to knife and baseball bat (the favorite weapon) attacks on "foreign" fast-food store proprietors, "foreign" or "leftist" picnickers, and "punks" (a category that includes both bourgeois alternate life-style youth, and older vagrants) that have resulted in deaths and many serious injuries. Although in general violent crimes are dealt with seriously, propaganda crimes are punished only minimally.

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE SUPPORT THESE PARTIES whose politics consist mainly of xenophobia? Who are the so-called right-extremists who take to the streets to insult, maim and murder those who are "different?" The German Folk Union that now sits in the Saxony-Anhalt legislature is not a fascist or Nazi formation, though it undoubtedly draws support from Hitlerites. The common denominator message is old-fashioned nationalism, linking nation to Germanness, which boils down to the slogan "Germany for the Germans." Implicitly and explicitly the message is racist. This links the ultra-right to the mainstream German conservatism of the Christian Democratic Union, the outgoing governing party, and the Christian Social Union, its coalition partner, which is the ruling party of Bavaria. So there is no sharp line of division between mainstream right-wing sentiment and the extreme right. The differences are in the degree of vehemence, the overtness of racist and anti-semitic expression, and the readiness to support street action. Ultra-right groups often have more of a populist (anti-Euro, anti-finance capital) flavor, and feel that mainstream conservative parties are sellouts. Hence the electoral demise of the CDU in the East. But the underlying tone of hostility to the "menace" to German culture represented by immigrants and other multicultural elements bridges the entire right-wing political spectrum and intrudes even into the ranks of the Social Democratic Party and the Party of Democratic Socialism.

Surveys of public opinion support the view that right-extremist views are not limited to those who vote right-extremist parties. In fact, most right-extremists continue to vote for the mainstream conservative parties. One estimate is that about 15% of Germans (6 million voters) share right-extremist views, but only 2 million are likely to vote for right-extremist parties (around 5%, which is somewhat more than their actual vote in September). Hence the CDU and Bavaria's CSU have been moving rightward in their political slogans in order to try to capture the extremist vote.

Pretending that mainstream conservatism is sharply different from the extremist fringe enables conservatives to distance themselves from the "fanatics," and maintain an aura of respectability. The lumping together of all "extremists," something both the media and the police tend to do, also serves this purpose because once we examine the range of tendencies on the ultra-right, the overlap between one end of the continuum and the "respectables" becomes clearer. It also blurs the distinction between social groupings that might be open to a left perspective (skinheads who are not explicitly racist, unemployed youth who are only minimally drawn to nationalist slogans, and workers who are more populist than racist) and those who are more explicitly fascist. The police make no distinction, and therefore contribute to a process of stigmatization that then reinforces the tendency to identify as Nazis. There is a difference between a drunken hoodlum in his early 20's who believes foreigners are taking his job away and therefore attacks them, and a "fascho" who advocates incarceration or the death penalty for various classes of cultural deviants including the handicapped, specifically refers to Hitler's positive contributions, promotes Holocaust denial literature, and has clear ideas about "Aryan" supremacy, and may even have arms stored in his cellar. Lumping them together pushes the former towards the latter. Meanwhile, the parent of the hoodlum is likely to rationalize street violence on a "kids will be kids" basis, or decries it but support the sentiment behind it.

Gerhard Frey's DVU is somewhere in the middle of this melange. His newspaper, the "German National Newspaper," lauds France's Jean-Marie Le Pen, attacks the Christian Democrats for buying into German guilt for the Nazi period (among other things), and is committed to rewriting World War II history to turn German soldiers into heroes and deny all war crimes and the Holocaust. Ads promote anti-semitic and super-patriotic literature.

As to electoral support, it is fairly clear that unemployment is one, though by no means the only or even the major significant factor. As compared to an overall 12.9% of the vote in the April election, the DVU got 18.5% of the unemployed voters. It did better than that among all younger voters, especially working class men, but also among younger women. The DVU got around one-third of the votes of 18-24-year-old men. Older voters whose histories go back to GDR days tended to support the more leftish SPD or the PDS, and clearly their support for the "left" had increased by September. Also, to keep things in proportion, there was a very large increase in the total number of voters in that April election. The SPD, its former Green Party ally, and its quasi-ally the PDS together gained nearly 210,000 additional votes over their vote in the previous election, which was more than the total vote of the DVU.

NEVERTHELESS, THE INFLUENCE OF THE EXTREME RIGHT, both directly in the form of voting strength and indirectly as more respectable parties move rightward in order to attract the extremist vote, is deeply disturbing to many Germans. The day-to-day occurrence of racist attacks in the East is particularly bothersome because it is often assumed that 40 years of anti-fascist education by the Communists should have had some effect. It probably did have, at least on the older generation. But the propagandistic nature of this "education" also had a backlash effect. Over the years, many East Germans came to mistrust every statement made by the regime, including those that were true (for example, that the U.S.A. is a racist society with a starkly unequal distribution of income), and anti-fascist propaganda was to some extent discounted also. As for the younger generation, even that propaganda ceased a decade ago, which means at the age of eight or ten. The years of adolescence took place in the context of a general breakdown of the social fabric of the society, from secure employment and at least minimal guaranteed health care, to youth organizations, recreational facilities, and solid families buttressed by decent-paying, respectable jobs.

How much right-extremist sentiment is due to economic problems, and how much is traceable to deeply rooted German authoritarianism? Both "structural" and "cultural" factors are at work, and they interact. The reality of unemployment (structure), for example, undermines the work ethic (culture) that has long been an important value in Germany. One interpretation is that of Bernd Wagner, a 43-year-old ex-police officer from the GDR. Prior to 1989 his job was to monitor the right-extremist scene. Given the fiction that such activities could not exist in the "socialist" world (any more than, say, prostitution or graft), he was transferred to another job. After 1989 he worked for the West German police, also monitoring extremists, and again he was accused of exaggerating. He quit, to start up his own watchdog organization, the Center for Democratic Culture. In a 1998 report, he details the entire history of right-extremism in the East (the "new states") before and after 1989, and describes the range of groups coming under that rubric, from runaway delinquents with petty criminal records and a general anti-foreigner attitude all the way to disciplined neo-Nazi paramilitary cells with informal ties to legal ultra-right political parties. His frightening report gives strong support to the "cultural" dimension, since there had already been a developing right-wing culture in GDR days, at a time of full employment and comparatively secure social arrangements. Even then there was a widespread undercurrent of support for street violence against punks, gays, and anyone who appeared as "un-German." This was tacitly supported by a state that defined such elements as "anti-social." Victims even included foreign "guest workers" from the GDR's ally, Communist Vietnam. Areas of heavy concentration of right-wing violence today were also centers of such violence before 1989.

However, Wagner recognizes that the annexation of East Germany to West Germany exacerbated the problem. The "disintegration" of the political, economic, and value system of the GDR meant that "a different political, economic, and social system entered into the daily lives of GDR citizens, one that was not only seen as new and unfamiliar, but strange and dangerous," he tells us. "Formed by their experience in the GDR, which was characterized by authoritarianism, security, and conformity, many now see a way out in an orientation that is also authoritarian, secure, and conformist...The movement toward the right-extremist idea of a solidaristic community with a folk-national basis arises from the feeling that central values such as order, security, punctuality, hard work, are being damaged" by those who do not conform. In this sense, Wagner points out, there was and is a consensus between the values of the former regime's ruling party (one might add that this goes back to the Nazis and even the Kaiser's empire), and a broad segment of the population, a coalition between the guardians of the previous system(s) and those citizens who are uncomfortable with anything creative, individualistic, and avant-garde, anything that appears "un-German." In a classical example of scapegoating, blaming West Germany or German capitalism is displaced in varying degrees (depending on the particular faction of the ultra right) with blaming foreigners and cultural deviants, even though the actual number of such people is miniscule.

Contributing to the culture of xenophobia is the fact that local police, mostly untrained in such refinements as human relations, perhaps reflecting local attitudes, have been known to harass and illegally assault foreigners. One citizen watch-dog group called "Action Courage — SOS Racism" claims to have documented 45 attacks on foreigners by police during 1997, but said this was only the tip of the iceberg. Some of the victims, who were attacked only because of their skin color, were actually German citizens.

For younger people in the East today, as one observer put it, "voting Right has become part of youth culture, like Techno music or skateboarding." Political ideology consists of racism and supernationalism, rather than a fully-blown fascism. Right-wing youth gangs have established, in many communities of the East, what are termed "national liberated zones," meaning youth centers, neighborhoods, and entire towns "cleansed" of not only foreigners, but also all alternative youth groups with a more humanistic, liberal, or anti-racist outlook. This purging takes the form of direct violence, punctuated with heavy beer-drinking. These hooligans are not necessarily unemployed, often dress in the latest of consumer culture styles (the official skinhead uniform of bomber jacket and jump boots is also not cheap), and sometimes carry out their attacks riding on motorcycles. This youth "counter-culture" mirrors the values of many in the older generation, including public officials, who often minimize the criminal behavior of young hooligans because they substantially agree that traditional values of hard work, security, and family solidarity are threatened by gays, punks, and especially dark-skinned foreigners.

THE SEPTEMBER, 1998 ELECTION HOLDS OUT HOPE THAT INROADS on xenophobic politics can be made. Conservative and authoritarian minds can be moved leftward with realistic alternative programs. A militant left politics, if translated into active political (and social) work with young people, can begin to liberate the "liberated zones" from their illiberal occupants. But whether such programs and activities can be developed under the auspices of the cautious politicians of the SPD is doubtful. And it will take a few more years before younger, imaginative people will be able fully to take the reins of the PDS away from the old guard remnants of GDR days. If the economic structure continues to be incapable of providing decent, secure jobs, the leftward turn this past September could easily be reversed. April, 1998 could then be but a foreshadowing of much worse to come.

Mexico: Malaise & Social Conflict

Phillip Smith

IN THE HEADY DAYS OF *SALINISMO*, that neoliberal movable feast of privatization under the administration of Raul Salinas de Gortari, Angel Isodoro Rodriguez Saenz was on top of the world. One of the favored players in Salinas' $10 billion sell-off of 18 state-owned banks, Rodriguez headed the newly privatized Banpais, lived in ostentatious luxury, and nicknamed himself *El Divino*, the Divine. But the fruits of his actions as a banker were less than heavenly. Banpais collapsed after Rodriguez plucked $2 billion from its coffers for his own ventures, including $400 million in bad loans to his brother, his father, and himself. Under Mexican law, this was no crime, but *El Divino*'s unauthorized borrowing of an additional $49 million from a Banpais subsidiary was beyond the pale. With Mexican investigators on his trail, Rodriguez fled to Spain in 1996. Finally captured by Spanish authorities — *El Divino* unsuccessfully attempted a swimming getaway from his yacht anchored in the Mediterranean — Rodriguez was extradited to Mexico last spring, only to be released awaiting trial. Widely broadcast images of *El Divino* settling into his chauffeur-driven Mercedes for the drive home to one of his mansions infuriated countless Mexicans hard-hit by years of economic turmoil.

Rodriguez' escapades put a human face on the huge, complex financial scandal known as FOBAPROA, for the initials of the government's banking bailout agency, which was preparing to take over $61 billion in bad debts run up by the banks privatized under Salinas. *El Divino*'s Banpais is on the list and typical in its abuses. For much of 1998, the FOBAPROA scandal seized headlines, as the left-opposition PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) and right-opposition PAN (National Action Party) savaged President Zedillo and PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) parliamentarians for their attempt to bail out the bankers.

The PRI Dodges A Bullet

THAT FOBAPROA HAS BECOME ONE OF THE BIGGEST STORIES of the year demonstrates how far the Mexican political system has come, and how far it still has to go. A few short years ago, the long-lived PRI-state appeared on its last legs.The party, aptly described in its prime by Mario

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Vargas Llosa as "the perfect dictatorship," had grown fractured and sclerotic, apparently unable to deal with the three-fold crisis for which it was responsible and that threatened its rule. The peso devaluation of January 1995 ripped apart the national economy and plunged the country into a depression rivaling that of the 1930s. A romantic indigenous guerrilla movement, the Zapatistas, erupted in the valleys of Chiapas. And the internal fight for the future of the PRI turned bloody, with a trio of high-level political assassinations leaving a legacy of bitterness and skepticism. This triple threat had the ruling party on the ropes and raised hopes for radical change.

In the intervening years, none of these problems has disappeared: the economy remains unable to provide for millions of Mexicans, the Zapatistas endure and have been joined in armed rebellion by the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) and smaller guerrilla groupings, and PRI factions continue to scrap over control of the party-state apparatus, while the killers of Colosio, Ruiz Massieu, and Archbishop Ocampo remain shadowy. Still, the atmosphere of crisis has eased, been downgraded to one of exhausted malaise. The sense that the country was on the brink of major change has largely vanished, wiped away by the weight of political inertia and fear of radical change, the PRI's fabled tenacity, and the unending struggle to pay the bills and put food on the table.

Which is not to say that the country is quiescent. Social and political struggles for the nation's future continue, but they are bound up with issues of day-to-day survival and, for the electoral opposition, new attention to mundane matters of governance. Independent labor organizing continues apace and grassroots campaigns on the environment, economic issues, human rights, and democratic reforms are all on-going, but their goals now are more incremental than fundamental. And to a large degree, the PRI can take credit.

The PRI leadership may be venal, authoritarian, and even thuggish, but it is not stupid. Faced with a multifaceted and increasingly threatening civic rebellion against its iron-fisted domination of elected offices, the PRI showed enough enlightened self-interest to actually allow the opposition to win elections. Since 1996, voters have elected Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, the PRD's most popular leader, as Mexico City mayor, sent an opposition majority to the lower house of the Mexican congress, elected six non-PRI state governors, and turned hundreds of town halls over to opposition parties. As a result, on one very important level the struggle has shifted from the big fight for democracy to smaller skirmishes within a more or less formally democratic system. The PRI has, at least for the time being, successfully defanged the democratic revolution by a broad policy of inclusion instead of repression for its electoral challengers.

Clearly, democratic rule has not yet been won, especially in rural southern Mexico, where PRI machines run by local political bosses known as *caciques* routinely deliver huge voting majorities by whatever means necessary, but these opposition electoral victories are far more than cosmetic. The opposition majority in the Chamber of Deputies has turned what was previously a rubber stamp assembly into a true legislative body, thwarting presidential initiatives on finance and labor law and forcing popular measures into the budget. FOBAPROA, in fact, was part of President Zedillo's neoliberal financial "reform" plan for restructuring the banking system (by, among other things, removing all restrictions on foreign ownership of Mexican banks); instead, it became an opportunity for PRD and PAN legislators to demand a thorough airing of the dealings between government officials and the circle of wealthy industrialists and bankers who bankroll the PRI. In August, PRD President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador released a list of some 300 prominent people, including several billionaires, who would benefit from the bailout, prompting edgy PRI deputies to furiously backtrack on their leader's proposal. The newly unruly *priista* delegation is now calling for a scaled-backed bailout, and with a nervous glance at the battered and brooding middle class, also proposing substantial relief for small debtors — as much as 60% for farmers and fishermen and as much as 45% for small businesses and mortgage holders.

To the extent that limited opposition victories — and the limited but real power that accompanies them — validate Mexico's version of democracy, the time-tested PRI strategy of cooptation succeeds. Previously, all politics took place within the party, with emerging dissidents enticed within the fold or, if necessary, eliminated. For now, the PRI has yielded its monopoly, but the PRI-state remains, somewhat eroded but essentially intact. The party itself, however, is fracturing under the stress of multi-party democracy. While elements of the administration favor the democratic opening, and even demand more democracy within the party, other party stalwarts are determined to continue their authoritarian traditions. The "dinosaurs," as the opposing "technocrats" simplistically label their internecine foes, control various party organs and positions. Some state governors, who wield significant power under Mexico's federal system, have challenged President Zedillo's control of the party. Notable among them is Puebla Governor Manuel Bartlett, who has lead other governors in disputing greater internal democracy and has been openly campaigning for the party's presidential nomination.. Allied with the recalcitrant governors are segments of big national capital, personified by the powerful Hank family. Similarly, control over the party's powerful mass organizations — the CTM (labor), the CROC (the peasantry), and the CNOP (the bureaucracies) — is largely in the hands of old-style PRI loyalists.

Whither the Party of the Aztec Sun?

WITHIN THE OPPOSITION CAMP, THE PRD, the one-time hope of the left, has finally been allowed to win governships, and with the anti-charismatic Cuauhtemoc Cardenas positioned as Mexico City mayor, holds a good chance of winning the presidential election in 2000. But there are several big ifs here, the first being whether the PRI allows a free and fair election. That is by no means a given. The last time a non-PRI candidate appeared to have won the presidency — Cardenas himself in 1988 — a massive, days-long "computer failure" at the PRI-controlled elections board halted the vote count until Raul Salinas de Gortari magically emerged with a razor-thin majority. Much has changed in ten years; the PRI officially accepts meaningful multiparty democracy, but the test will come when the party's powers that be face the prospect of losing the presidency. Will the *caciques* of Oaxaca, the *priista* labor bosses, the big spenders of industry allow the party to cede power democratically? The ongoing battles for the soul of the PRI will resolve that question.

But beyond the question of whether the PRI would allow a Cardenas victory is the question of whether Cardenas can earn it in a free and fair election.His mayoralty is widely regarded as a serious test of his political and administrative abilities. If he cannot run Mexico City how can he govern the country? The incoming *perredistas* confronted a municipal administration that had been literally stripped bare by departing PRI loyalists, a city where decades of corrupt practices had accumulated into a cash-hemorrhaging administrative nightmare, a metropolis choking on its own refuse, a citizenry paralyzed by fear of a crime wave raging ever since the 1995 depression, and a police force arguably more frightening than the criminals. So far, Cardenas has compiled only a mediocre record against these sisyphyean challenges.

The municipal workers' union, controlled by PRI hardliners, has bedeviled Cardenas with labor stoppages and slowdowns at the least hint of layoffs or rationalization, and the similarly *priista* street vendor associations are engaged in running street fights with Cardenas' police forces, wreaking havoc in the heart of the city. But clearly subordinating everything to the presidential run in 2000, Cardenas has taken pains not to antagonize his foes, even at the risk of alienating his base. He has not mobilized his supporters, and in fact, his administration has even pleaded for an end to street demonstrations in the city on the grounds that they tie up traffic and frustrate urbanites.

Like Cardenas, the PRD itself suffers from a mushy centrism. While much of the former Communist and socialist left joined the party's ranks in 1988, the PRD's platforms call for little more than a nicer version of neoliberalism, one tweaked with Keynesian capital infusions. With high positions in the hands of professional politicos and former *priistas*, including Cardenas himself, the party finds itself caught between the pragmatism that brings electoral respectability and the popular and economically nationalist radicalism of its bases in the rural working class and urban middle class.

This split is exemplified on one side by party leader Porfirio Munoz Ledo's announcement that he will challenge Cardenas for the party presidential nomination in 2000. Munoz Ledo, erstwhile head of the PRI before bolting along with Cardenas and the rest of the "democratic current" in 1988, has broken with the party's congressional leadership over its refusal to compromise with the PRI and the PAN. He promises a more conciliatory and centrist party. On the other side, *perredista* politicians are under fire from independent unionists worried that the party will betray them by endorsing labor law reforms under circumstances more likely to benefit business or the PRI unions than authentic and democratic unions. Still, for the electoral left, there is nothing but the PRD.

Cardenas may have been the real victor in 1988, but to attain the presidency in 2000 he and his party must overcome the political schizophrenia that derailed his 1994 campaign. Without a clear alternative vision, the party's chances are iffy, but it must formulate a program radical enough to energize its bases yet pragmatic enough to win over Mexicans more fearful of change than tired of the status quo. Fortunately for the party, if not for individual Mexicans, the state of the economy provides ample ammunition with which to attack the PRI-state.

The Economy

THE PRI-STATE'S LOYALTY TO THE DOCTRINES OF NEOLIBERALISM ENDURES, despite the batterings the national economy has suffered under the ministrations of the technocrats. The national economy has finally climbed out of the depression precipitated by Zedillo's 1995 peso devaluation — annual GNP growth is at last positive again — but this marks nothing more than a return to a dismal situation for most. More than half of the economically active population cannot find work in the formal economy. And those fortunate enough to do so are working for less. Although real wages are finally moving upward again, they have declined 22% since devaluation and 68% since 1980, the eve of the neoliberal period. (Yet labor productivity has increased steadily throughout the period, indicating a massive transfer of wealth upwards.) The official minimum wage, currently about $90 per month, is so low given the cost of living that estimates of household minimum incomes are commonly based on multiples of the minimum wage. At current minimums, a gallon of milk, a pound of coffee or pork chops, or 10 pounds of potatoes take more than two hours' wages. As for a labor aristocracy, General Motors, now Mexico's largest private employer with 72,000 workers, pays its assembly line workers about $15 per day.

The wage squeeze on the urban working and middle-classes, and even worse conditions for peasants and rural workers, have been accompanied by a credit crunch so severe and so widespread that El Barzon, the debtors' organization, has grown into a major player in national politics. While the boom days of *salinismo* created a dozen billionaires, they also brought a doubling of average household debt and in fact diminished the middle class.

And, as the brouhaha over FOBAPROA makes clear, the country's financial system is in dire shape. Under heavy pressure from the mandarins of global finance to open up the financial sector, and battered by fall-out from the peso crisis and years of recession, Mexico's banks survive thanks only to government life support. Moody's Investor Services, a prominent monitoring organization, places Mexico's banking institutions at third from the bottom of its survey of 70 nations, lower than any other Latin American nation and below the troubled systems of East Asia

In what must seem a terrible irony to Mexican economic policy-makers, although they followed all the prescriptions of neoliberal economic orthodoxy to restart the economy and even seemed to be making progress, at least as measured by standard macroeconomic indicators, the crisis of the global economy is turning their efforts to dust. Investor skittishness has deflated the Mexican stock market, dropping leading indexes by nearly a quarter since the beginning of 1998. The peso is once again drifting downward. And Asian investment in Mexican manufacturing operations, one of the motors of the regime's feeble job creation program, is rapidly drying up as Korean and Japanese corporations hunker down in an effort to survive the crisis.

To add injury to insult, the global crisis has contributed to falling prices for oil, the mainstay of Mexico's export economy. With prices now hovering around $10 a barrel, the government, which depends on oil for nearly 40% of its revenues, has had to revise its budget twice. In both instances, the result was lay-offs of government workers and decreases in desperately needed social spending. This combination of financial disarray, global economic turbulence, and official adherence to neoliberal orthodoxy threatens to stop Mexico's economic recovery, such as it was, dead in its tracks. For the middle class, the maddening chimera of a decent standard of living once again vanishes like a mirage. For the working class, hopes of work turn into days of selling chewing gum on street corners. And for the technocratic champions of the free market, a day of reckoning is at hand. Former Finance Minister and current head of the central bank, Guillermo Ortiz, who oversaw the privatization under Salinas, once harbored presidential ambitions. Now he will be fortunate to keep his job. Eduardo Fernandez, who heads the agency in charge of FOBAPROA, will probably also be sacrificed.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the South

If nationally the PRI has demonstrated the flexibility to avert a meltdown, matters are different in the poverty-stricken and largely indigenous South — the states of Chiapas, Guerrero, and Oaxaca. Here, in the PRI's last, most secure, and recalcitrant bastions, all peaceful means of attacking the party's monopoly on power have failed. Repeated lawful attempts to force reform by peasant and grassroots organizations and the opposition PRD have been quashed by the region's old-style PRI machines. Rural *caciques*, party bureaucrats, large landowners, and post-NAFTA agricultural and mining/oil interests, together with police and military — and now paramilitary — forces, combine to create a potent, reactionary, and inherently counterrevolutionary juggernaut against which for increasing numbers of the population the only recourse is the gun.

Chiapas is the quintessential case. In this remote, heavily indigenous state bordering on Guatemala, landowners are still fending off the Revolution of 1910. While land reforms and protection of indigenous rights were embodied in the constitution of 1917 and enacted elsewhere, those changes were never more than empty promises in Chiapas. A succession of brutal and venal governors, aided and abetted by loyal *caciques* and the *municipio*- (county) or village-level patronage machines they controlled, left Chiapas with its social relations firmly planted in the 19th century even as late 20th century capitalism ripped like a tornado through the state. While cattle grazed idly on the extensive estates of the elite, neighboring villages fought each other and the ranchers for increasingly scarce access to land. Young people, seeing no future in the old ways, left to become landless laborers or migrated to the cities. Others, joined by land-hungry peasants from across the country, pushed into neighboring rainforests. Traditional village structures flew apart under the pressure. Alcoholism and criminality increased, and in another sign of social anomie, U.S.-based Protestant evangelicals boasted substantial success in converting traditionally Catholic peasants, adding yet another layer of conflict to the simmering villages.

This is the social and political milieu whence emerged the Zapatistas on NAFTA day 1994.Greeted by broad sentimental support, the Zapatistas struck with lightning speed, seizing towns and cities across Chiapas and battling the Mexican military in fighting that left at least 150 dead before retreating to their redoubts in the canyons and rainforests. In the five years since then, the Mexican government has engaged in a two-track policy toward the rebels: On the one hand, President Zedillo endorsed interminable negotiations leading to the San Andres Larrainzar accords of 1996, which were to have granted at least some of the Zapatista demands for indigenous autonomy, if not their broader demands for national democratic reform. The government, however, refused to implement the agreements, instead calling for renewed negotiations.

WHILE NEGOTIATORS HAGGLE, THE MEXICAN MILITARY SQUEEZES THE ZAPATISTAS. With some 50,000 troops in the state — not to mention police and paramilitary forces — commanders found it easy to encircle and isolate the rebels, always drawing the noose tighter. In 1998, two notably pernicious tactics came to the fore: The increased use of paramilitary groups, such as the ill-named Peace and Justice, and the increasingly aggressive use of the Mexican armed forces. After the December 1997 massacre of 46 pro-Zapatista peasants in the village of Acteal at the hands of paramilitaries, the military moved to "restore order," clearly a euphemism for strangling the rebels and destroying their villages.

Typically, police and military commanders turn a blind eye to local tensions between PRI loyalists and rebellious peasants until they explode in violence, then move in as "impartial" law enforcers. The lead-up to the massacre at Acteal is a prime example: In the weeks prior to the massacre, authorities sat on their hands as the *Municipio* of Chenalho, where Acteal is located, saw more than 30 acts of tit-for-tat political violence. Where Acteal is atypical is in the aftermath. Under tremendous political pressure, both national and international, authorities arrested dozens of paramilitaries and local PRI leaders for the crime. PRI loyalists generally find immunity from prosecution, while its opponents are subject to persecution by PRI-controlled state and local authorities, as well as harassment from the military.

In April, 900 troops raided the autonomous village of Taniperlas, beating and arresting its inhabitants and expelling foreign sympathizers before turning the control of the village over to PRI loyalists. A similar raid on the village of Nicolas Ruiz led to 163 arrests, again accompanied by beatings, looting, and the transfer of power to loyalists. And in what could be an ominous sign for the future, a June attack on the autonomous village of El Bosque by 500 army troops led to the first firefight between Zapatistas and the military since the early days of the rebellion. It also left eight Zapatista sympathizers dead.

The prospect of a new outbreak of fighting between the Zapatistas and the military eased somewhat later in the year, as government and military leaders backed away from their earlier aggressive posture under popular and international pressure. No invasions of autonomous villages have occurred since June, and Subcomandante Marcos broke his long silence to once again affirm the Zapatistas' willingness to renew negotiations. The contending sides are talking about talking. Still, the prospects for peace and justice in Chiapas are shaky at best. Archbishop Samuel Ruiz, long scorned by conservatives as "Sammy the Red" and the "Zapatista Pope," has resigned from the peace commission, citing implacable opposition from local authorities, and the Zedillo administration is deeply divided between conciliators and exterminators.

The U.S. government deserves special mention in this regard. Deeply invested in the current regime, the U.S. is assisting the Mexican military in its counterinsurgency efforts. A long tradition of Mexican standoffishness toward

U.S. military assistance has apparently ended as U.S. and Mexican officials weigh the common threat from the Zapatistas. According to the Latin American Working Group, Mexican officers now make up one-third of the students at the School of the Americas (305 students) and the Inter-American Air Force Academy (260 students). An additional 190 Mexican officers were trained under various other U.S. programs in 1997, while U.S. military hardware sold, leased, or given to the Mexicans reached $145 million — up from zero only a few years ago. Information on U.S. Special Forces deployments within Mexico or in-country training exercises by U.S. personnel is sketchy; the data is "not readily available," according to the Defense Department.

Most of the training and equipment is ostensibly aimed at counter-narcotics efforts, but both U.S. and Mexican officials insist that there are no tracking programs in place to ensure that the assistance is properly used. Such statements only lend credence to the widespread belief among Mexicans that the U.S. is directly supporting the military's counterinsurgency efforts in Chiapas and elsewhere. In fact, in the early fighting the Mexican military used U.S.-supplied Blackhawk helicopters designated for the drug war, and, unlike the caravans of anti-riot equipment that streamed south out of San Antonio in 1995, most of the military hardware now being delivered is better suited for counter-guerrilla warfare than combating drug traffickers or urban disorders.

The nature of the U.S. training at the School of the Americas is equally maleficient. Dozens of Mexican officers have completed courses at the school's Training Center in Psychological Warfare — courses whose manuals recommend the use of paramilitary units to separate insurgents from their supporters and destroy their infrastructure. The use of paramilitaries also shields the state from direct responsibility for political violence. General Mario Renan Castillo, head of the Mexican armed forces from 1995 through 1997, was apparently an apt pupil. During his tenure, and with his encouragement, at least a half-dozen paramilitary groups sprung up in Chiapas. The resort to paramilitaries is a particularly ominous sign. Similar strategies in Colombia have helped turn that country into a charnel house.

While the radically democratic Zapatistas — better described as armed reformists than as revolutionaries — dominate the armed left in Chiapas, in Guerrero and Oaxaca and beyond, old-school Marxist revolutionaries continue to enrage the government. For the past two years, the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), itself a coalition of around 20 small clandestine armed groups, has carried out sporadic attacks across southeast and central Mexico. Political descendents of the Marxist-Leninist guerrillas active in Guerrero and Oaxaca in the 1970s, the *erpistas* follow a Maoist peoples' popular war strategy and claim to have advanced beyond "the stage of the clandestine accumulation of forces" and entered into a stage of armed propaganda. With an estimated 300 armed combatants and thousands of active sympathizers, as well as strict military discipline and weapons including light artillery and anti-aircraft guns, the ERP has demonstrated the ability to inflict damage. Its attacks have left dozens of soldiers and police dead, along with a like number of its own militants. In response, thousands of soldiers patrol the southeast, along with other hotspots, such as the Huasteca region of the states of Puebla and Veracruz.

The ERP is now lying low — a self-announced phase of tactical retreat —

but could easily cause more casualties in a hurry if it switches back to an active armed propaganda counteroffensive. The government's initial massive military response and the subsequent two-year "silent war" with the rebels reflect both its genuine apprehension about the ERP's politico-military potential and its determination to avoid negotiations with the guerrillas. In contrast to its stance toward the Zapatistas, the government refuses to acknowledge the ERP as a political entity. Although the hardline response to the ERP gives the lie to the official line that it is "a small armed group of criminals," that characterization allows the state to forego talks.

Following a strategy of "heightening the contradictions" (or the worse the better), the EPR views the human rights violations and military repression that now blanket the region as necessary evils that will ultimately bring the masses over to the side of revolution. And they may be right. The frequently brutal state repressive apparatus is probably the best recruiting agent the guerrillas have. Mexican and international human rights groups have issued report after excruciating report detailing torture, kidnapping, rape, robbery, murder, and "disappearances" on a massive scale in the zones of military governance.

The experience of the Loxicha indigenous region in the sierras of Oaxaca proves instructive: the remote Loxicha villages, long suspect in the state's eyes, have seen their village councils and mayors arrested wholesale, their villages repeatedly raided, their men frequently taken away by soldiers and masked informers. Some seventy Loxicha men have either "disappeared" or been arrested since 1996; unknown others have gone over to the rebels. Some of those arrested have signed confessions of membership in the EPR, but there is a small problem with those confessions. They were written in Spanish, while most of the Mixtec-speaking villagers are unable to read or write in the former tongue. Those who purportedly confessed have since claimed they were tortured and forced to sign blank documents — later filled in by their torturers.

Violence in the Loxicha flared in June, when in the pre-dawn hours hundreds of Mexican army troops surrounded and attacked the schoolhouse in the village of Los Charcos. Inside were guerrillas who had come to the village to hold meetings with the residents, as well as peasants from neighboring villages who were spending the night there. Subsequent military press releases described a "heroic" firefight with the rebels, but witnesses at the scene described a massacre. According to witnesses, military commanders demanded the guerrillas surrender, then immediately opened fire from all sides, including from hovering helicopter gunships. Reporters noted thousands of bullet holes in the schoolhouse the next day (before it was demolished and rebuilt). Twelve people died and 26 were wounded in the assault — none of them soldiers. Since that massacre, re-energized guerrillas have repeatedly attacked military and police outposts, including a late June ambush on the highway to the Pacific resort of Zihuatanejo that left three soldiers dead.

The guerrillas killed at El Charco were not, however, ERP members. Instead, they represented a newly emerged guerrilla faction calling itself the ERPI (insurgent). The schism is apparently rooted in tactical divisions. The ERPI is largely indigenous and argues that the ERP tactic of propaganda by the deed, such as the hit-and-run attack on the coastal resort of Hautulco that killed 11 in 1996, is counterproductive and not supported by local communities.

The emergence of yet another guerrilla front is a bad omen for the state's counterinsurgency strategy. And there may be more on the way. Military and non-governmental sources agree that there are about a dozen other embryonic guerrilla groupings, and the military is worried that the ERPI's new armed option may trigger these groups to move beyond propaganda actions. While analysts contend that these groups operate in 17 of Mexico's 32 states, all of them are active in the southeast and many of them are either composed of or aimed at the region's indigenous population.

Drugs: Singing the Traffickers' Song

AT THE OTHER END OF THE COUNTRY, an entirely different phenomenon threatens the state and civil society alike: the rise of Mexican drug trafficking organizations to unprecedented wealth and power. Mexico has long supplied marijuana and heroin to eager consumers in the United States. The groups that evolved to handle that trade typically maintained close relations with the small farmers whose crops they purchased, and while they accumulated large sums of money, they tended to keep a low political profile. Corruption occurred at the local level and violence was uncommon.

Things changed in the 1990s. Colombian cocaine traffickers, besieged at home and facing an American anti-drug blockade in the Caribbean, turned to the Mexican organizations and their already existing smuggling apparatus. The opportunistic Mexicans soon began taking payment in kind, setting up their own wholesale distribution networks inside the U.S., and reaping incredible profits. They also applied their know-how to revamp the Mexican heroin industry and take over the formerly U.S.-based methamphetamine trade. Numbers are always problematic in the murky world of illicit commodities, but Mexican observers estimate that the five leading "cartels" are reaping a $7 billion annual profit on a trade of $25-30 billion. Drugs have become Mexico's leading export.

Proscribed substances could be regulated as a commodity like any other, and the trade's deleterious effects would be limited to that self-inflicted by drug abusers, along with the social consequences of such behavior. In fact, there is a growing, if still tiny, minority within the Mexican academic and law enforcement communities who argue for the decriminalization of the traffic, but for now the drug industry is necessarily clandestine and criminal. This status quo threatens the Mexican state on two fronts. First, the unprecedented degree of corruption and official complicity has shattered what little public confidence there was in Mexican law enforcement and, more generally, the political system. Second, and perhaps more insidious, it has allowed the United States to meddle ever more deeply in Mexico's sovereign affairs in the name of the War on Drugs.

The 1997 arrest of newly-appointed Mexican drug czar General Rebollo for being on the payroll of Amado Carillo Fuentes (known as the "Lord of the Skies" for using 747s to transport tons of cocaine), was only the most blistering example of the corruption inspired by the drug trade. Here, drug money had obtained the complicity of the highest drug enforcement officer in the land. But with Mexican trafficking organizations paying out an estimated million dollars a week in bribes (twice the budget for drug law enforcement), the lucre is reaching many other hands as well, from federal and state judicial police commanders and military officers to highly-placed fixers in the government. The Swiss government's recent seizure of $132 million from jailed former first brother Raul Salinas indicates that he was the point man for the industry during his brother's administration. The current point man will not, if events follow the pattern, be revealed until the current administration has left office. Then the new administration, in a token effort to appease U.S. and domestic critics, will offer up the sacrificial lambs.

Official lawlessness and police violence on behalf of traffickers is an even more socially corrosive consequence of the drug trade's illegal status. Border cities such as Tijuana have witnessed firefights between *federales* and *judiciales* (state judicial police) acting as bodyguards for competing bands of traffickers, assassinations of prosecutors arranged by police commanders, and the routinized use of police vehicles and equipment in drug transport. Military units working for traffickers have "disappeared" pesky journalists. Official lawlessness extends to the seeming impunity with which traffickers evade arrest and imprisonment, not only for drug charges but also for a spiraling number of murders. Shake-ups among the cartels, especially since the mysterious death of Carillo Fuentes in 1997, have turned the border into a bloody war zone. Innocent bystanders and targets' families are being killed in record numbers, with last September's murder of 18 members of trafficking families in Baja California marking a new level of violence. At the same time, so-called narco-juniors, the spoiled children of first generation traffickers, have grown infamous for their thrill-seeking rampages across the northern deserts, and are probably responsible for a large number of the dozens of raped and murdered *maquiladora* workers whose carelessly buried bodies, discovered with gruesome regularity, dot the desert.

Meanwhile, the U.S., whose consumer predilections and strangled official response are responsible for the pathologies created by the illegal drug industry, sits in moral and political judgment of Mexico's sins. In fact, U.S. drug policy is much more than mere moral posturing. It is a wedge, a means of exerting influence on and, at times, direct control over crucial sectors of the Mexican security apparatus. The War on Drugs provides the pretext for rapidly warming ties between the U.S. and Mexican military establishments, and while the Mexican military has traditionally stayed aloof from politics — there have been no serious coup threats since the 1930s — its role as counterrevolutionary guarantor of the PRI-state against the guerrilla threat is giving military commanders greater political voice. Ties to the U.S. military, nurtured in the name of fighting drugs, only make the Mexican state more apt to apply U.S. counterinsurgency techniques against rebellious sectors of its own populace.

But the U.S. role extends beyond the military. The State Department has provided $16 million in the last two years to "support Mexican law enforcement efforts," and the Justice Department exerted strong pressure on the Zedillo administration to pass last year's U.S.-style organized crime law. Justice is also providing assistance designed to strengthen the investigative capabilities of Mexican police and prosecutors. In addition, the U.S. Agency for International Development has judicial exchange programs and conducts seminars and training courses for Mexican federal and state judges.

Both the narco-economy of the north and the armed opposition in the south will continue to pose severe tests, albeit of vastly different sorts, for the PRI-state and the emerging multi-party system. The drug traffickers do not seek to change the system, but, like other capitalist enterprises, merely to operate as freely as possible within it. Since the traffickers' interests cannot be addressed through legal means, they use those means at their disposal: corruption and violence. Precisely because the drug industry has so pervasively employed these tools, the Mexican state cannot muster the strength to do more than manage the traffic, not impede it, and certainly not eliminate it.

And so the narco-economy, confined outside the rule of law, feeds the state at the same time it corrodes it. Mexican drug law enforcers grow fat with bribes (honest ones grow cold in their graves), politicians take "campaign donations," peasants take their harvest money, and merchants find drug money as fungible as any other. Without massive changes in the global drug prohibition regime or in drug consumption and trafficking patterns, neither of which is remotely likely, much will happen — another major trafficker arrested, another planeload of cocaine seized — but little will change. The ultimate harvest is bitterness and cynicism eating away at the body politic.

The guerrilla challenge is an entirely different matter, but appears as intractable. In general, the "minimum program" for Zapatistas and *erpistas* alike is meaningful democracy, a demand especially heartfelt in PRI machine-controlled rural areas. But the social forces who control the party's local machinery in Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Chiapas understand all too well the losses that true democracy would entail for them. And even if, by some miracle, local democracy were allowed to bloom, the interests of the peasantry and rural workers would still run counter to those of the neoliberal state in which they would now have some small voice. Because there is no sign of sudden enlightenment among the rural *priista* backbone, let alone signals that Mexico will return to the pre-NAFTA economic nationalism that at least paid lip service to the popular classes, the most likely medium-term prognosis for the south is festering, low-level insurgency and permanent military occupation.

While neither the festering insurgencies in the south nor the reign of the *narcotraficantes* on the northern border pose an immediate threat to the Mexican state or to the country's nascent multi-party system, they do raise the specter of a Mexico headed down the Colombian path. There, drug traffickers carried out a bloody, if ultimately failed, war against the state, while peasant-based insurgencies have waged a more successful, 30-year struggle against the central government. (Leftist Colombian guerillas now control almost half the national territory.) The price for Colombia has been massive internal refugee movements, countless massacres, a justice system turned into a virtual star chamber, and a rate of political murder and "disappearances" that make Mexico's human rights violations appear piddling.

But the Colombian model is only the worst-case scenario. If Mexico's electoral system, with or without the PRI, can satisfy popular demands for justice and democracy, the nation can avoid the Colombian path. It will not be easy, because for millions of Mexicans justice implies economic justice, which puts them on a collision course not only with the country's political and economic elites, but also with the mandarins of the global economy.

Building on the Strengths of The Socialist Feminist Tradition

Sue Ferguson

SOCIALIST FEMINISM AS A VIBRANT INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL CURRENT has come and gone. It stalled in the mid-1980s, unable to muster a cohesive response to the critics of dual systems theory (the theory that social power was bifurcated into a patriarchal system of gender oppression and a parallel, though intersecting, capitalist system of economic class exploitation).[1] A few erstwhile socialist feminists retreated into an economic reductionism while others moved increasingly toward a purely cultural explanation of women's oppression that has culminated in feminist postmodernism. In the late 1990s, however, with globalization foisting upon us a host of unwelcome economic realities, even many postmodern feminists have begun to search for a materialist explanation.[2] Although economic reductionism has little to offer in this regard, one often neglected strain of socialist feminism – social reproduction theory – is more promising. If socialist feminism is to exist as anything more than an intellectual artifact, it is essential to engage with the anti-capitalist insights promoted by those working within the social reproduction framework.

The promise of social reproduction theory lies in its commitment to a materialist explanation of women's oppression that rejects economic reductionism without forfeiting economic explanation. Its premises, if fully developed, are essential to a renewed socialist feminism, for they can provide a coherent theoretical underpinning to an anti-capitalist coalition politics. They have, however, rarely been articulated as such. Instead, those who ground their work in social reproduction theory tend to rely on, as I will show, certain structural functionalist concepts and logic, reproducing many of the shortcomings that plagued dual systems theory. In the process, they undermine their theory's innovations and emancipatory potential.

This article begins by locating social reproduction theory within the overall trajectory of socialist feminist thought, emerging out of the debate over dual systems theory as a materialist alternative to cultural feminism. I then explain the theory's central innovations in terms of its foundation in historical materialism; these Marxist roots prompt its proponents to question the economistic materialism that has dominated

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the tradition and the left in general. By conceiving the material foundation of social life as the productive and reproductive activities of everyday life, social reproductionists offer a materialist understanding of social relations that is better able to take account of contradictions and complexity than one based on the market alone and, in so doing, they open the door to an anti-capitalist feminist coalition politics. This door is, however, only ever partially opened, since, I go on to argue, proponents of social reproductionism do not fully incorporate and develop the theory's central innovations. I conclude with an argument about the need to more clearly establish the specific impact capital accumulation and class exploitation have on the overall process of social reproduction and bring to this analysis an historical and political conception of class. Only then, I argue, can the promise of this strain of socialist feminism be developed.

The Socialist Feminist Tradition

Since the early 1990s, a number of works have been published telling the story of socialist feminism.[3] While the details differ to some degree, the broad contours of the stories told are consistent. From its activist origins in the New Left, through the domestic labor debate to the theoretical cul du sac of dual systems theory and challenges issuing from black feminism, socialist feminism underwent a number of ground-breaking transformations before it began its relatively rapid decline as an influential political and intellectual current in the early 1980s. At that time, the activist/academic ties that had forged the tradition were strained to the point of breaking, sending individual socialist feminists in a number of different directions.

The festering (and ultimately unresolved) issue fueling these developments centered on the place of Marxist analysis within the socialist feminist perspective. One tendency, which explained women's oppression in terms of the functional requisites of capital's drive for profit, constantly pushed up against a second tendency, which understood women's oppression in terms of men's socio-biological drive for mastery – a drive that intersected with, but nonetheless operated independently of, a co-existing economic system. In the former (economic reductionist) camp, class analysis and its attendant form of resistance, class struggle, are considered "fundamental" to women's emancipation. In the latter (dual systems) camp, Marxism is at best a secondary consideration; at worst, it is irrelevant.

The inability to move beyond these two inadequate formulations has, over time, prompted a number of one-time socialist feminists to abandon not only Marxism, but materialist analysis in general. By the mid-1980s, the Althusserian socialist feminism represented by Michele Barrett's *Women's Oppression Today* (published first in 1980 and republished three times in the ensuing eight years) was the dominant current. Barrett's attention to patriarchal ideology, and its "relative autonomy" from the economic system, has been aptly criticized for reproducing that which it claimed to redress: dualism and economic reductionism.[4] Barrett has attempted to answer that criticism by moving in an increasingly anti-materialist "post-Marxist" direction by essentially, according to one critic, "substituting discursive determinism for what [Barrett rejects] as an economic determinism in classical Marxism."[5] Thus, those socialist feminists who followed Barrett's critique find themselves reincarnated as postmodernists, with little or no use for Marxist concepts and theory.

Others, however, remained committed to a materialist framework, often viewing that framework through a lens critical of Marxism, or of the Marxism espoused by early socialist feminists (an important distinction to which I will return). Many outside academic corridors persisted in bringing class analysis to feminist organizations and struggles and/or feminist analysis to class organizations and struggles.[6] Inside the academy, a significant minority continued to explore women's history, politics and sociology from a materialist perspective, enriching socialism's and feminism's intellectual heritages. In some instances, socialist feminists have struggled, with more or less success, to incorporate aspects of an anti-racist perspective as well.[7]

But much of this scholarly and activist work has been carried out on vague theoretical foundations. Although broadly framed by a social reproduction perspective, it seems to stem more from an empirically grounded conviction that capitalism and sexism (and, at times, racism) are integrally related than from a rigorously constructed, coherent social theory. In fact, over the course of this past decade, the work of theorizing has too frequently been turned over to feminist Foucauldians and Derridians; the domination of academic postmodernism, and its insistence on the fragmented, fictional nature of experience, has led many materially-inclined socialist feminists to shy away from developing a broad, unifying perspective. Ilene Philipson's and Karen Hansen's comment in 1990 remains largely true today: "While many . . . socialist-feminist contributions have enormously enriched our understanding of the world and women's place within it, none provides the all-encompassing theoretical framework that both dual systems theory and [Gayle Rubin's] sex/gender system attempted to elicit."[8] As a result, materialist feminists today make do either with tired, if not entirely worn out, principles and convictions or with loose formulations about social reproduction.

But social reproduction theory was, in the first instance, an attempt to develop precisely that elusive theoretical coherence. In the early 1980s, a small number of socialist feminists argued that a unitary, materialist social theory was indeed possible.[9] Dissatisfied with simply "adding gender or race on," theorists of social reproduction aimed for a truly integrative analysis. They suggested such a theory could avoid the pitfalls of economic reductionism and functionalism if its materialist foundations were conceived as social and historical, not abstract, narrowly-defined economic relations.

According to the proponents of social reproductionism, early socialist feminism relied on an unduly narrow, ahistorical conceptualization of the economy; it treated the economy as a self-sufficing arena of commodity production existing independently of the daily and generational production of people's lives.[10] In so doing, it uncritically accepted and abstractly reproduced what was, in fact, a defining historical feature of capitalism: the separation of production from consumption (or reproduction). It is not necessary, social reproductionists argue, to abandon Marxism in order to move beyond this point. Rather, only by returning to the basic premises of Marxist methodology – its historical materialist premises – can socialist feminism provide a materialist explanation of women's oppression that overcomes both the dualist and economic reductionist tendencies of the tradition's earlier work.

The Innovations of Social Reproduction Theory

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, PAT AND HUGH ARMSTRONG WROTE IN 1983, begins from the conviction that "the ways people co-operate to provide for their daily and future needs, combined with the techniques and materials at their disposal, establish the framework within which all human activity takes place."[11] They went on to argue that the economy, in this view, is not simply that arena in which goods (commodities) are produced; rather, it is that system through which people organize to meet all their human needs. And a (perhaps the) central element of this organization is the daily and generational production of individuals, which, in the capitalist era, takes place largely in households (and, as more recent social reproductionists stress, in the community). The material basis of women's oppression can be understood by exploring the different ways women and men contribute to the production of individuals – contributions which are not only socially, but also biologically, determined.

The historical nature of this broadly defined economy is important to emphasize. By the beginning of the seventeenth century in Britain, the process by which goods are produced to meet subsistence needs begins to be separated out from the consumption of those goods and the generational production of individuals. That process, which takes place through the market in labor and goods, is not primarily organized around the goal of meeting human need but around the capitalist mandate to accumulate. And as Marx explains, the logic of the capitalist mandate is to commodify everything in sight – including, or especially, labor power. As more and more people work outside of their households for a money-wage, they become increasingly dependent on the market for the items they once produced at home (or obtained through the informal economy of bartering, lending and giving). But that dependence simply intensifies people's dependence on waged work, for without a wage, they cannot obtain crucial subsistence goods. It is because of this cycle of dependence that the market actually comes to dominate social reproduction in general.[12] Quite simply, people's ability to sustain themselves and others – to materially reproduce themselves – comes to depend upon their ability to earn a wage to feed, clothe and shelter themselves and their family.

THE DOMINATION OF THE MARKET IS UNIQUE TO CAPITALISM and it leads to some important developments in political theory. For one, the market is increasingly equated with the economy, and a whole science (Political Economy and later, Economics) develops to explain its laws of operation. Rather than understanding the economy as the historical and human organization it is, political economists reify it, imbuing it with a dynamic (the laws of supply and demand) apparently devoid of human relations. This is what Marx identified as the fetishization of commodities and the market, and his critique of political economy is, in fact, an effort at defetishization – that is, an attempt to reveal the social reality behind this narrowly construed economy. As a sphere of exchange cut off from the acts of production/reproduction, the market effectively obscures that reality (the nexus of which is the exploitative relationship between capitalist and laborer).

Marx's critique revealed those social relations which are immediately wrapped up with the sphere of commodity production: those between laborers and capitalists. That he did not analyze in any detail the social relations of human reproduction is problematic from a feminist point of view. It has tended to reinforce the message among those struggling to change the world that the only (or perhaps the most) important arena of human activity is the formal economy, or the market; thus, reproductive activities, in which women have historically played a central role, have been neglected as sites for political struggle. Moreover, much existing Marxism has not incorporated its founder's critique of commodity fetishism. Many 20th-century Marxists have deployed key concepts such as class, exploitation and capital in ahistorical and abstract ways, using them as a sort of counter-science to political economy rather than as a means of revealing the social relations they represent. In other words, Marxist economics is often just that, another form of Economics – not the defetishizing social critique of political economy it was intended to be. By placing them outside the sphere of inquiry, much modern Marxism reinforces the tendency to neglect those social relations that underpin the formal economy. Arguably, it is this Marxism that informed early socialist feminism and it is this Marxism with which social reproduction theorists began to take issue in the 1980s.

By returning to the maxims of historical materialism, the Armstrongs and others suggested that, while the market is the linchpin of the "the ways people co-operate to provide for their daily and future needs" in the age of capitalism, it is not a self-sustaining entity; capital accumulation, the market's mandate, depends upon the prior existence of the free waged laborer (prior because the market has no internal mechanism for creating the laborer). In other words, the capitalist drive to commodify stops short of the system's most basic need: the production of people.[13] The production of people occurs primarily within the household and implicates men and women in very different ways. Because households have historically been organized around a sexual division of labor, men and women have developed distinct interests and constructed power relations to those ends.[14]

Thus, a functional relationship between the formal economy and households exists insofar as the latter ultimately supply the laborers on which the former rests. But, and this is where social reproduction theorists depart from the economic reductionist socialist feminists, households are not merely units geared toward feeding the capitalist system with labor. And, by extension, women are not mere breeding machines, spitting out future laborers for capitalists to exploit. Rather, women's reproductive labor and household relations in general are as much a part of "the ways people co-operate to meet their daily and future needs" as is the market. Unlike the market, however, households are oriented to fulfilling human need – a mandate antithetical to capital accumulation. As a result, households are not purely functional units but are themselves the source of a distinct set of dynamics put in motion by the impulse to meet the human needs of social reproduction – that is, the human need to reproduce daily and, in the case of households with children, generationally.

THE INEVITABLE CONNECTION BETWEEN HOUSEHOLDS AND THE FORMAL ECONOMY is manifest in two fundamental ways: capitalists' requirement for a healthy, renewed workforce each day and over the long term; and households' dependence on wages as the crucial, if not the only, means of reproducing themselves. Still, the reproduction of life cannot be reduced to the imperatives of the market. People co-operate to meet human needs through the market, but also through households and communities and these social activities together form the material basis of life – a material basis whose relations are at once complex and contradictory. This is the foundation of the social reproductionist claim to an integrative social analysis that provides an alternative to the shortcomings of dual systems theory.

By emphasizing the importance of the market and the household/community in determining social relations, social reproductionists point to a method of grounding analysis in material reality without resorting to economic reductionism. To insist on bringing the underlying reality of households and communities, without which the formal economy could not exist, to the fore analytically is a long overdue corrective to the Marxist economics and socialist feminism of an earlier era. And, in suggesting that these processes are socially integrated (as the Armstrongs put it: "Patriarchy and capitalism are not autonomous, nor even interconnected systems, but the same system"[15]), social reproduction theory clears the way for a materialist model of production and reproduction that is much more comprehensive than the market model that has dominated feminist discussion and debate in the past.

Another important innovation social reproductionists offer is related to their commitment to defetishization. Far from engaging with Marxism as an abstract science that offers only economic laws of motion, they take up the historical materialist project of deconstructing the social relations that make those laws possible. And in exploring the social foundations of economic organization, they uncover a web of experiences that throw up contradictory interests and needs that are constantly evolving. For that reason, social reproductionists offer an alternative to the traditional approach to social theory (employed as much by Marxists as nonMarxists), in which concepts like the economy, class, gender and race are treated as just that – concepts, emptied of social content and historical specificities. One of the central upshots of this recognition is the attempt to retheorize class as a lived experience, beginning with the acknowledgment that class never exists outside of the other fundamental relations of lived reality (i.e., race, gender, age, ability, etc.). In the words of Wally Seccombe and David Livingstone: "We seek to break with a "class first" framework that treats gender, generational, and race relations as subsidiary to, or something derived from, class relations." Rather, class, like other interests, take form because of the forces of human agency (people making "common cause with one another") reacting to the "multidimensional structures of inequality" that subject people to "similar treatment, hardship, or risk."[16]

These insights of social reproduction theory are significant politically because they provide a potential foundation for an anti-capitalist politics. Meg Luxton and Heather Jon Maroney suggest that activists working within the social reproduction paradigm have been able to offer the following "working answer to the intricacies of the gender/race/class question: because the class structure of capitalism "maintains and perpetuates" racism, sexism, and heterosexism, it must be "overturned before such problems can be entirely eradicated," by means of coalition politics, in which all the partners' goals are "truly integrated" as part of the same struggle and also as part of a struggle for socialism."[17] By explaining oppression in terms of a materialist foundation that is defined in part, though not exclusively, by the capitalist dynamic of accumulation that drives the formal economy, social reproduction theory makes it possible for left women's groups, for example, to find common ground with the radical elements of the labor movement, without the politics and struggle of one set of interests being given a higher priority than the other – or without the one being seen as more "fundamental" to overturning the socio-economic system as a whole than the other.

Similarly, if class is not treated simply as a formal-economic category, a "thing" to which people either belong or do not belong, but rather as one inevitable condition of existence that people experience through other inevitable conditions of their existence (such as race or gender), it becomes possible to look for ways in which left anti-racist or anti-sexist politics are, at one and the same time, anti-capitalist class politics. It also becomes possible to distinguish between those elements of race- or gender-based politics that have more to do with propping up the socio-economic system than dismantling it.[18]

Slipping Back Into Dualism

After almost 20 years of scholarly and activist work by committed social reproductionists, however, such possibilities remain unrealized. Instead, its tenets have served largely as a loose framework for socio-historical and empirical studies often catalogued under the heading Feminist Political Economy. Studies, ranging from explorations of women's (re)productive work in the fur trade to globalization's effects on women's lives as workers and mothers, convincingly illustrate the integration of productive and reproductive processes. While these are significant insofar as they serve to highlight a set of important issues which have been ignored by traditional political economy (about, for instance, the super-exploitation of homeworkers, for whom unpaid domestic labor merges with underpaid waged labor), they stop short of pushing forward and developing the theoretical innovations necessary to build a solid anti-capitalist feminist politics.

This is partly due to the radical rupture between academic and activist feminism that is the legacy of socialist feminism. While the goodwill to heal that rupture exists in some quarters, the socio-political conditions have mitigated against it.[19] Over the past two decades, the left has experienced limited, uneven and isolated successes; as a result, it has been fighting a largely defensive battle to prevent the dissolution of programs and benefits won in previous years; thus, it has not been in a position to define the political terrain. In this context, many of the hard questions about moving the struggle forward simply do not get asked, and the momentum for activists and academics to learn from and work with one another is difficult to establish.

But the possibilities of social reproduction theory elude many of its proponents for another important reason: despite, and in contradiction to, an avowed commitment to understanding the materialist foundation of social relations as an integrated and unified process, some of the basic theoretical concepts used to elucidate that process recall the structural functionalist approach that characterized dual systems theory. This is abundantly clear in the formulations employed by many proponents of social reproduction theory today. Isabella Bakker, for instance, explaining the social reproduction paradigm in an introduction to a popular text on Canadian political economy, could be tearing a page from Heidi Hartmann's classic elaboration of dual systems theory, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism," when she writes: "Gender differentiation is universal and of fundamental importance on par with class divisions . . . There is a co-determination with economic structures of sex/gender systems."[20]

But this slippage is not simply linguistic; it is, in fact, conceptual and can be traced to some of the earliest contributors to social reproduction theory, including the work of Wally Seccombe, whose 1983 flagship paper on social reproduction, "Marxism and Democracy," is widely cited. Seccombe calls for an "all-embracing" approach that conceptualizes "the integration of the socio-economic with politico-legal relations of state and the cultural formation of groups and classes."[21] He goes on to develop what he argues is the theoretical tool required for this project, a "reworked" mode of production that takes account of the (re)production of both commodities and labor power. From this promising beginning, however, he quickly moves to the more problematic claim that two distinct logics of social development come to dominate: "economic" laws governing the consumption of labor power and "demographic" laws regulating its production; domestic groups or households, he informs, mediate the relationship between the two sets of laws, which are drawn together essentially as a result of the capitalist's need for labor power.[22] While Seccombe points to the contradictions that permeate the relationship between the economic and demographic processes (insisting that one cannot be understood solely and directly in terms of the needs of the other), his basic conceptual tools recall the structural functionalism of dual systems theory.[23]

THE WEAKNESSES OF THIS APPROACH ARE CARRIED OVER into current social reproduction literature. To begin, there is lingering unease about how an analysis of race is to be integrated into a two-sided process of social reproduction. The authors of a 1997 book, *Recast Dreams*, a study of working class families in a Canadian steel industry town, do not attempt to theoretically integrate the experience of race and racism into their perspective. While they acknowledge this as a weakness of the study, their explanation – that the study's subject is a White working class community – is both questionable and telling, given current discussions in anti-racist theorizing about the need to problematize Whiteness.

Another difficulty that emerges in the social reproduction literature is an ambiguity about the precise nature and locus of power within society. In particular, proponents of the theory tend to sidestep the twin issues of capital accumulation and class exploitation. For example, the authors of *Recast Dreams* illustrate empirically the interdependency of households, communities and formal economy, but their analysis of the way the social forces they identify interact is difficult to decipher. In one tantalizing passage, David Livingstone and Meg Luxton refer to a "hierarchy of determination" and suggest that of the three primary spheres of activity, "workplace production relations tend to constrain the autonomy of household activities . . . while communities . . . take up more discretionary parts of people's time and energies."[24] This passage, which stands without further elaboration, could suggest that the dynamic of capital accumulation impinges unevenly on all sets of social relations, shaping their interaction in specific ways. But this position is neither clearly argued nor developed and would seem to fly in the face of other passages in the book that treat the three sets of relations, in dual systems fashion, as equally determining.

Strategies for feminist resistance are also disappointing. Two recent collections dealing with globalization and the dismantling of the welfare state serve as good examples.[25] While some authors acknowledge the limits of state reform, they continue to advocate it as a solution with little or no discussion about why this is a limited strategy (that is, because the state is a capitalist state) or what steps might be taken to overcome those limitations. Others advocate building militant local resistance that focuses its energies outside accepted political channels while attempting to forge international links. But here too, no clear conception of how such a strategy can confront the power of capital is on offer, nor is there in-depth discussion of what, if any, role organized labor can play in the struggle. Given the historic antagonisms between movement politics and labor (and a theoretical framework that asserts their social integration) this lacuna is especially glaring.

Building Upon the Strengths

TO MOVE BEYOND THE WEAKNESSES OF A STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALIST APPROACH and develop a truly integrative and historical understanding of social reproduction involves two crucial tasks: clarifying the role of capital accumulation in the overall process; and further developing the notions of class and class consciousness as a political and lived experience – that is, returning to the premises of social reproduction theory outlined above.

Here, it is useful to engage more thoroughly with the Armstrongs' contributions, for they, more clearly than their social reproduction colleagues, integrate the process of capital accumulation to the overall process of social reproduction. Beginning from the notion that the overall dynamic of social reproduction is tied to the ability of people to meet certain physiological and historical needs, they essentially argue that those needs will be thwarted so long as one fundamental means of reproducing ourselves – the production of subsistence goods – is commandeered by the forces of capital accumulation in an effort to generate profit, not goods. Thus, in their model, the formal economy plays a decisive role and capital accumulation is clearly a powerful social force. It asserts its mandate over the whole process of social reproduction precisely because people's lives (meeting subsistence needs) are dependent upon its modus operandi, the market. These insights, which get lost among the dualist formulations of other theorists, suggest that the goal of democratic control of the process of social reproduction must involve confronting the power of capital. Social movements must look for ways to link their struggles with those which confront the power of capital directly, at the workplace.

Still, although the capitalist economy is intimately connected with – if not absolutely determinative of – the social relations of daily and generational reproduction, the capital/labor relation is not the most important or fundamental axis of struggle; rather, the Armstrongs and others suggest, class relations are, like gender, race, age and ability, an inescapable condition of people's lives. As such, they are reciprocally implicated: class is constituted in and through the experience of gender and race, and vice versa. It follows that neither production relations nor gender relations can be assumed to be more progressive or valid fronts of resistance.[26] Struggle and strategy must be, therefore, assessed within the specific contexts. And if gender and class, etc., are not separate systems, so much as they are a series of layered experiences, it is essential to move away from framing analysis in terms of structures and functions and begin instead with the real social relations and the human agents that produce, shape and sustain those structures and functions. The defetishizing critique of social reproduction theory is a promising beginning, and Seccombe, Livingstone and others have advanced this key innovation in significant ways, particularly around the issues of class consciousness.[27] But as long as social reproductionists retain elements of dual systems analyses, their efforts in this regard will be stunted. As Himani Bannerji suggests in her provocative discussion of socialist feminist political economy, a structuralist framework ultimately treats (re)producers as "functional assumptions of the production process," rather than the "living, conscious agents" they actually are.[28]

The theoretical framework for an anti-capitalist materialist feminist theory and politics has already been sketched. If the strengths of the socialist feminist tradition are to be developed today, it is necessary to draw those contours more boldly.

NOTES

1. That dilemma evolved out of two main criticisms: a functionalist account of the intersection of patriarchy and capitalism; and a failure to incorporate an explanation of other (specifically racial) oppressions. For a key text of dual systems theory, see Lydia Sargent, ed., *Women & Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1981). A good summary of the limits of dual systems theory is provided by Iris Young, *Throwing Like a Girl and other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), especially pp. 21-35.

2. See, for example, Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, *Materialist Feminisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993).

3. Two important books are: Karen V. Hansen and Ilene J. Philipson, eds., *Women, Class, and the Feminist Imagination: A Socialist-Feminist Reader* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990) and Rosemary Hennessy and Chrys Ingraham, eds., *Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference, and Women's Lives* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997).

4. See Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas. "Rethinking Women's Oppression," *New Left Review* 144, 1984.

5. Teresa L. Ebert, "Critiques for a Red Feminism," in *Post-ality: Marxism and Postmodernism*. Spring 1995, p.114. Ebert is engaging Barrett's book, *The Politics of Truth: from Marx to Foucault* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

6. The examples are numerous; they include struggles like that waged in the late 1980s by the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics or, more recently, the Common Threads project set up to help the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE!) organize LA garment workers.

7. See, for example, Linda Carty and Dionne Brand, "'Visible Minority' Women – a Creation of the Canadian State," *Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation sur la*

recherche feministe, 17:3, Sept. 1988: 39-42; or Christina Gabriel and Laura MacDonald, "NAFTA and Economic Restructuring: Some Gender and Race Implications," in *Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada*, ed. Isabella Bakker (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1996): 165-186.

8. Hansen and Philipson, Introduction to *Feminist Imagination*, p.25.

9. I focus in this paper on Canadian contributors to social reproduction theory, among whom the following can be listed: Pat and Hugh Armstrong, Isabella Bakker, Patricia Connelly, Bonnie Fox, David Livingstone, Meg Luxton, Martha MacDonald, Heather Jon Maroney, Wally Sccombe and Dorothy Smith. Other important American and British contributors include Stephanie Coontz, Lisa Vogel, Sheila Rowbotham and Iris Young.

10. Contributors to the domestic labor debate, whose purpose was to draw attention to the processes of reproduction in the household, are especially open to this criticism. See Wally Seccombe, "Reflections on the Domestic Labor Debate and Prospects for Marxist-Feminist Synthesis," in *The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism and Nationalism* (Montreal: Book Center Inc., 1987): 190-297.

11. Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, "Beyond Sexless Class and Classless Sex: Towards Feminist Marxism," in *Studies in Political Economy* 10, Winter 1983, p. 9.

12. Stephanie Coontz offers an excellent historical account of these changes in *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Femilies 1600-1900* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), pp. 116-209. Market domination of the process of human reproduction is not just evident in meeting basic subsistence needs; as capitalism advances, the means of satisfying human needs for leisure time, intellectual stimulation, sport and sex are increasingly commodified too.

13. Aspects of biological reproduction are commodified, particularly for those who experience difficulty conceiving without technological intervention. On this see, Kathryn Russell,"A Value-Theoretic Approach to Childbirth and Reproductive Engineering," in *Science & Society* 58.3, Fall 1994: 287-314. The process as a whole, however, can never be fully dominated by capital as it conflicts with one of the key conditions of capitalism, the existence of the "free" laborer (see Armstrong and Armstrong, "Beyond Sexless Class," p. 28.

14. The production of people occurs in communities as well; insofar as communities and households exist within nation states that are themselves racially stratified and insofar as people-production is not just a physical/biological process, but also cultural and psychological, there is a great deal of scope for understanding racial oppression in these terms. I focus here on gender, not because I think it is more important or fundamental form of oppression, but because this is the central concern of social reproduction theory to date (for reasons I suggest below). I recognize, however, that there is no such thing as a non-raced woman, that is a woman who is not also equally defined by her place within a system of racial oppression.

15. Armstrong and Armstrong, "Beyond Sexless Class," p. 29.

16. Wally Seccombe and D.W. Livingstone, "'Down to Earth People': Revising a Materialist Understanding of Group Consciousness," in *Recast Dreams: Class and Gender Consciousness in Steeltown*, ed. Livingstone and J. Marshall Mangan (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996), p. 133.

17. Meg Luxton and Heather Jon Maroney, "Gender at work: Canadian Feminist Political Economy since 1988," in *Understanding Canada: Building on the New Canadian Political Economy*, ed. Wallace Clement (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p. 97. The citations are from Carolyn Egan *et al*, "The Politics of Transformation: Struggles with Race, Class and Sexuality in the March 8th Coalition," in Frank Cunningham *et al*, eds., *Social Movements/Social Change: The Politics and Practice of Organizing* (Toronto: Between the Lines and Winnipeg: Society for Socialist Studies/Société d'études socialistes, 1988.): 20-47.

18. For instance, as Himani Bannerji has convincingly argued, the multi-cultural politics introduced by the Trudeau government in Canada is essentially conservative – aimed at channeling anti-racist resistance into "safe" cultural forms without class content, "On

the Dark Side of the Nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of "Canada"," *Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue d'études canadiennes* 31:3, Fall 1996: 103-128.

19. The faltering relationship between academics and activists has been an issue of concern. Interesting discussions can be found in: Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock, eds., *Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1991); and Hansen and Philipson, eds., *Feminist Imagination*, pp. 25-31.

20. Isabella Bakker. "The Political Economy of Gender," in *The New Canadian Political Economy*, ed. Wallace Clement and Glen Williams (Kingston, Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 100, emphases added.

21. Seccombe, "Marxism and Demography," p. 28.

22. Seccombe, "Marxism and Demography," p. 44. In raising this criticism, I do not want to detract from Seccombe's unquestionable strengths. In this and other works, he develops a rich historical analysis of class and families that illustrates a real appreciation for human agency. See both: *Family Forms and Modes of Production* (London: Verso, 1992) and *Weathering the Storm: Working-Class Families from the Industrial Revolution to the Fertility Decline* (London: Verso, 1993). In suggesting his work recalls the structural functionalism of dual systems theory, I am referring to his *theoretical* explication of the framework in which he situates those historical actors. Seccombe's later publications do not stray from these theoretical premises.

23. The integration social reproductionists favor is often asserted rather than argued – we are asked to conceive of a unitary social totality, but understand that it is one characterized by two distinct dynamics.

24. Livingstone and Luxton, "Gender Consciousness at Work: Modification of the Male Breadwinner Norm," *Recast Dreams*, p. 109.

25. I am referring here to Bakker, ed., *Rethinking Restructuring* and contributions by social reproductionists to Patricia M. Evans and Gerda R. Wekerle, eds., *Women and the Canadian Welfare State: Challenges and Change* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

26. Himani Bannerji offers a compelling explication of this thinking in *Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism And Anti-Racism* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1995).

27. See the final three chapters of *Recast Dreams*, written variously by Livingstone, Seccombe, Luxton and Elizabeth Asner.

28. Bannerji, "But Who Speaks For Us?" in *Thinking Through*, p. 77.

Women and the Third World: Exploring the Dangers of Difference

Meera Nanda

I WILL BEGIN WITH A REAL-LIFE STORY from Shashi Tharoor's recent book, *India: From Midnight to the Millennium*. In the passage quoted below, Shashi, an upper-caste, very liberal-left urbanite from Bombay is talking to Charlis, a dalit from a small village in Kerala. The two men have known each other since they met as boys in Shashi's ancestral village. Shashi had befriended the untouchable boy out of a sense of outrage against his more traditional, caste-bound cousins who would not allow Charlis to play with them. At the time of this conversation, Shashi is attending an elite English-language college in Delhi, which will then bring him to the U.S. and to the UN (where he works as a senior officer in the office of Khofi Anan). Charlis is pulling himself up by his bootstraps: determined to get an education, he has made it to a provincial college near his village — the first in his community to come this far. Here is an excerpt from their conversation touching on Rudyard Kipling and two of his fictional characters:

> "For the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady," he [Charlis] declaimed at one point, "are sisters under their skins!–Rudyard Kipling," he added. "Is that how you are pronouncing it?"
>
> "Rudyard, Roodyard, I haven't a clue," I confessed. "But who cares Charlis? He is just an old imperialist fart. What does anything he wrote have anything to do with any of us today, in independent India?
>
> Charlis looked surprised then slightly averted his eyes. "But are we not," he asked softly, "are we not brothers under our skins?"
>
> "Of course," I replied, too quickly. And it was I who could not meet his gaze.

Dead white men's poems: words of "imperialist farts" for the upper caste Shashi; an affirmation of egalitarianism for the untouchable, Charlis.

This conversation highlights the disjuncture between the post-colo-

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nial critics of modernity and development, and the women on whose behalf they claim to speak.

I will treat Shashi Tharoor as a stand-in for the broad class of intellectuals in and from the postcolonial world who are intimately familiar with the West, but who feel compelled to say "No" to it, or who, at the very least, feel compelled to approach the West with a presumption of radical difference. Given the limited and uneven reach of development, these intellectuals have come to see their own access to modern scientific learning and modern institutions as a source of their alienation from the lifeworld of the non-modern masses. Not only do these angst-ridden intellectuals desperately wish to speak in a popular idiom derived from shared symbols and myths of the masses, they believe that this idiom can provide templates for different sciences, different institutions and indeed, different ways of being altogether. These differences are valued as seedbeds of alternatives to both capitalism and socialism.

But what of Charlis? Going by his passionate engagement with the words of dead white males, it is clear that he does *not* approach them with a presumption of radical difference. Far from it: he finds in them intellectual resources to combat the difference he has suffered all his life at the hands of upper castes. Contrary to the postcolonial intellectuals who look to "Third World difference" as a source of salvation, Charlis-the-subaltern is not interested in affirming any difference: *he wants to put difference out of business altogether*. After all, it is not the Kipling who declared the impossibility of the East meeting the West, but the Kipling who declares "sisterhood under the skin" who has captured Charlis' imagination.

I want to explore a most peculiar twist in this encounter: the postcolonial intellectual justifies her presumption of radical difference toward the West *in the name of the subaltern* who, if Charlis is our guide, seems to be making a presumption of universalism toward the West. So the question to ask is simple: how do discourses of difference actually play out in Third World societies? Can we simply *assume* the consent of the subalterns for embracing "their own" local knowledge? Can we, to borrow Nancy Fraser's question, assume that a struggle for *recognition* of non-Western, non-modern difference will help bring about a *redistribution* of economic and cultural power within these societies?

LIMITING MYSELF TO MY NATIVE INDIA, I will examine three case studies. First, that of Viramma, a remarkable dalit woman whose first-person narrative of her life has recently appeared as a book. Here we ask how deep is the difference between Viramma and Western or Westernized Indian women? Is Viramma "like us, only more so," as Susan Moller Okin has affirmed? Or does any presumption of shared knowledges and needs between Viramma and the Western women amount to "discursive colonization" or "feminist Orientalism" as Chandra Mohanty and Fredrique Marglin, respectively have charged? For our next two cases, we move from the subaltern to the intellectuals and their acts of commission and omission. The acts of commission take us to the arguments for Third World ecofeminism made most prominently by Vandana Shiva. I ask who exactly is pushing for Shiva's neo-Hindu notions of *prakriti* and *Shakti* — the subaltern women like Viramma or the landed, upper-caste exploiters of these women? I will argue that far from empowering women like Viramma, ecofeminism has come to serve as a mobilizing ideology of surplus-producing, landowning farmers. Finally, for the acts of omission of difference-oriented theorists, we go to Prem Chowdhry's study titled *The Veiled Women* which offers a cautionary tale for all those who denounce modern technology *itself* as fundamentally patriarchal. Chowdhry shows how the pre-existing, religion- and culture-sanctified patriarchal bargains are literally soaking up the liberatory aspects of the shift from private to public patriarchy made possible by the Green Revolution.

But before proceeding with my case studies, I need to define more precisely who my interlocutors are and what exactly concerns me about their critiques of development. Defining postcolonial intellectuals as those who say "no" to the West is to cast too wide a net. There are those who may say "no" to particular economic and political policies of the West, and many others who may be troubled by the uneven and exploitative mode of development under capitalism. I have nothing to say about *these* critics, except that I count myself as one of them. My concern is limited *only* to those critics who are postcolonial or post-developmentalist in a strong sense of the word; that is, who bring a post-Enlightenment worldview to bear on the problems of development. I include here critics with very different theoretical orientations, including Gandhian communitarians like Ashis Nandy, Vandana Shiva and Claude Alvares; Foucaultians like Arturo Escobar, ethno-sociologists like the Marglins, and feminist critics like Jane Parpart, Mariaane Marchand, Mitu Hirschcman, and Geeta Chowdhry who seem to be deeply influenced by feminist theories of difference. These critics see development as a source of violence, both real and symbolic, on non-Western people. The violence comes from subjecting non-Western people to a culturally alien, ethnocentric and colonial imaginary of what it means to be developed; forcing them to measure the worth of their lives and their communities by Western norms; and in the process, silencing their own norms of a good society.

The source of this symbolic violence, or "the motor of the crisis," as Braidotti and her colleagues put it, is modern science itself. Scientific rationality, the critics claim, has hidden its Eurocentric and patriarchal interests behind its claims of objective and universally valid knowledge. Riding on false claims of objectivity and propelled by imperialist interests, modern science has established itself as the norm of what it means to be rational and objective. All other ways of comprehending the world have been delegitimized. Postdevelopmentalist critics ask not for better implementation of this or that development policy, but for pluralizing the norms of development themselves, for allowing non-Western people to define development in their own culturally-grounded conceptual categories and meeting these needs through their own local sciences and technologies.

I fully welcome the idea of using local cultural discourses to enable and encourage a more participatory and egalitarian modernization. But the kind of emphasis one finds in post-developmentalist discourse goes far beyond such a strategic use of culture and verges on *culturalism* which regards the conceptual and imaginary representations of existing cultures in modernizing societies to be the ultimate and irreducible force in development. Protestations to the contrary, I believe that the kind of culturalism one finds in post-developmentalist discourse reifies non-Western cultures by setting them as the "other" of the West and not examining the content and actual practices that give substance — often a highly oppressive and illiberal substance — to the traditions of these cultures. The post-developmentalist notion of the non-Western cultures, I contend, is shaped by the ideological needs of *Western* intellectuals (and their "anti-imperialist" cultural nationalistic allies in the Third World) to invest other cultures with critical force against their own supposedly hyper-rational, one-dimensional scientistic culture. This radical xenophilia of Western intellectuals has scarified, or at least minimized, the theoretical space for a critical assessment of non-Western cultures.

Let us return, for the moment, to where we started from in our Shashi-Charlis dialogue. *Post-development critics make a presumption of radical difference toward rationality itself*: norms of what is rational warranted and truthful are "*completely constituted* by the distinctive cultural inheritance of different cultures," as Sandra Harding has declared in her recent book, *Is Science Multicultural*? or as Marshall Sahlins concluded in his *How Natives Think*?, or as Ashis Nandy put it much before them in his *Intimate Enemy*. The question before us is: what would *Charlis* say? Would *he* feel content to rediscover his own definition of what is rational? More importantly, *will his own culturally constructed rationality be so different from modern scientific rationality that he will feel violated and silenced by it*? Does Charlis see modern scientific rationality and worldview as an enemy or an ally in his fight against his local oppressors?

It will be useful to dwell upon the larger debate on scientific rationality because culturalism of post-development discourse uses the idea of "different cultures, different rationalities, different sciences" to legitimate itself. The argument that all of us – and not just Charlis – should prefer Charlis's own standards of rationality in order to get a "strong objectivity" against the supposedly phony objectivity of science has been made most forcefully by Sandra Harding, most recently in her *Is Science Multicultural?* where she extends standpoint epistemology into postcolonial concerns. Harding is emphatic that, "modern science is at an epistemological par with other cultures' traditions of systematic knowledge: they are all equally local knowledge systems, for they are all *completely constituted* by their respective local cultures. Thus there could be many universally valid but culturally distinct sciences." What is more, Harding insists that the distinct sciences of different cultures are not parts of a puzzle that will all eventually fit together, but they are, she puts it, "fundamentally incompatible knowledge claims, encoding different norms shaped by each culture's distinctive discursive inheritance." Harding is hardly alone: similar claims are the staple of contemporary cultural and social constructivist studies of science.

Since this article is not about the philosophy of science, I will not go on to refute Harding's claim here. I will only point out what troubles me about this thesis of cultural construction of the very norms of rationality: *treating rationality and knowledge as completely constructed by culture puts culture beyond a reasoned critique*. If at no point in our inquiry can we go beyond, or refute, the cultural categories that we inherit, how can we obtain any critical distance from these categories? Of course, Harding, Donna Harawy and their sympathizers would say that we *can* go beyond inherited cultural assumptions through purposefully adopting the standpoint of the underdog. Underdogs don't need value-neutrality, or objectivity, which are Western cultural values anyway. They can legitimately claim the status of science for inquiry based upon their own culturally embedded assumptions –say, of treating nature as sacred, as Shiva argues, or treating the natural and the supernatural as one and the same, as Frederique Marglin argues. Once these local ways of knowing are positively evaluated as sciences and not just folk beliefs, the subaltern and their sympathizers can use them as legitimate norms of rationality against which they measure modern science's assumptions, methods and claims. Well, seeing modern science from the underdog's standpoint *will* reveal differences. But why should it follow that the underdog will reject the difference as alien and undesirable? Moreover, even if adopting a local standpoint can help the underdog see through "western science," it still evades the issue of how it can help them see through their own religion- and tradition-sanctified dominant ideologies.

The insistence on local rationalities as progressive standpoints of the oppressed flies in the face of *real* movements of the oppressed, the most radical of which have all been firmly in the Enlightenment mode. Take the anti-caste movement of B.R. Ambdekar which, in a sharp contrast to Gandhi's reformist overtures to the untouchables, was a radical attack on the ideology of caste itself. Ambedkar and his dalit followers challenged the Brahmanical knowledge about the natural world *not* in the name of their own dalit caste-myths and origin stories *but* in the name of scientifically obtained objective truth. Unlike their academic sympathizers, the organic intellectuals of Dalits and women – say an Ambedkar, or a Pandita Rama Bai, people who personally suffered the worst insults and degradations of the traditional Hindu order – were never content to build a counter-hegemony around the standpoint of the dalits or women. As Ambedkar repeatedly emphasized, annihilation of caste would require a challenge to entire Hindu cosmology that assumes the sacredness of nature and the continuity of the natural and the supernatural – precisely because this kind of "local knowledge" was used to justify the rationality of Karma and caste. Ambedkar, in other words, linked the liberation of dalits to *overturning* the kind of cultural assumptions about sacredness and holism that people like Harding, Marglin and Shiva see as the standpoint of oppressed. Ambedkar was convinced that only a *secularization of consciousness* through a rigorous application of reason and scientific-temper could bring about a *transformative* change. If Charlis has been influenced in any way by Ambedkar, as most progressive dalits are, I am ready to bet that he would any day opt for modern science over Hindu cosmology as his own standpoint.

But let us get down to the specifics. Viramma, is a Tamil-speaking dalit woman in her 60s who narrated the story of her life and the life of her community to two ethnographers who published the entire narrative in her own voice. From the opening sentence "My paternal grandfather was a serf of the Reddi," we meet this energetic, life-loving, sharp-witted and sharp-tongued woman who is simultaneously a mother, a wife, a farm worker, a midwife, a devout believer in a whole pantheon of goddesses, a singer of songs, a lead organizer of religious festivals – all in all, a pillar of her community. Viramma's ability to create a life of love, laughter and meaning is all the more remarkable for she has had more than her share of avoidable misery, losing nine of her 12 children to perfectly curable, ordinary infectious diseases. And she has had more than *anyone's* share of humiliations at the hands of the upper-caste landlords. No one's fool, Viramma understands perfectly well that the upper castes exploit her labor, and feels perfectly justified in stealing from them. But her everyday resistance is bounded by her internalization of the idea of purity and pollution. She sees caste humiliations as deserved because of the sins in past lives of her entire community.

I want to bring the concerns of the critics of modernity and modern science to bear upon Viramma's life. Is it the case that Viramma experiences modern institutions and knowledge as alien impositions contrary to own practical and strategic interests? Is it the case that Viramma's local knowledge as a midwife is embedded in a wholly different and more enabling rationality?

Viramma's relationship with modern institutions and ideas is too complex to allow a neat for-or-against classification. She has lived through truly epochal changes, including India's independence, Indira Gandhi, the slow-but-sure loosening of caste hierarchy, the spread of wage labor over caste "duties," the rising aspirations of her son, the coming of the TV and so on. While she loves the idea of a woman as a Prime Minister, and values the opportunity to send her son (*not* her daughters) to school, she finds the new militancy among the younger generation unnerving, and she abhors the TV.

Being a midwife and a healer, her main contact with modern institutions is through public health workers who visit the village for vaccinations, family planning, and childbirth. Again, Viramma simultaneously reaches out and evades: she seems to appreciate the value of timely medical intervention, cooperates with the nurses and seeks modern alternatives for all complicated pregnancies she attends (she herself opted for the modern method of abortion over her own traditional knowledge). But she hates the way the nurses and doctors treat them: she finds them arrogant and full of caste prejudice. This love-hate relationship holds even with traditional healing practices that are deeply intertwined with religion. Viramma believes that diseases like smallpox, cholera, hepatitis are caused by the presence of angry goddesses who must be appeased with worship and gifts. She is slow in accepting smallpox vaccination and continues to combine modern treatments with traditional worship.

Modern medicine *is* experienced as different, in part threatening and in part life-saving. The question is *at what level* does the difference operate: at the level of rationality of modern medicine itself, or at the level of institutions? Of course, even an analytical separation between rationality and institutions is unacceptable to critics like Marglin, Nandy and their Foucaultian colleagues who see knowledge and institutional power as co-constructing each other. They explain Viramma's discomfort with modern medicine as a reflection of her non-logocentric worldview in which the natural and the supernatural, health and disease are not separated from each other as polar opposites, but each contains elements of the other: nature is enchanted, and health includes disease and death. What is more, they have claimed that modern hospitals cannot, *even in principle,* meet Viramma's needs for they incorporate a bipolar, logocentric reasoning.

But there is very little sign of non-logocentricity in Viramma's local knowledge. She invokes gods and goddesses in order to explain, predict and control disease, just as we moderns invoke the germ theory of disease. There is no sign whatsoever that she offers prayers to the person afflicted with smallpox because she is simultaneously celebrating health, as Marglin has claimed. Whatever the outsiders may read into it, Viramma herself is very clear that her prayers are meant only to cajole the goddess to leave them alone. Absence of goddess is welcomed as absence of disease. If we take Viramma at her word, we will find that gods and goddesses serve fairly down-to-earth instrumental rationality that seeks freedom from suffering. There is no reason to insist that incommensurability of rationalities will forever make modern medicine alien and oppressive to Viramma. Pitching difference at the level of rationality ignores the possibility of institutional reform, and turns a blind eye to the fact that, after all, Viramma with all her expert local knowledge, and all her mother's love, could not prevent nine of her 12 babies from dying. To conclude, yes, Viramma resists modernization but *not* because of her standpoint epistemology, which actually contains elements of instrumental rationality expressed in a religious idiom.

LET US MOVE TO THE BEST KNOWN CASE FEMINISTS HAVE MADE for local knowledges, namely, Vandana Shiva's arguments for Third World ecofeminism. Elsewhere I have examined Shiva's essentialism and standpoint epistemology, and need not repeat these arguments. Here, I want only to deal with Shiva's much admired "politicization" of "Third World difference": even those who find Shiva's essentialism and romanticism troubling, praise her for politicizing the issue of Third World women's subsistence needs and their culturally distinctive uses of nature. But this begs the question: must feminists welcome *all* politicization as progressive? Should we not ask *what kind of politicization* of difference has Shiva's ideas brought about in India? So I ask a simple question: what has happened to Shiva's idea of feminine principle in the last 10 years since her book, *Staying Alive,* put it on the agenda of new social movements around the world? Which political constituencies have used it and to what end? I want to be clear that the remarks that follow are meant solely to assess the influence of the idea of ecofeminism and not the personal political beliefs of anyone involved.

Gail Omvedt, a sympathetic critic of ecofeminism, provides a fair summary of Shiva's influence in her recent book, *Reinventing Revolution*: "Shiva's articulation of the feminine principle that sees united action by women and men to transform society in a feminist, ecological and participatory direction finds its echoes in the themes of *stri shakti* [women's power] within the women's movement connected with the Shetkari Sanghathan and other rural organizations." Shetkari Sanghathan and other rural organizations that Omvedt mentions are powerful farmers' movements of landowning, surplus-producing commercial farmers who are simultaneously aligned against the state from whom they demand higher subsidies for modern inputs and higher prices for their crops, and against the mostly dalit landless and migrant workers who they don't pay even the barest minimum wages.

These farmers' movements differ in their caste, class and ideological orientations. Media reports from India indicate that Shiva is personally involved as an advisor and supporter of Gandhian, "anti-imperialist" movement KRRS in Karanatka, and has also lent at least her tactical support to the populist, upper-caste and severely patriarchal Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) in Uttar Pradesh, an organization that actively campaigned for Hindu fundamentalists in 1991 elections. Shiva's *idea* of prakriti and feminine principle, has found a wider women's constituency in the more free-market oriented, neo-liberal

Shetkari Sanghathan in Maharashtra. The Sngahatan's "Laxmi Mukti," (Laxmi-the-goddess liberation) is based upon ecofeminist principles and has won the support of well-known Indian feminists, including Gail Omvedt and Madhu Kishwar. Even Bina Agarwal offers words of praise for the ecofeminist elements of Shetkari Sanghathan program in her otherwise remarkable book, *A Field of Her Own*.

But if you place these movements in the larger class structure that prevails in the rural economy, it becomes clear that ecofeminism is serving the tactical and ideological interests of landed farmers rather than the strategic interests of either women or nature. Karnatka Rajya Raitha Sangh (KRRS), for instance, has used Gandhian and ecofeminist anti-modernism to cover up class and caste differences among the landowners and landless workers in order to demand concessions and subsidies from the state: the entire modern, urban industrial sector, inside India or outside, is declared to be the enemy of the entire traditional, rural and agricultural "real India." While the Gandhian leadership of KRRS mobilizes large number of peasants to ransack offices of multinational corporations, it turns a blind eye to the atrocities against dalit farm workers that members of KRRS have continued to commit.

Movements like KRRS, BKU, allied new social movements and their anti-modernist intellectual sympathizers end up conferring a seemingly secular, populist and even progressive "anti-imperialist" gloss on a kind of reactionary nationalism that is no different in substance from the *swadeshi* (self-reliance) platform of the Hindu right. The movements (notably KRRS and BKU) have claimed, following the rhetoric made popular by Shiva and other anti-modernist intellectuals, that Western economic interests represented by multinational corporations and western culture in general are the major contradiction in Indian society today and that a fight against the West is in the interest of the ordinary people in India. Western feminists and progressives more or less accept this underlying assumption as well. But such "anti-imperialism" is hardly warranted by actual economic facts. For much of its post-colonial history, India has been one of the most protected economies in South Asia. Indian state and businesses have actually invested more abroad than any foreign corporation is allowed to invest in India. Even after the economic liberalization that started in the early 1990s, the total direct foreign investment in entire South Asia amounted to a mere 0.5% of the GNP in 1996, a figure which compares poorly with 4.2% in East Asia and 1.9% in all other developing countries. Clearly, the overheated anti-Western, "anti-imperialist" rhetoric is serving the ideological need of rural and Hindu nationalistic elites to rally the masses across class and caste divides for their own, often shared, agendas.

LET US LOOK AT THE MUCH PRAISED "Laxmi Mukti" program of Shetkari Sanghathan. Started in 1990 in response to women activists and feminist intellectuals, this program urges farmers to make a voluntary gift of a portion of their land to their wives on the condition that the wives can only use traditional organic farming techniques. The limited usefulness of such a gift can be readily granted: independent ownership does strengthen women's position in the family, although it is not clear if wives can actually sell or mortgage the gifted land if they wanted to. But I contend that such a program performs an ideological function by confining women's rights within the traditional framework of family and goddesses. What is worse, it makes the intra-family gift serve as a substitute for land redistribution to those without any assets at all. There are reports that many relatively large farmers are using it as a means to evade a legal land ceiling, which explains their enthusiasm for this program. Moreover, the restriction of women to organic and subsistence farming is a continuation of sexual division of labor. Laxmi Mukti is clearly a middle-peasant program that serves to absorb women's growing assertion of the right to land within the traditional patriarchal family, and prevents them from making common cause with landless women.

The partly willing and partly inadvertent co-option of ecofeminism by farmers' movements is a good example of the problems of valorizing symbolic differences over class differences. While it *is* true that the symbolic and the material can not be separated, it is *not* true that struggles over the terrain of symbols neatly translate into a more equitable redistribution in the terrain of the material. I am not suggesting that *all* struggles over recognition of difference are *necessarily* right wing or left wing. All I am saying is that given India's balance of caste and class power, glued together by deeply inegalitarian Hindu norms, critiques pitched at the level of irreducible cultural differences with the West are strengthening the already formidable power of upper caste, rich rural males, who are the most dubious "allies" that feminists and other secular democrats could ever want

FINALLY, THERE ARE THE ACTS OF OMISSION OF THIRD WORLDIST INTELLECTUALS. Here we turn to Prem Chowdhry's *Veiled Women*. The women in the veil are farm laborers in Haryana who seem to be getting the worst of both worlds: they enjoy neither the freedom from hard labor on the farm that comes with the veil, nor the relative autonomy that comes with working for wages. Defying all generalizations by South Asian anthropologists and economists, women in Haryana have not experienced any improvement in their social worth, despite very high levels of wage labor participation encouraged by the Green Revolution. Indeed, the situation seems to be getting worse with female feticide on the rise leading to a high male ratio.

This dismal situation has been cited repeatedly by prominent feminist critics of development as an example of the "violence of science," or as evidence of the *fundamentally* patriarchal nature of modern technology which supposedly imposes a wholly different, Western capitalist logic on the ecological and moral economy of the peasant. Prem Chowdhry's sensitive field studies show what this meta-level epistemological critique of technology leaves out. The great value of Prem Chowdhry's work is that she never lets you lose track of the ways in which supposedly Western technology is mediated through traditional, "Eastern" institutions. A few words of explanation here.

Introduction of the Green Revolution *has* indeed set in motion social forces that are causally associated with, using Sylvia Walby's terminology, the transformation of the private patriarchy of peasant economy into the public patriarchy of market economy. Because of the adoption of new technology by small and marginal farmers, who now need to earn more cash to modernize, Haryana has seen a change of cultural norms. Before the Green Revolution, women of dominant-caste landowners were permitted to work only on family farms while only lower caste; landless women worked for wages. In the late 80s, 44% of upper-caste, small and marginal farmers allowed their women to work on other people's farms for hard cash. Important studies of women and work by scholars like Bina Agarwal, Kalpana Bardhan and Barbara Miller in the agricultural sector, Karin Kapadia in the informal sector, Naila Kabeer and Swasti Mitter in the garment industry have clearly shown independent income through wage work leads to a slow but steady enlargement of women's freedoms in South Asia. The reason it is not happening in Haryana has everything to do with the culture of female subordination which has deep historical roots in the harsh desert-like ecology of part of the region combined with hypergamy, imitation of upper caste practices and the concept of male *izzat* (honor) which depends upon female propriety. Whatever other virtues this peasant culture may have in terms of ecological living, they were obtained not because of, but at the cost of, equality and autonomy of women. It is these deeply misogynist and illiberal cultural norms that are now acting as shock absorbers to maintain men's *izzat* (honor) at a time of rapid changes introduced by the Green Revolution.

An *enabling* critique of development must engage in a cultural challenge to this inherited discourse of patriarchy, caste and other inequities justified by traditional cosmologies. And that challenge cannot proceed within the confines of local knowledges alone, for these knowledges simultaneously allow everyday resistance but also condition the subalterns to accept their subordination. It is important to acknowledge that like all cultures, non-Western cultures and traditions have progressive impulses toward autonomy and justice. But if we let traditions define what autonomy and justice are, that is, if we accept as justifiable that different cultures have different norms of what is true, just and good, we run the risk of easy appropriation by traditional patriarchs who are taking the lead in the rising tide of religious revivalism in many parts of the world. The task of feminism and other progressive social movements ought to be to challenge the terms of the debate. Modern science can assist in this challenge by enabling the subalterns to see through the mystification of their own inherited ideologies. To reduce science to a Western local story is not in the interest of the Virammas and the Charlises of this world, who have everything to gain from it.

NOTES

(This is an edited text of the paper read at "Which Way for Women and Development? Debating Concepts, Strategies and Directions for the 21st Century, " a conference organized by the City University of New York, Oct. 15-17, 1998.)

1. Dalit is the chosen self-description of the "untouchable" castes in India. The word dalit literally means "crushed," or "the oppressed."

2. Nancy Fraser. "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age." *New Left Review,* No. 212, July/Aug. 1995.

3. Viramma, Josiane Racine and Jean-Luc Racine, *Viramma: Life on an Untouchable.* London: Verson and Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1997.

4. Susan Moller Okin. "Gender Inequality And Cultural Differences," *Political Theory*, 1994, 22 (1): 5-24.

5. Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." Feminist Review, 1988, 30: 61-88; and Fredrique Marglin and Suzanne Simon. "Feminist Orientalism and Development," Pp. 26-45 in *Feminist Perspectives on Sustainable Development.*, edited by Wendy Harcourt. London: Zed. 1994.

6. Prem, Chowdhry. The Veiled Women: Shifting Gender Equations in Rural Haryana, 1880-1990. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 1994.

7. For representative writings of this genre see the entries in Wolfgang Sachs, *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge and Power*. London: Zed Books. 1992.

8. Arturo Escobar, "Imagining a Post-Development Era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements". *Social Text* 31/32: 20-36.

9. Frederique A. Marglin and Stephen A. Marglin *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance*, edited by. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1990.

10. See the recent anthology edited by Marianna Marchand and Jane L. Parpart, *Feminism / Postmodernism / Development*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

11. Braidotti, R. et at. (eds.*) Women, Environment and Sustainable Development: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis*. London: Zed, 1994.

12. For a trenchent critique of culturalism, Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islam and Modernities*, London: Verso. 1993.

13. Sandra Harding, *Is Science Multicultural? Postcolonialisms, Feminisms and Epistemologies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 44.

14. For recent works, see David Hess, *Science and Technology in a Multicultural World: The Cultural Politics of Facts and Artifacts*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1995, Sarah Franklin, "Science as Culture, Cultures of Science," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1995. Works by Fredreique and Stephen Marglin, Ashis Nandy, Ziauddin Sardar are well known.

15. See my "A Postcolonial Manifesto for the Brahmans? Sandra Harding's Epistemology for Ethnosciences" forthcoming in *Feminist Theory*.

16. See Frederique Marglin, "Smallpox in Two Systems of Knowledge" in Frederique Marglin and Stephen Marglin (eds.) *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

17. See my "History is What Hurts: A Materialist Feminist Perspective on the Green Revolution and its Ecofeminist Critics" in Rosemary Hennessy and Chrys Ingraham (eds.) *Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference and Women's Lives*. NY: Routledge, 1997. Also, "Is Modern Science a Western, Patriarchal Myth? A Critique of the Neo-populist Orthodoxy." *South Asia Bulletin*, XI, 1991.

18. Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution: New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1993, p. 316.

19. For a complete analysis, see my forthcoming, "Who Needs Post-development? Discourses of Difference, the Green Revolution and Agrarian Populism in India" *Journal of Developing Socieites*. (June 1999).

20. See Achin Vanaik, *The Painful Transition: Bourgeoise Democracy in India*. London: Verso, 1990, p. 12-13.

21. M. Pigato et al (eds.) *South Asia's Integration into the World Economy*. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1997.

22. Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, London: Blackwell, 1989.

A Flawed History of The Popular Front

Frank A. Warren

Despite differences over whether the Popular Front marked a retreat from socialist politics or whether it provided positive lessons in coalition politics, most historians have dated its years from the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern in August 1935, to the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 23, 1939. And most have agreed that Stalin, spurred by fears of world isolation in the face of Hitler's consolidation of power, had begun in 1934 to temper the revolutionary rhetoric and to seek alliances against the danger of fascism. But until the formal adoption of the Popular Front in August 1935, the American Communist Party continued its ultra-left attacks on the "social fascism" of liberals and rival socialists. Once the switch was made from a rhetoric based on the antithesis of capitalism vs. Communism to the Popular Front rhetoric of democracy vs. fascism, Communists courted the liberals. Equally frightened by the specter of fascism, many liberals welcomed the switch.

There followed a period of Communist/liberal cooperation in which new Popular Front organizations were formed and older organizations were transformed to reflect the politics of the Popular Front. Anti-war organizations now embraced collective security; organizations were formed to aid Loyalist Spain and civil rights causes, and to support the growing labor movement. In this atmosphere, liberal intellectuals who had become more pro-New Deal in the aftermath of its 1935 reform legislation were joined by Communists giving muted support to the New Deal in 1936 and enthusiastic support in 1937 to create a political coalition. Popular Front cultural organizations flourished. The membership of the Communist Party grew to more than 80,000. Popular Front politics were present in many CIO unions, cultural institutions, and in sections of the New Deal. According to some critical historians the strength of this reformist coalition meant losing the possibility of developing alternatives to capitalism during the Popular Front period; the same strength has led other historians to applaud the reformist coalition, if

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not the Stalinism of its Communist component.

Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front** is a major reinterpretation of the Popular Front that, given its scope and its scholarship, must be taken seriously. Denning denies what most critics and sympathizers of the Popular Front assert: that it marked a retreat from radicalism. Denning's Popular Front is a "broad social movement" (xviii) which is continuous with the proletarian revolutionary culture of the early 30s; labor and the worker continue as the center of the movement's vision of "the people":

> There was *not* a radical break between the 'proletarian movement' of the early 1930s and the Popular Front; the politics of the Popular Front was *not* populist, but remained a class-based labor politics. . . . The turn to a populist rhetoric was less a retreat from radicalism than an emblem of the shift from an embattled subculture to a significant mass social movement. (125,128)

Although acknowledging that the Communist Party was "the most influential left organization in the period," Denning plays down the traditional emphasis on Party "control" (5-6). For Denning, the Popular Front has too often been reduced to a variety of New Deal reformism: "It is mistaken," he writes, "to see the Popular Front as a marriage of Communists and liberals. The heart of the Popular Front as a social movement lay among those who were non-Communist socialists and independent leftists, working with Communists and with liberals, but making a culture that was neither a Party nor a liberal New Deal culture" (5). At another point, he writes that the Popular Front was "a radical social-democratic movement forged around anti-fascism, anti-lynching, and the industrial unionism of the CIO" (xviii). This is a provocative set of claims that needs to be addressed.

My quarrel is largely with Denning's *political* Popular Front. I agree with Denning that the Popular Front had a cultural dimension that helped produce various forms of art that are far richer and more interesting than historians have credited them with being. I also agree that the Popular Front involved a "structure of feeling" (26) that had a long-range cultural impact far beyond the death of the political Popular Front. As a cultural history of the left, *The Cultural Front* is invaluable. Denning's readings of literature, including what he calls grotesque realism and ghetto pastorals, add a dimension of complexity compared to the more superficial interpretations of proletarian fiction. His tracing of cultural institutions from artist collectives to Hollywood demonstrates links and relationships that are fascinating. His emphasis on the role of second generation immigrants in building the CIO and cultural institutions is perceptive. Readers who turn to these areas will be rewarded with striking insights and rich information. Indeed, if the book were only about the left cultural front of the 30s and the writers and artists who were inspired by the labor struggles of the early 30s and who continued to hold labor central to their artistic vision as they made their way from the small left-wing collectives to the institutions of mass culture, there would be far more to praise than to criticize.

Isn't it enough, then, that Denning has made an important contribution to our understanding of the left culture of the 1930s? My answer is "no." Because

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* Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front* (London and New York: Verso, 1996) 556pp. $65.00 HB.

Denning links the cultural front and the political Popular Front in a way that allows little distinction, he distorts the *political* Popular Front. In critically addressing Denning's conception of the Popular Front, I want to focus on four of his important arguments: (1) his expansion of the time-frame and the inclusiveness of the Popular Front; (2) his argument that the Popular Front did not mark a retreat from radicalism; (3) his stress on the allegedly social-democratic character of the Popular Front; (4) his minimization of the importance of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union in the Popular Front.

The Chronology and Inclusiveness of the Popular Front

IN HIS INTRODUCTION, DENNING WRITES: "The general strike that shut down San Francisco . . . marked the birth of a new social movement — the Popular Front — out of the depths of the depression" (xiii). Quite correctly, Denning says 1934 was "an emblem of insurgency, upheaval, and hope" (xiv). But was it the birth of *the Popular Front*? Strikes raised social consciousness, creative artists developed "labor" perspectives, and Communists, independent leftists and liberals supported the strikers, but none of this proves the *political* Popular Front was born during the strike wave of 1934. If Denning's point is that there had been examples of Communist/liberal cooperation prior to August 1935 and that one needs to examine these examples in order to understand why liberals and independent leftists would enter into a political alliance with Communists, that would be helpful in explaining the *roots* of the Popular Front.[1] But Denning is not talking about roots or precursors; he is claiming that the Popular Front literally began with the San Francisco strike and he is doing so because he claims that the Popular Front was an insurgent grass-roots social movement embodied in the bloody strike wave of 1934 and then in the formation of the CIO.

Certainly, the growth of the labor union movement was seen as essential for a Popular Front. And in 1934 there was Comintern activity in Europe to begin a Popular Front and dissatisfaction within the American Communist Party with the "third period" strategy. But the *political* Popular Front simply did not exist in 1934. If it had, the Communists would have supported Upton Sinclair's End Poverty In California (EPIC) campaign (cited by Denning as the origin of the California Popular Front) instead of lambasting it. Throughout 1934, the American Communists were still blasting liberals as "but" guys who would support capitalists in a crisis. Whatever gestures they made toward united action was toward a "united front" of *radicals*, though even here they offered it in a manner designed to undercut rival left leaders and parties. In fact, in 1934 liberals were bemoaning the lack of unity on the left, i.e., the lack of a Popular Front. Put very simply: without Georgi Dimitrov's August 2, 1935 pronouncement at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, there would not have been an American *political* Popular Front.[2]

If Denning's effort to push back in time the beginning of the Popular Front is unpersuasive, so too is his ignoring the fact that the Nazi-Soviet Pact terminated the Popular Front. That labor struggles continued does not prove the Popular Front continued. Indeed the 1941 strike wave he cites to establish the continuity of the Popular Front actually interfered with the collective security foreign policy of the Popular Front. Nor does the fact that Popular Front cultural institutions continued into the 1940s mean that the *political* Popular Front continued. Denning pays very little attention to the organizational disarray of the Popular Front during the time of the Pact. And he appears to assume that wartime anti-fascism, pro-Russian sympathy, and evocation of "the people" represented a genuine continuation of the 30s' Popular Front. But to do so forces him to ignore Communist support for the no-strike pledge, for incentive wages, for the labor draft, as well as its criticism of the liberal intellectual community for not understanding the difference between progressive and reactionary capitalists — all indications that for the duration of the war the "laboring" of American society was not central to the Communist Party. It also leads him to overlook the large number of ex-Popular Front liberals who ridiculed the Communist Party.

Similarly, his notion of the continuity of the Popular Front, obliges him to ignore the Communist Party's elimination of its Southern branches, its opposition to the March on Washington and to the Double-V campaign which sought victory over fascism abroad and racism at home and was supported by most civil rights activists, its indifference to Winfred Lynn's legal challenge to being inducted into a segregated army, its criticism of the protest over the court-martialing of four black WACs in 1945 at Fort Devens — all indications that the anti-racism which Denning places at the center of the Popular Front vision was, for the duration, not central to one of its chief components, the Communist Party. His suggestion that the founding of CORE in 1943 was symptomatic of an ongoing Popular Front ignores the fact that its key founders, like James Farmer, were conscientious objectors to World War II.

Denning's entire discussion of anti-racism/anti-lynching is designed to demonstrate a radical continuity that did not exist. He says that the International Labor Defense (I.L.D.) "can be seen as the earliest Popular Front organization" and sees its "mass" defense strategy in the Scottsboro case and other earlier episodes as "perhaps the most effective part of the Popular Front public culture" (13). The "mass" defense did save the Scottsboro defendants' lives, but the Communist Party and the I.L.D. engaged in the typical ultra-left "third period" attacks on the very same liberals and civil rights organizations that would constitute such an important part of the Popular Front. Later, on the other hand, when Roosevelt failed to go beyond verbal condemnation of lynching and to seriously work for the passage of the Federal Anti-Lynching Law, there was no Popular Front mass protest. In Harlem, as Mark Naison has shown, the Communist Party's Popular Front alliance with the New Deal and local liberal politicians caused it to "discourage relief insurgency" and direct action tactics.[3] Maurice Isserman makes a strong case that the Party did not entirely abandon its struggle for black rights during the war, but he recognizes that the Party argued that "a too militant defense of black rights at home would interfere with the war effort."[4] Anti-racism/anti-lynching was central to the Popular Front and to the Communist Party and for their efforts in these struggles, both deserve credit. But when "other matters" — the political alliance with Roosevelt, the war effort — took precedence, those other matters became the limiting framework in which anti-racist struggles took place.

I HAVE STRESSED THE WAR YEARS because there is a fast and loose quality about some of Denning's evidence here, especially in his discussion of the internment of Japanese-Americans.[5] He writes that although the Communists "did not protest the internment of Japanese-Americans and even suspended their Japanese-American members" (34), the West Coast Popular Front did protest. "Did not protest" is a euphemistic way of saying the Communist Party *supported* the internment without saddling the party with the disgrace of its performance. When Denning writes that Carey McWilliams was "one of the few white critics of the camps" (35), he has it wrong. First, there were many white critics; most were religious liberals, but there were a number of "secular" liberals (though the latters' record was pretty shameful). And, second, though he notes later in the book McWilliams' equivocation (early "qualified endorsement" and later criticism), he fails to fully show what that qualified endorsement entailed: an article in a major magazine denying the camps were concentration camps, presenting sympathetically the Administration's rationale, and arguing that if the American people resisted racial demagogues, the camps could "reflect great credit upon us as a nation."[6]

McWilliams made important contributions to the anti-racist education of the American public, but by not exploring McWilliams' early position, Denning projects a distorted picture of the war years. And his account does not permit him to properly take note of the authentic opponents to the internment of Japanese-Americans: the religious liberal and left community and the Socialist Party. It was Norman Thomas who exposed and opposed the internment. On the air and in the pages of *The Socialist Call*, Thomas, along with radicals like Travers Clement, kept up a steady barrage of criticism — not just of conditions in the camps (a common liberal focus), but of the internment itself. The response of the Communist Party was to try to drive Thomas off the air, and the response of the secular liberal community was to refuse him an outlet in their journals.

Denning not only attempts to extend the chronological boundaries of the Popular Front, he also consistently portrays the Popular Front as more inclusive than it was. To suggest that Lewis Corey was the great theorist of the Popular Front on the basis of his analysis of the middle class, when Corey never supported the Popular Front, does an injustice both to Corey and to the history of the left in the 30s.

Denning's inclusive analysis suffers from two failures: (1) a failure to distinguish between the idea of a united front and the idea of a Popular Front; (2) a misconception that Americanizing Marxism can be equated to a Popular Front theory.

In a footnote, Denning picks up on Judy Kutulas's statement that dissident Marxists like Corey and V.J. Calverton were premature united fronters.[7] When Kutulas uses this phrase it is not clear whether she too is conflating the united front with the later Popular Front. But clearly Corey, Calverton, Hook, Rorty and the other dissidents who resigned from the League of Professional Writers knew they were talking about a *united front* of *radical* parties, a front in which the parties united against the threat of fascism, but in which they retained their right to criticize each other. They would have considered the Popular Front's courting of liberal reformers and its effort to submerge ideological and political differences in a suffocating unity an anathema to a radical united front.

Denning further writes that Corey and Calverton pioneered the major themes of the Popular Front social movement before the Communist Party adopted them: the stress on American exceptionalism and on Americanizing Marxism. Later he writes: "Ironically, when the Communist Party itself adopted the Americanizing strategies and rhetoric of the American Workers Party and became supporters of the broad-based Popular Front social movement, the veterans of the AWP attacked not only the Communist Party but also the larger social movement" (432). That is not ironic at all. The short-lived American Workers Party was an effort to build a radical party based on class struggle, but adapted to American — not Soviet — conditions. The idea of American exceptionalism was that the conditions of the class struggle were different in the United States than in Europe — not that there was not a class struggle and not that a radical party should become a reformist party. The Popular Front went in an opposite direction: it subordinated the class struggle and was a political alliance of socialist and non-socialist groups and parties — a bloc, as Howe and Coser wrote, clearly limiting itself to "political goals within the framework of the *status quo*."[8]

It follows from Denning's redrawing the chronological and participatory lines of the Popular Front that the radical divisions and political shifts in the 1930s are not the real story of the Popular Front. "Mine," he writes, "is less a story of political divisions than of cultural continuities, the culture of the Popular Front represented a larger laboring of American culture, which political adversaries often shared in shaping" (26). If Denning's point were only that labor struggles, labor themes, a new generation of plebeian participants in both the labor struggles and the cultural expression of those struggles characterized the various left, often feuding, groups, there would be little with which to quarrel. But, for Denning, the cultural front *is* the Popular Front. And that is where his conceptual framework breaks down. For the Popular Front was not simply a strategy that brought people together; it was a strategy that further divided the left and set off cantankerous debates. Denning recognizes that C.L.R. James, Sidney Hook, Lewis Corey, V.J. Calverton and other dissident radicals opposed the Popular Front, and he recognizes that most of the key authors of the League of Professional Writers 1932 statement (a document he views as central on the role of the intellectual in a capitalist society) broke with their 1932 support of the Communist Party and became critics of the Popular Front. But he never probes that break in terms of what it says about the role of the intellectual in relation to the Communist Party and to the Popular Front. Why was it, as Herbert Solow once pointed out, that with few exceptions those who wrote most frequently for *The New Masses* in 1929 would be repudiated by the Communists as "enemies of the people" by the late 30s?[9] What had happened in the world of the left? in the world at large? Is none of it related in any way to the Popular Front? These were not superficial differences, but defining debates that established where one stood politically, including one's stand on the Popular Front. One simply cannot write about the Popular Front that existed without taking those debates seriously; not to do so trivializes serious differences and sanitizes history.

The Popular Front and the Retreat from Radicalism

DENNING'S ARGUMENT FOR CONTINUITY ALSO INVOLVES ARGUING that the Popular Front did not mark a sharp departure from the early thirties radicalism. Here, he criticizes Richard Pells who believed there was a rich intellectual attempt on the part of Lewis Mumford, John Dewey, Robert Lynd, Sidney Hook and Reinhold Niebuhr in the early 30s to develop a radical alternative to capitalism, one fusing community and individualism, and joining the best traditions of liberalism with a socialist economy. Pells believed that in the late 1930s, with the Popular Front as a contributing factor, intellectuals turned to the piecemeal reform of the New Deal.[10] Denning will have none of this. Acknowledging a change in rhetoric from proletarian revolution to "the people," he insists that "the people" was still emblematic of a radical vision. Denning correctly claims the worker as a central part of the Popular Front concept of the people: "The 'people' invoked by the left-wing Popular Front were neither the vast 'middle' between the economic royalists and the foreign 'lower classes' nor the white, ethnically unmarked, forgotten men: they were working men and women of many races and nationalities" (128). And he makes a good case that "Ballad for Americans" is not about an undifferentiated people, but about class, race and nationality — all the "nobodies." Denning places Paul Robeson's rendition in the context of a series of works about the contested field of America. But what he writes about the contested field does not negate Robeson's ballad of the dispossessed as also a ballad of celebration. Like the 30s' writers who, as William Stott once wrote, set out to criticize the United States and wound up celebrating it, the Popular Front had a critical and a celebratory edge.[11]

Denning is not wrong in arguing that Popular Front culture cannot be dismissed as sentimental and simplistic and that what has often been peremptorily set aside in this fashion involved a re-envisioning of American history and society in terms of diversity and pluralism. But were Warren Susman — one of Denning's chief targets — and others wrong about the sentimentality involved in the Popular Front evocation of "the people"? I know from my last conversation with Susman, as well as from his writings, that he believed the rediscovery of the Popular Front and its culture had resulted in romanticized history. Confusing radicalism with populist sentimentality, he felt, marked a wrong turn for the American left. Perhaps if Denning had spent more time on "The House I Live In" rather than on "The Ballad for Americans," he would have been willing to acknowledge that Susman was on target. There is a terribly simplistic and distorted history that emerges from the Popular Front — an abstract and sentimental vision of the people — even though Denning is right to argue that the Popular Front should not be viewed exclusively in sentimental/patriotic terms.

In the end, the Popular Front suggested that what was needed was the reclamation of a lost America, not the transformation of an economic system. It is interesting that in his Popular Front Manifesto, *It Is Later Than You Think*, Max Lerner followed his section on the Popular Front with a section on the "rediscovery of the past," the rediscovery of America's "democratic tradition." "For," Lerner wrote, "the fact is that progressives and radicals alike, with the exception of the extreme revolutionary Left, are engaged in a new Research Magnificent — the rediscovery of the nation and of the sentiments that cluster around it." Significantly, Lerner follows up with a remark that runs counter to Denning's whole theme: "this is part of radicalism in retreat." Far from seeing the language, vision and politics of the Popular Front as signs of an advancing radical social movement, as Denning does, Lerner understood that it was a defensive strategy, that the confident radicalism of the early 30s had ebbed ("if there is one unmistakable result that fascism has had, it has been to change the character of the radical movement"). After charting the retreat from the earlier heady radicalism, in admittedly simplistic terms, Lerner situated the context of the Popular Front: "We live now in the period of the collapse of high radical hopes, of the mortal fear of fascism."[12]

Sadly, unlike in Great Britain where Denning suggests parallels (xvii), the story of the American intellectual community during the Popular Front period is the story of a retreat from socialism.

Social Democracy and the Popular Front

LERNER'S DEFENSIVE ANALYSIS LEADS DIRECTLY TO DENNING'S CLAIM that the Popular Front was a social democratic movement. One unfortunate result of 20th-century history has been to rob the term "social democratic" of any precise meaning. The New Deal is sometimes described as the American form of European social democracy. Perhaps it is too late to rehabilitate the term, but at a minimum historians should restrict it to at least some version of a mixed economy, in which at least a sizable portion of the basic industries and services is publicly owned. If we use this as a minimum, then neither the New Deal nor the Popular Front was a social democratic movement.

It is worth taking serious note of the clear lines separating progressive liberalism from social democracy that are drawn in David Plotke's *Building a Democratic Political Order*.[13] I have serious disagreements with Plotke's analysis of the New Deal and post-war liberalism, but he is correct in arguing that attempts to equate the New Deal with European social democracy reduce the latter to liberalism by playing down social democracy's more thoroughgoing programs for social transformation.

This is not to say that many liberals (like Lerner) and labor leaders who participated in the Popular Front were not theoretically social democrats. Nevertheless the politics of the Popular Front were not social democratic. In his 1937 article, "The Anatomy of the Popular Front," Sidney Hook was basically correct when he wrote that in a Popular Front, the left — in order to maintain unity — must bow to the right-wing of the Popular Front.[14] It was true in France. It was true in Spain to the point of destroying the left of the Popular Front. And in the United States, both the Communists (by 1937) and the liberals fully supported the New Deal. When Browder declared in 1938 that there were only two political parties — the pro-New Deal and the anti-New Deal parties — he defined the political limits of the Popular Front.

Where does Denning find a social democratic thrust within the Popular Front? He writes approvingly of Ira Katznelson's argument that the alliance of the Popular Front social movement with the New Deal Democratic Party became the American equivalent of European social democracy.[15] Thus, he claims that "U.S. social democracy was the product . . . of the alliance of the New Deal and the Communist Party and the defeat of the Popular Front social movement in the Cold War years meant the defeat of a U.S. social democracy" (10-11). A brief look at the evolution of the New Deal suggests otherwise. The major impact labor had on the New Deal followed the strike wave of 1934 which, along with other signs of social and economic protest, set the stage for the 1935 passage of the Wagner Act, of Social Security, and the creation of the WPA. However, all these were adopted *before* the Popular Front emerged and at a time when the Communist Party was attacking the New Deal as proto-fascist (and incidentally equating social democracy with fascism). The labor movement helped push the New Deal to the left in 1934, but originally without the help of the Popular Front, and only for one brief period. As Steven Fraser's biography of Sidney Hillman demonstrates, for three years between 1934 and 1937 a coalition of labor leaders like Hillman (backed by protest in the street), assorted reformers, and consumer-oriented businessmen moved the New Deal in the direction of a consumer-oriented capitalism dependent on a high-wage economy and a strong labor movement and spurred, when necessary, by Keynesian economics.[16] This was certainly to the left of the corporate-oriented N.R.A. and the large farmer orientation of the A.A.A. But it was hardly a social-democratic program. There is nothing in the late 30s to suggest that the Popular Front in any way moved the New Deal to anything remotely resembling social democracy. Indeed, Roosevelt's response to the Little Steel Strike should serve as a caution to theories of an imaginary social-democratic breakthrough.

DURING THE WAR, THE CIO POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE'S PROGRAM for 1944 was economically and socially progressive, but any study of war-time power relations — the dollar-a-year men in control and a co-opted Sidney Hillman hoping to gain Roosevelt's ear — should suggest the character of New Deal social thinking. And where was the Communist Party's — in Denning's mind one of the creators of this social democracy — support for social democracy or even for labor militancy when it blasted John L. Lewis as a traitor for leading the coal miners' strike? The Party was following its disgraceful and embarrassing support of capitalism and big business. The progressive program was designed primarily to win labor votes for Roosevelt. Hillman (backed by his Communist labor supporters) made this clear to a group of liberal intellectuals following the 1944 election. He told them he had found "the formula," for winning elections. If this is what is meant by the advance of social democracy in the 30s and 40s, it is pitifully meager. It is surprising that Denning, with his radical sentiments, should settle for so little.

Denning also uses Henry Wallace to make his argument that the Popular Front was a social-democratic movement. Here he suffers from the malady of too many of Wallace's admirers for whom the wish becomes the reality. Wallace clearly had no social-democratic vision in the 30s; he was not even much of a liberal. He defended the sharecropper-displacing program of the first Agricultural Adjustment Act. Most liberals in the 1930s did not regard Henry Wallace in any way as a representative spokesperson. At the start of the war, I.F. Stone wrote that Wallace lacked the backbone to stand up to the big business types flocking to Washington. It was only after Wallace delivered his May 1942 Century of the Common Man speech which matched liberal hopes and aspirations for World War II, that he emerged as the voice of liberalism. But if the liberals had not been so eager for a vision that supported theirs from a New Deal official, they might have noted Wallace's vague, confused and contradictory ideas. Far from having a social democratic ideal, Wallace constantly spoke of making capitalism work, of keeping the Horatio Alger dream alive, of government/business cooperation.

It is the labor movement, however, on which Denning primarily bases his case for the alleged radicalism of the Popular Front. The CIO represented "the social movement I have called the Popular Front," he writes. And the CIO is described as social-democratic in its culture and politics (xvii, 110). First, to say that the CIO represented the Popular Front is an over-simplification. Other organizations — the National Negro Congress, the American League for Peace and Democracy — were clearly products of the Popular Front strategy, and their history organically connected with its history. In that sense they are far more representative of the Popular Front than the CIO. The CIO which was an indigenous organization drew support from the Popular Front, and its growth was central to the Popular Front as a bulwark against fascism. But its roots precede the Popular Front and its formation had its own dynamic. The Communist, Socialist and Trotskyist organizers are part of the story of its success, and as the strongest of the three, the Communist union organizers played a vital role. But while the CIO might well not have been organized in the 1930s without the left, the Popular Front, in the end, helped to circumscribe its radicalism.

I am persuaded by Lizabeth Cohen's analysis of the industrial workers in Chicago 1919-1939. She described their radicalism (within the context of the 1930s) and the grass-roots aspects of their insurgency, but also the limits of that radicalism.[17] Her term "moral capitalism" captures the driving moral force behind the insurgency, the desire to change the autocratic nature of work and to gain a modicum of economic justice and security. But it also suggests that the mass of shop workers — as distinct from some of their organizers — did not question the capitalist system. As long as Denning stays within these or similar bounds, he is persuasive about the nature of working-class insurgency. But whereas Cohen doesn't push her evidence for labor radicalism beyond its limits, Denning keeps pressing for it to embody a social-democratic vision. That there was a social-democratic component within the labor movement is true, but it never achieved hegemony and an American social democracy could hardly emerge out of the Communist Party wooing the Democratic Party.

It is also important to pay attention to two aspects of CIO-style organizing noted by Cohen: its top-down structure and its growing dependence on the federal government. At the end of *The Cultural Front,* Denning writes approvingly of C.L.R. James's last work in which he argued that the American workers sought a kind of workers' control through the CIO. Initially, there is a good case to be made for this claim. However, as Cohen shows, the CIO increasingly became organized from the top-down. Although this would later work against the Communists, it is important to remember that contrary to Denning's picture, the Communist Party during the Popular Front period supported this structure, placing its faith in Lewis and its own influence in central headquarters. The reliance on Lewis meant there was no Communist protest when its organizers, who had been central to the steel organizing drive, were removed from the payroll once the drive was successful. As far as the Communists were concerned, their support for Roosevelt and the Popular Front became, as Bert Cochran has written, a “quest for acceptance and respectability.” For example, fearful of hurting the Party’s relationship with the Democratic Party and the leadership of the CIO, Browder successfully persuaded Communist union leaders to condemn the spontaneous Pontiac wildcat strike in November 1937.[18]

For all its remarkable militancy and class consciousness, the CIO became part of the New Deal coalition. Denning’s history of the CIO suggests that everything was basically sound until the post-war labor purge of Communist-led unions. The purge was disgraceful, but all was not well before. The Popular Front did not simply help build an independent labor movement; it also helped integrate that labor movement into interest-group liberalism. What Denning sees as the wartime Popular Front furthered this process. Wartime grass-roots labor actions — the resistance, for example, to the no-strike pledge — came from the shop floors and dissident radicals, not from the Communists or from the liberal community. If there was not a mass base in the labor movement to resist the undemocratic post-war purge of the Communists, perhaps it had something to do with their reputation for opportunism gained through the years dating back to the Popular Front. But that is missing from Denning’s Popular Front.

The Communist Party, the Soviet Union and the Popular Front

Denning’s conception of the Popular Front minimizes the role of the Communist Party. He writes that the importance of party membership has been overemphasized (xviii). In this, he is partly right. No doubt a concern with who was and who was not a party member has received inordinate attention. But this is not to say that the Communist Party was unimportant or that it did not control those organizations that have generally been seen as typical of the Popular Front such as the American Student Union, the American League for Peace and Democracy, the National Negro Congress. The first two did not survive the August 1939 change in the Communist line, and the National Negro Congress became a shell of its earlier self. Those liberals who, up to the Nazi-Soviet Pact, had agreed with the Communist position on collective security, civil rights or Spain, but now disagreed with the Party’s about-face, could not win control of these fast-crumbling organizations. But Denning, as I have already noted, is not concerned with them. By disproportionately focusing on the unions and the cultural institutions in the world of music, film and literature he gravely underestimates the role of the Communist Party.

The Communist Party is less important for Denning’s version of the Popular Front than it is in other histories, but it certainly does not disappear. What nearly vanishes are some key issues of the period (collective security, the Moscow trials, the purges of the anti-Stalinist left in Spain, even the Nazi-Soviet Pact), as well as episodes involving the Party that might interfere with his generalizations. Thus, on the latter, he writes that “the politics of labor defense. . . . remained at the heart of the Popular Front social movement for three decades,” (13) while conveniently forgetting the case of Fred Beal, the Communist organizer who had been a defendant in the Gastonia strike trial. Beal jumped bail and went to the Soviet Union, but when he returned as a critic of the Soviet Union to face imprisonment for his role in the strike, there was no Popular Front labor defense. Nor is the role of the Communist Party in the trial of the Minneapolis Trotskyists discussed. The selective "labor defense" of the Popular Front is matched by Denning's selective history.

An issue that was central to the formation of the Popular Front, foreign policy in general and collective security in particular, receives relatively little attention. Although the Moscow trials had all the potential for disrupting the Popular Front, they are, I believe, referred to only once. The purge of the anti-Stalinist left in Spain enters into Denning's analysis of John Dos Passos, but he ignores what it tells us about the nature of the Spanish Popular Front in action and whether or not that history has any relevance to the historian of the American Popular Front. Denning argues that the Popular Front transformed the ways people imagined the globe, and he discusses the development of an international consciousness. He is not wrong here. But he refuses to discuss the selectivity of that international consciousness. The closest he comes is in a remarkable passage. Speaking of those who make Stalinism the central issue of the Popular Front, he writes:

> However, this narrative only illustrates the well-known contradictions of any politics of international solidarity; on the one hand, it is built on powerful ways of imagining the globe, narratives of the world system that make sense of an incomprehensible totality; and, on the other hand, it is subject to the twists and turns of international diplomacy and to the internal crises of foreign movements, parties, and regimes. To focus on the zigzags of international diplomacy is to misunderstand the larger significance of Popular Front solidarity.(12)

What this passage does is reduce the Moscow Trials and Stalin's murderous purges to an internal crisis of the Soviet Union and Stalin's Pact with Hitler to a mere zigzag of international diplomacy. Does Denning's "politics of international solidarity" include the critical two years of the Kremlin's international solidarity with Nazi Germany?

Denning's reticence on the issue of Stalinism is connected, I believe, with the fact that Denning's is a history of the culture of the Popular Front in which very little is said about the theme of left unity. Yet, unity was part of the theoretical structure of the Popular Front and runs throughout its literature. It is central in explaining Popular Front liberal reaction to the Moscow Trials and to the purge of the anti-Stalinist left in Spain. The unity motif is not absent from Denning's analysis. But it does not have the prominent place it deserves. And it does not have it, I suspect, because it raises the political and moral questions of what must be accepted in the name of unity. It also leads one to recognize that in the face of Popular Front unity there was a left that spoke out on these questions. But in Denning's book there are no references to the public arguments over the Moscow Trials or the nature of the Soviet Union. These public disagreements are important because they reflect intellectual divisions that require us to ask *why*? What were the issues — practically ignored by Denning — that created such rifts in the intellectual world? Can we erase them from a cultural history of the Popular Front? And do some of the positions taken on the issues reflect a moral insensitivity that ate away at the base of the Popular Front? I believe they do. That is why *my* Popular Front was tragic and a wrong turn. Thousands of the best people — courageous, committed, with high social ideals — committed themselves to a Popular Front strategy that demanded that they sacrifice their critical faculties in the name of unity, that led them away from developing democratic socialist alternatives to capitalism and, instead, helped tie them and their labor allies politically to the Democratic Party which, while using their votes and ideological support, lacked the egalitarian commitment that might have made the strategy worthwhile. In the last sentence of *The Cultural Front*, Denning writes of *his* Popular Front: "The failure of their laboring remains our starting point" (472). I believe Denning can urge this because his is a Popular Front which misinterprets its *political* dimension and ignores its tragic evasions.

NOTES

1. In *The Popular Front and the Progressive Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), David Blazer has done this for the British Popular Front.

2. Since he argues that the Popular Front was not primarily an alliance between Communists and liberals, Denning might reply that I am ignoring his stress on the role of the independent leftists. Though his examples are not the same as mine, those I am calling liberals here — and in my writing on liberalism in the 1930s — were liberals who had moved left under the impact of the depression and had adopted socialist and quasi-socialist ideas. Thus, we often have the same *type* of people in mind. The EPIC campaign illustrates my point. The California Communists had wanted permission to support Upton Sinclair; the national headquarters refused and demanded they attack him. Had there been a *political* Popular Front in existence in 1934 this would not have occurred. Denning has a far stronger case that radical/liberal cooperation had already begun in labor organizing and in cultural areas *without* the *political* Popular Front, but that would have undercut his argument that the Popular Front was the foundation for all the other activities.

3. Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem During the Depression* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 270.

4. Maurice Isserman, *Which Side Were You On*? (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 119.

5. One example of what I mean by "fast and loose" is the case of Louis Adamic. Denning uses Adamic as a representative Popular Front figure throughout the book. Adamic did write movingly on second-generation immigrant workers, on labor, and he was part of re-envisioning the United States in more diverse and pluralistic terms. But these aspects of his career can all be found in the1930s when his criticisms of the Soviet Union and the American Communist Party and its Popular Front positions caused Popular Fronter Malcolm Cowley to say that Adamic's autobiography, *My America*, "smelled of Stolberg and red herring." (Stolberg was a labor journalist highly critical of the Communists and their role in the CIO.) Contrary to Denning's analysis, Adamic can only be considered representative of the Popular Front during World War II when his wartime work with the American Slav Congress led him to drop his previous critical views of Stalinism. Adamic's 1930s placing of the immigrant workers at the center of the American experience occurred at the very time when spokespeople for the Popular Front scorned him. This indicates that many views that Denning believes were key characteristics of the Popular Front were characteristics of 30s culture generally and not Popular Front culture particularly.

6. Carey McWilliams, "Moving the West-Coast Japanese," *Harper's Magazine* 185 (September, 1942): 359-369.

7. Judy Kutulas, *The Long War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

8. Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party* (Boston: Beacon, 1957), 323.

9. Herbert Solow, "Ripostes," *Partisan Review*, 4 (March, 1938): 59-62.

10. Richard Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973). See also, Frank Warren, *Liberals and Communism: The 'Red Decade' Revisited* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966; republished Columbia University Press,

1993).

11. William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (New York: Oxford, 1973), 237.

12. Max Lerner, *It Is Later Than You Think* (New York: Viking, 1939), 66, 81.

13. David Plotke, *Building a Democratic Political Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

14. Sidney Hook, "The Anatomy of the Popular Front," *Partisan Review* 6 (Spring, 1939): 32-38.

15. Ira Katznelson, "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity," in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, ed. Steven Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 185-211. In this essay, Katznelson is more cautious in his use than Denning. He speaks of the social democratic "possibility" within the New Deal and of "proto-social democracy" in relation to the New Deal.

16. Steven Fraser, *Labor Will Rule* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

17. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

18. Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 135.

Is Bureaucracy "Best" For Unions?

Kim Moody

THE 1995 LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE IN THE AFL-CIO and the victory for the New Voice team of John Sweeney, Linda Chavez-Thompson, and Rich Trumka helped bring contemporary organized labor back into the focus of the intellectual and academic communities. A near blizzard of teach-ins, books, anthologies, and at least one new organization reflect the renewed interest in and contact with unions in a corner of society that had at best looked at this aspect of current working class life from a distance for decades — a situation labor leaders tended to encourage. The new organization is Scholars, Artists, and Writers for Social Justice (SAWSJ). From its beginning SAWSJ developed a working relationship with the new AFL-CIO leaders that gave the project credibility. One of the founders of SAWSJ was labor historian Steve Fraser. So, Fraser's article, "Is Democracy Good for Unions?", that appeared in the Summer 1998 issue of *Dissent*, on the nature of unions and their leadership is of some consequence for the debate and discussion that has unfolded in intellectual circles.

The *Dissent* article is unique in that it presents a view of organized labor that is usually confined to the verbal corridors of the penthouse of labor. It is a view that incorporates assumptions shared by most high level union officials, but seldom spoken and almost never committed to print. It is remarkable, too, because it dispenses with all the sociological decoration of the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" and the evolutionary niceties of 1960s "maturity" theory to praise bureaucracy and bureaucrats as the right and proper form of trade union organization and leadership. Fraser's arguments are corridor classics. He starts off by noting that it seems to be the left and the right who are most concerned about union democracy and membership rights. The coupling of the right and left as advocates of union democracy is a longstanding classic, as is the careful distinction he makes between the motives of the two: the left good if naive, the right bad. Still, like the lawyer's inappropriate jab in a TV courtroom drama it is well designed to leave a bad taste in the jury's collective mouth even after the judge rules, "objection sustained."

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The difference between the left and right views on union democracy isn't just one of motive or intent. The right's flirtations with procedural democracy and membership rights flows from the belief that the majority of union members, at least the white ones, are, like themselves, social conservatives. Give this "silent majority" half a chance and it will reign in leftist social engineers like Walter Reuther and perhaps stop unions from endorsing liberal Democrats. Or so they believe. While advocates of union democracy on the left understand that social conservatism, including racism and sexism, runs as deep in labor's ranks as in any class of this society, we reject this simplistic liberal leader-conservative ranks thesis. Instead, we see again and again that movements for greater union democracy create a broader and deeper social consciousness and bolster leadership skills among new rank and file leaders.

Another group in which the majority shares the right-wing view of the rank and file as social simpletons unable to negotiate the complexities of power or overcome their prejudices is, of course, the labor bureaucracy. Its distrust of the ranks is one side of the bureaucratic equation — one reason for all the layers of insulation from member influence or power. The backwardness of the ranks is enough to justify this. The myth of its own forward-looking social vision makes bureaucracy a virtue.

Unfortunately, not all labor leaders are practicing social progressives (wannabe labor leader Junior Hoffa comes to mind), while the record of liberal or social democratic leaders on civil rights within their own unions, for example, is abysmal. In recent decades, as Herbert Hill has pointed out in *New Politics* and elsewhere, few have ever used their bureaucratic power to rectify racist practices in the unions. While union leaders are usually more liberal than business people or Republicans, the image of them standing far ahead of the entire union membership is largely a social prejudice.

The rank and file is not some monolith, neither all backward nor all a "virginal" mass, as Fraser characterizes the left view of union members. Labor's ranks have a range of opinion and practice on just about any question. There are white supremacists and white racial liberals, Black militants and accomodationists, feminists and right-to-lifers, etc. Unions can play a role in shaping the social and political views of members. A few more democratic unions, such as the United Electrical Workers and the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers, actually try this. Bureaucratic unions discourage discussion and debate, so there is little real political life or education in most unions these days. While the new AFL-CIO leaders have encouraged some level of debate, it has yet to filter down even as far as most International Union affiliates.

MOVEMENTS FOR UNION DEMOCRACY PROVIDE PRECISELY the kind of political life and education once provided by the better unions. Conventions, conferences, and schools held by groups like TDU, UAW New Directions, REAP (in the United Food & Commercial Workers), or the Caucus for a Democratic Union in the 42,000-member California State Employees/SEIU Local 1000 are far more educational and interesting than those of any AFL-CIO union or of the federation itself. To these must be added the schools and conferences of allied organizations such as Labor Notes, the New Directions' Workers Education Center, the Black Workers for Justice, and the Transnationals Information Exchange.

In some respects, today's rank-and-file-based groups are also socially and politically well ahead of the liberals who head their unions. The leadership teams of today's union reform movements, from the Teamsters for a Democratic Union to New Directions in TWU Local 100 (NYC Transit) to the new reform leadership of SEIU Local 1000, are far more racially diverse and gender balanced than the leadership of almost any International Union. The "Right to Vote" reform movement that took over the Pennsylvania Federation of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) in the 1980s abolished the de facto segregated seniority lists and Jim Crow locals still in existence. They convinced the white majority this would make a stronger as well as a more democratic union. The Teamster reform slate led by Tom Leedham and backed by TDU may be the most diverse such slate ever run for top national offices in the history of American unionism.

Another corridor classic Fraser offers is that reform movements never win. Fraser demonstrates an awareness that the intersecting dynamics of employer pressure and union bureaucracy tend to feed rank and file rebellion, but in his view "the crusade for union democracy seems interminable and interminably futile." Fraser's eyes are, of course, focused on top offices and electoral victories appear to be his sole measure of success. Even accepting this narrow criteria we would point to top level reform victories in the Steelworkers in the 1960s (one of the few Fraser mentions); Mine Workers in the1970s, National Maritime Union in the 1980s, and the Master Mates & Pilots, Musicians, and Teamsters all in the 1990s. Only slightly down the hierarchy were major victories in the Steelworkers District 31 in the 1970s, the California Nurses in the 1990s, and any number of larger local unions in the UAW, SEIU, AFSCME, Steelworkers, Musicians, and Teamsters among others. We might also add the countless number of pro-democracy groups that won representation on local union executive boards across the labor movement. It would seem that successful electoral rebellion far from being the rare exception has been a regular, if not dominant, feature in U.S. unions since the 1960s — interminable, as Fraser puts it, but not always futile.

Of course not all reform movements take off or win elections to high office. Some go bad while in office, many are limited by their own ideology, others are wrecked on the shores of industrial restructuring. But rank and file struggle for democratic unions arises again and again and where it is well organized and its message strikes a chord it frequently wins. When it does it makes a difference. That transformation of the Teamsters, while far from complete, is remarkable for the reduction in bureaucracy and privilege, the opening of political debate, the change in political direction, and the increased effectiveness in bargaining. Even a Hoffa victory will not reverse all of this. Looking further back, the example of the United Mine Workers presents another case of major transformation in the culture of a union. It was, to be sure, a partial and uneven process limited by inexperienced leaders and eventually battered by an industry in decline and crisis, but to imagine that the UMWA that fielded the Pittston strike of 1989 is the same as the union of Tony Boyle is absurd. Fraser imagines the whole process of union reform to be futile because he holds up an abstract standard of democratic perfection that he himself has no use for.

The improvement in bargaining performance cannot be stressed enough since it is the failure of old guard leaders in this area that produces most union reform movements in the first place. Unions that have been through a reform process or those that are more democratic tend to improve their bargaining performance, even under today's difficult circumstances. Of course, unions in which a reform movement either wins or stakes out some territory are often those, like the Teamsters, that had let their bargaining standards crumble over the years. Improvement usually involves getting up to standards set in the past or by others. But the deeper the process, the greater the willingness to risk mobilizing the members (who may well want more power as a result), the more likely the outcomes will grow over time. This was certainly the experience of the Teamsters, not only at UPS, where a new standard was set, and in the other big national or regional contracts, but in countless local bargaining units where the reformers took over.

In line with his assertions of doom for democracy, Fraser writes as if the question of union democracy and union effectiveness in the Teamsters ended the day "donorgate" surfaced. It didn't. The current election in the Teamsters will affect the entire labor movement, including the balance of forces on the AFL-CIO Executive Council. Every progressive should have lent vocal support to Leedham and the reformers. Most remained silent, some said a plague on both your houses, a few even backed Hoffa, but to their honor some spoke up for reform — including some leaders of SAWSJ. By the time this is published, the election might be over. Likely Hoffa will have won. Hoffa has the name recognition, the loyalty of many remaining Old Guard local leaders, and the sympathy of the media and employers; but this election is a "ground war" in which money is limited and the largest organized force on the ground is TDU. At its November convention TDU members reported that Leedham seemed ahead in those areas where TDU was able to campaign. It was also true, however, that it was impossible for this on-the-ground campaign to reach a majority of the union's 1.4 million members across the U.S. and Canada. Still, as of mid-November both camps were predicting a close race.

But even if Hoffa wins, history does not end. There are dozens of locals, some very big and strategic, with reform leadership. Several of these reform leaderships were elected after news of the scandal broke, indicating a continued demand for democratic reform. There are tens of thousands of union members who have seen the material benefits of democracy at UPS and elsewhere. There is TDU. Hoffa in office will not be able to deliver to the standards already set in many jurisdictions or on much of anything to a membership that has come to expect results. His three year term is more than likely to end in leadership bickering over the trough and defeat.

As the experience of the Teamsters has shown, the fight for union democracy is not about resurrecting the past — the guilds or the chummy Carpenter Locals of old that Fraser mentions in *Dissent*. Nor is it about stifling leadership initiative or being nice to your opponents. Democracy can be rough terrain. What it is about is making leaders accountable and opening debates on the direction of unionism. Ultimately, it is about activating labor's greatest source of power. No, not the staff or the lawyers: the membership, their families, and communities. This is where the union's real power lies. Yes, the ranks need education, organization, and leadership — things they do not get from the majority of today's union leaders. But they also need the power to change course, dump leaders who fail, and shape a leadership equal to today's challenges.

The complexities and conflicts of modern capitalist society do tend to foster and reproduce bureaucracy in large organizations, as Fraser argues. That is precisely why the fight for union democracy is so important. Fraser argues that there is a trade-off or opposition between power and democracy. Democracy has to be sacrificed sometimes to gain power. This, too, is an old argument, but one that obscures the actual sources of union power — the union membership and their place in the economic order. It isn't the cleverness of leaders and advisers, the diligence of the staff, or the alleged orderliness of top-down organizations that will match, much less best today's corporate giants. The idea that a small clique of leaders commanding a large staff is the essence of power and effectiveness in the midst of a complicated, contentious world has reality upside down. It's like Soviet planning applied to unionism. Dealing strategically and effectively with a complex reality requires open debate, access to information, freedom to criticize, conflicting ideas, contesting leaders, in short a democratic culture.

FINALLY, THERE IS FRASER'S HISTORICALLY INVENTIVE ARGUMENT that the "rank and file is complicit in the creation of the bureaucracy; the bureaucracy is its legitimate offspring, at least in the case of strong CIO-like upheavals." Fraser isn't just arguing, as "maturity" theorists might, that the ranks go along with it in times of relative prosperity and stable bargaining relationships. He is arguing that rank and file upheaval like the formation of the new CIO unions is the cause of bureaucracy and that when this bureaucracy arises in "the Sturm und Drang of industrial warfare, it represents not the worst but the best the movement has to offer."

There is a quick sleight-of-hand on Fraser's part: the equation of the fighting organizations of 1934-1939 with the bureaucratic unions of later years. It goes like this: "A powerful bureaucracy often signals the strength of its anonymous creators down below. The fact that they were able to fashion an institution capable of standing up to an enemy whose overlordship went unquestioned for so long is an accomplishment, not a mistake or failing." In fact, the new unions that toppled giants like General Motors, Ford, General Electric, and even Big and Little Steel in those years did not bear much resemblance to the bureaucracies of today; if they had they most certainly wouldn't have accomplished what they did. For one thing, it was workers in motion, not some "institution" that beat GM and the others. If outcomes had been decided simply by some clash of institutions or structures, there is not much doubt that history would have taken a different and worse course. Indeed, so institutionally weak were many of the industrial unions at that time, they nearly collapsed when recession hit again in 1938. With the partial exception of the Steelworkers there was no "powerful bureaucracy" to speak of. The galvanizing event, the Flint GM sit-down strike, would most likely never have happened if the national leaders of the new UAW, who opposed any action at that time, had had in 1937 the legion of appointed reps and Administration Caucus dependents the UAW leadership used to terminate the 1973 sit-in at Chrysler's Mack Avenue stamping plant in Detroit.

No, the ranks did not create bureaucracy in the midst of the industrial warfare of the 1930s. They created fiercely democratic local unions knit together by more or less democratic and fragile structures. The ranks also found leaders. There is, after all, a distinction to be made between leaders and bureaucrats. The new CIO, of course, contained both, sometimes embodied in a single person like John L. Lewis or Sidney Hillman who brought their unions into the new federation. But in 1936, the heads of most new unions were leaders without much in the way of staff, bureaucratic insulation, cherished relationships with capital, or personal privilege. In most of these new unions, leaders and members fostered a rough and tumble democratic life, sometimes despite their intentions. It took years of effort to stifle that democratic culture. All too often the youthful leaders of the 1930s became the "mature" executioners of union democracy in the 1940s or 1950s. When they did so, however, it was not as rank and filers. Nor were they often open about their intentions.

The imposition of bureaucratic rule has always required bureaucratic methods, including outright dishonesty. A recent example of this process is found in the attempt by leaders of the American Flintglass Workers Union, a small, relatively democratic union, to take that union into the United Food & Commercial Workers, one of the nation's most grotesquely bureaucratic unions. Merger might have made sense for this tiny union, but given the reality of the UFCW, it was clear the "Flints," as they call themselves, would lose some of their current democracy; e.g. the election of the union's ten national reps. To get it by, the pro-merger leaders called a special convention without making the terms of the merger available until the delegates arrived. Sensibly, the delegates voted the merger down by over three to one. In this case democracy prevailed over bureaucratic method.

The battle for bureaucratic unionism was won by the 1950s and the unions that emerged looked little like those that exploded on the scene in the mid-1930s. Reviewing in horror the transformation of so many unions, Sidney Lens wrote at the time (in *The Crisis of American Labor*) about the rise of full-time, appointed "reps" whose swelling numbers bolstered the domination of union politics by the top officials. There had always been authoritarian leaders, but for the newer industrial unions at least all of the armies of appointees were something new. This rising tide of bureaucratic business unionism brought with it the receding fortunes of the unions themselves. Four decades later, many of labor's friends and enemies alike assume that massive bureaucracy and top-down control are the natural state of the unions, possibly "the best" state.

What Lens and many others knew then to which Fraser seems oblivious, was that the insulation of the membership from union politics, and the practice of collective bargaining changes, is often meant to change the relationship of the top leaders to management. This latter relationship becomes closer in many ways, even when problem-ridden, than the relationship with the ranks. Bargaining becomes merely a service conducted by professionals meeting with professionals. The struggle for power on the job and in society gives way to a polite tug of war over the margins of a largely predetermined slice of the corporate pie. The trip from the "stable bargaining relationships" of the 1950s and 1960s to the cooperation schemes of the 1980s was not such a long one. Along the way, however, the unions' independence from the employers was increasingly compromised.

Putting aside one's interpretation of historical cause, effect, and timing, I would further point out that few of today's top labor leaders have seen much *Sturm und Drang* until quite recently and seldom up close and personal. For a couple of generations the American labor officialdom has been composed primarily of more or less adept politicians and negotiators, whose skills and outlook were acquired in inherited and well-ripened bureaucracies. Unlike the Hillmans and Reuthers of another era, whatever one thinks of them, the majority of today's labor leaders tend to be third generation "yes men" (yes, men) with only a fading clone of a social vision handed down from International Executive Board to International Executive Board. For decades the *Sturm und Drang* of industrial confrontation have been systematically avoided whenever possible by all but a few. Instead, the return of serious conflict has seen most labor leaders dive into "labor-management cooperation" with their predators no matter how often they kick them in the face. The level of denial is astounding.

Indeed, if we are to judge by the results of the last two or three decades, bureaucratic unionism has been a massive failure in politics, organizing, and even collective bargaining. The tale of decline and retreat is too well known to require repeating here. The recent successes have been too few to justify complacency about the lingering heritage of bureaucratic business unionism. Even these, such as the defeat of Fast Track and Prop 226, are defensive. (The biggest recent success in collective bargaining, UPS, came out of the reform process in the Teamsters.) So critical is this situation that some of the more astute practitioners of business unionism are attempting to modernize it from above. We appreciate the higher profile they have given labor. We would all like to see the "New Voice" effort to organize low wage workers succeed. What we see, however, is that the process is bogged down in its own bureaucratic methods, limited by its contradictory business union ideology, and inevitably mired in factional maneuvers (as opposed to open debate) at the top.

Who will cut this Gordian Knot? The timid tiptop modernizers themselves? Not likely. For change to be more than marginal or superficial it will have to come from below. A TDU-style national opposition group is one way, certainly the most effective, but there are others. A movement or loosely organized current that captures large locals or a section of a union, like the BMWE reformers, will affect the internal life and policy of the International Union — injecting democratic culture across the organization. A coalition of currents within a union can break the grip of bureaucracy and open the door to democracy.

Another way to look at this is that many of those who sit astride the ruling machinery of our unions will be gone in a few years — a simple function of time. They can be succeeded by an even more stilted group of hand-picked yes men, and perhaps some women, trained in the art of retreat. Or they can be replaced by leaders with new ideas, a commitment to changing the aging bureaucratic structures of most unions, and deep roots in the ranks from which they came. It may just be that this new generation (whatever their ages) will not require six figure salaries, have a taste for cozy relations with top executives, or think that a union where the staff has more power than the members is an effective way to confront global corporations. Naturally, it takes more than changes in leadership to create a democratic labor movement, but when this leadership is linked to an active movement based in the ranks the potential is great.

We have a choice. We can tinker at the top telling ourselves all the while that things are getting better in the house of labor. Or we can lend a hand to those who seek a deeper change and are willing to put up with debate, political conflict, an informed rank and file, and the other facets of democracy because they know that ultimately that is where the power of the unions will be found.

Herbert Hill's critical essay-review of Nelson Lichtenstein's biography of Walter Reuther, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit, Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* appeared in the last issue of NEW POLITICS Volume VII, No.1. Below is Nelson Lichtenstein's rejoinder followed by Herbert Hill's rebuttal. We invite further comment.

Walter Reuther in Black and White: A Rejoinder to Herbert Hill

Nelson Lichtenstein

IN HIS ASSAULT, "Lichtenstein's Fictions: Meany, Reuther and the 1964 Civil Rights Act," Herbert Hill has launched an attack upon my biography of Walter Reuther — and upon me — that will further damage his reputation as a legal scholar and civil rights historian. This is not because Hill criticizes Reuther and Meany on their civil rights record and I defend them. As I shall demonstrate below, my biography represents a sustained critique of Reutherite politics and practice. Rather, Herbert Hill's failure to grasp the actual argument offered by my Reuther biography is so blind, willful, and self-contradictory, that it brings into question the reliability of his historical work and the validity of his judgments on a whole range of parallel issues.

Herbert Hill played an historic and heroic part in the African-American struggle for liberation. His place in the annals of that movement is secure. But Herbert Hill does not own that history or the part he played in it. Furthermore, his effort to reduce the trade unions, both past and present, to little more than a white job trust does a disservice both to the history of America's working class movement and to the possibility of a genuinely progressive trade union revival. Herbert Hill's world is one of Manichean polarities, but reality was far more dialectical.[1]

The Hill attack has two misshapen themes. First he devotes at least two-thirds of the space in his essay to the refutation of a single para-

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graph in my Reuther biography: a few sentences which assert the important role played by the AFL-CIO and the UAW in the addition of a fair employment practices title to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Hill argues that their support was both self-serving and "limited" in the sense that the unions supported Title VII only to the extent that it was ineffective when it came to a reform of actual union racial practice. And he offers paragraph after paragraph demonstrating the way in which the AFL-CIO and the UAW fought effective enforcement of Title VII during the 1960s and 1970s. Although Hill's analysis is hardly perfect — his legislative history of Title VII ignores the role played by the conservatives in shaping the Title — I will demonstrate how it actually bolsters the larger argument made in my Reuther biography.

But Hill's second theme is both more personal, more political, and more immediately accessible to the readership of *New Politics* and others on the American left. He charges me with a whitewash of Walter Reuther because I have an "ideological requirement...to depict labor unions as a progressive social force whatever the facts. In order to do this Lichtenstein has to engage in evasions, half-truths, omissions and misleading 'explanations' for labor's record on racial issues."[2]

Over the entire sweep of the 20th century, trade unions have been, generally speaking, a progressive force in American life and social policy. Walter Reuther was a complex figure whose self-confident liberalism and soaring rhetoric, even in the last years of his life, had much to commend it. But such a viewpoint does not constitute an endorsement of labor's program and practice at any and all times. Indeed, the basic thrust of the Reuther biography is one of devolution, missed opportunities, and growing structural sclerosis. And as this rejoinder will demonstrate, contra Hill's misplaced invective, my account of Reuther's failures on the racial front, both inside the UAW and out, constitutes one of the prime indictments of his leadership in an era when those unions which were heir to the CIO legacy made their peace with the status quo.

To this end, I'm happy to catalogue Hill's charges because the actual text of my biography so easily and extensively refutes them. Thus Hill argues that while I "acknowledge" discrimination in the UAW, my biography does not, "with but two exceptions, discuss the response of the Reuther leadership to racist practices by local unions although they were widespread." Instead, "Lichtenstein works from the exception and ignores the pattern."[3]

Hill also charges that I "remind the reader with some frequency of Reuther's financial support for civil rights causes as proof of his devotion to the movement."[4] And driving in this presumptive nail, Hill quotes with approval historian George Lipsitz who writes in *Rainbow at Midnight*, his well-received history of mid-century American labor:

> I know that defenders of the AFL-CIO will point to their support for civil rights legislation as proof that they fought for social justice rather than for social peace. But when one looks closely at their role in the civil rights movement a different picture emerges. Walter Reuther paid for the sound system for the 1963 March on Washington, but then used his influence to censor John Lewis's speech. Social democrats like Joseph Rauh and Allard Lowenstein channeled civil rights workers within the Democratic party, urging acceptance of the decision to seat the segregationist Mississippi delegation at the 1964 convention instead of the integrated Mississippi Freedom Demo-

> cratic party. In these instances and others, union leaders tried to do with the civil rights movement what they had done with the labor insurgencies of the thirties and forties — take power away from the rank and file and delegate power to leaders making deals with corporations and political parties. In both cases, in my judgement, the rank and file lost far more than it gained.[5]

And now for the Hill hammer: "Lichtenstein does not share Lipsitz's view. On the contrary, he repeatedly emphasizes labor union financial support for civil rights activities without understanding its consequences. It is evident that a major ideological purpose of Lichtenstein's book is to 'prove,' that despite some limitations, on the whole, organized labor fulfilled its innate socially progressive role in the struggle for racial justice."[6] And a bit later, "Lichtenstein has not written a critical study of Reuther whom he perceives as a working-class visionary struggling mightily against powerful corporations."[7]

So we have the indictment. Now for the defense. My biography of Walter Reuther traces the career of a one-time socialist as he battles his way to a quarter-century leadership of the nation's most powerful and politicized trade union. His career is a tragedy because it both paralleled and advanced the larger devolution of the American labor movement, from insurgency and radicalism in the 1930s and 1940s, to near-establishment status in the 1960s. I don't subscribe to a great man theory of history, which is why I frequently declare Reuther a "prisoner of the institutions he did so much to construct." Hill thinks this formulation "impoverished," itself constituting an apologia, but I hope readers of *New Politics* are sophisticated enough to recognize that if you are on the left, the demonization of your opponents is not the highest or most useful form of political analysis. Reuther was an opportunist, but not always in the worst sense of that term. He saw himself, at least subjectively, as one who challenged the status quo, but he nevertheless accommodated, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, to the increasingly conservative institutional and social pressures that confronted the union movement.

From the world of big-time collective bargaining, to the UAW alliance with the Democratic Party, to the structures of subordination and discrimination that ordered the racial hierarchy in all UAW-organized factories, Reuther presided over and therefore took ultimate responsibility for a regime that had drifted ever farther from its labor-liberal ideals. Harvey Swados summed it up quite well in the early 1960s, "One cannot complain, as one might with almost any other union, of an absence of intellect, or of a lack of application of that intellect to the problems of our age. What one can say, I think with justification, is that the UAW leadership no longer takes its own demands seriously."[8] This view is offered to argue that a mass movement from below was required to break this social and economic stalemate. And when such movements did emerge, in the 1960s, Reuther sought either to block or co-opt them for his own political purposes.

But on to the text. My biography of Reuther consists of 19 chapters and an epilogue. I discuss the racial politics and practices of the UAW in a number of places, but largely in chapters 10, 17 and 19 which discuss Walter Reuther and his union during World War II, at the height of the civil rights movement, and during the era of the 1967 race riot and the eruption of late 1960s black militancy, most notably the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement. Herbert Hill has chosen to focus only upon a small portion of that narrative, largely that which appears in the chapter covering Reuther, the UAW, and racial politics during the late 1950s and 1960s. In the following passages I quote at length the actual text of the Reuther biography because some sense of the narrative flow is necessary for a reader to understand how wildly off-base is the thrust of Hill's critique. To the particular charge that my biography glosses over the systematic character of auto industry racism, or of UAW complicity therein, I offer the following:

> If Reuther's links to the Democratic Party had been the only constraint upon his activism, these might well have been strained as the (civil rights) movement reached flood tide. But Reuther's growing identification with both John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson had its reflection, if not its actual origins, inside the UAW itself where he found the growth of a rights-conscious militancy an ideological and organizational challenge of the first order. In the early 1940s the rise of a black insurgency within the automobile and agricultural implement factories had been organically linked to the growth of industrial unionism itself. A generation later, when a second wave of racial militancy surged forward, it crashed with full force against a shop floor regime and a union structure of far greater rigidity. This was a contradiction which Reuther could never resolve and never escape.
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> At the end of the 1950s racial structures based on the subordination of African-American workers had a three-fold character within the automobile industry. First, there was still outright segregation, maintained by employers and sustained by local unionists, in many UAW-organized factories in the South. In the decade after World War II this problem had actually become more prominent as the decentralization of Big Three auto production out of the urban North and the organization of new facilities, especially those of the aircraft and agricultural implement industries, put upwards of ten percent of all UAW membership South of the Ohio River and the Mason-Dixon Line.
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> In the Atlanta, Dallas, Memphis and Norfolk automotive assembly plants the prewar tradition barring blacks from all but janitorial work remained largely intact. "When we moved into the South," one of GM's plant managers in Atlanta explained in 1957, "we agreed to abide by local custom and not hire Negroes for production work. This is no time for social reforming...and we're not about to try it." Reuther was personally acquainted with the virulent racism of the Georgia workers. In 1945 he had flown to Atlanta to demand that Fisher Body Local 34 admit black sweepers to membership and upgrade them to production jobs. At a packed meeting that lasted five hours, Reuther pulled out all the stops, arguing for solidarity against the company and threatening the local with an administratorship if they failed to follow UAW policy. Soon 120 black sweepers were formally enrolled in the local, but none won production jobs. Indeed, the GM Atlanta locals remained a center of segregationist agitation, especially after the Brown decision, when the autoworker Elston Edwards, an Imperial Wizard of the Georgia KKK, recruited actively among his workmates.[9]

Let's pause here for a moment to note how Herbert Hill distorts the above incident. He writes of the situation in Local 34, "What Lichtenstein fails to mention is that 30 years later, with but one exception, blacks employed in this plant were still janitors, locked in a labor classification in the union contract that limited them to work only as janitors, with no possibility of promotion into jobs reserved exclusively for whites. Furthermore, this was the pattern in many UAW organized plants in the South and border states."[10] Aside from the fact that I chose not to comment on the state of affairs in the year 1975, half a decade after Reuther's death, Hill's charge is willfully blind to the plain meaning of the words in this paragraph: In Atlanta, like Memphis, Norfolk, and

Dallas, white unionists defended the segregation of African-Americans, keeping them confined to the janitorial work.

My text continues:

> Memphis proved an equally intransigent bastion of Herrenvolk militancy. Management at International Harvester hired hundreds of African-Americans to help staff its new agricultural equipment factory in the late 1940s. But trench warfare immediately broke out between whites and blacks on the shop floor. As in so many factories, mills and shipyards, not all confined to the Deep South by any means, Harvester's white workers linked a militant job control impulse with a racialist construction of the factory hierarchy. A close-knit fraternity of whiteness, skill and union power kept Harvester Local 988 a storm center of segregationist conflict. In the late 1950s Local 988 thumbed its nose at Solidarity House when it constructed a new union hall complete with segregated rest rooms and water fountains. 'We belong to Reuther's union but we don't believe in Reuther's integration,' announced one militant welder at a stormy meeting held between UAW officers and the Local 988 whites. 'When the showdown comes we'll take segregation and leave you guys up in Detroit.'
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> In fact, Solidarity House seemed without the will to intervene. As late as 1957 Reuther still maintained that 'except for isolated instances' discrimination in the matter of promotions and transfers has been eliminated. 'The most glaring instance of continued discriminatory practices is discrimination by management at the hiring gate, a process over which, in most instances we have no direct control.' Clearly, this was not the whole story in the South, but Pat Greathouse, the UAW vice-president in charge of the Agriculture Implement Department, was himself from downstate Illinois. He had spent much of the previous decade fighting the FE Communists, whose championship of African-American demands at Harvester made most Reutherites look twice before they leaped into the racial fray. The leader of the embattled Harvester blacks, George Holloway, found Reuther's high profile agitation against the Dixiecrats a genuine inspiration, but by 1959 he pleaded with Detroit that his workers 'felt that the UAW-CIO executive board has thrown us to the wolves and forgot their promises to correct his evil situation.'
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> Reuther and his executive board eventually moved against such blatant segregation in the southern locals, but a second racial problem, the upgrading of black workers into the skilled trades, proved even more difficult to resolve. During World War II Northern blacks had broken through the caste lines that kept them confined to foundry and janitorial work, but upward mobility halted in the 1950s as job opportunities contracted and the union pushed for higher apprenticeship standards. By the end of the decade the black proportion of the skilled trades stood at minuscule levels, 2% or less, which was often below that of even the notoriously exclusionary building trades. Black staffers often called the skilled trades 'the deep South' of the UAW. But Reuther was not about to take aggressive action here. The skilled trades had begun a long-simmering 'revolt' against industrial-style unionism so Reuther hesitated to further roil the waters with an assault upon the racial nepotism of this strategically placed section of the union.
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> Finally, black production workers in the late 1950s and early 1960s confronted an industrial relations structure of authority that seemed increasingly intolerable. The auto industry as a whole was about 13% black in the early 1960s, in Michigan upwards of 20%. And on the semi-skilled Detroit production lines the proportion reached even higher. At Chrysler's Jefferson Avenue and Dodge Main facilities and in the Rouge assembly building about half of all production workers were non-white. Not unexpectedly, as black workers became more numerous and more concentrated at the point of production itself, they came to see shop floor relationships embedded in the Treaty of Detroit in specifically racial terms. Thus Paragraph 63 of the UAW-GM contact, which gave foremen so much discretion in the transfer and upgrade of

> production workers, took on an ugly racial coloration when implemented by white supervisors still unacculturated to a multiracial workforce. Reuther had spent the better part of a decade in an unsuccessful effort to reform Paragraph 63, but few black workers had any sense of this difficult pre-history. As the rights consciousness of the 1960s moved from the lunch counters of North Carolina to the production lines of Detroit, African-American workers became sharply conscious of the oppressive and hierarchical character of the factory regime. And they soon blamed Reuther — or at least their regional director — for not doing more about it.
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> The UAW's Fair Employment Practices Department (FEPD) proved incapable of resolving these explosive pressures. It was largely 'ceremonial and symbolic,' in the words of F. Ray Marshall, an industrial relations expert friendly to the UAW. William Oliver, Reuther's 1946 choice as FEPD codirector, had been a foundryman from Ford's Highland Park factory. But unlike George Crockett, his predecessor in the job, or the many radical blacks who came out of the Rouge, Oliver had no large reservoir of political support in the UAW, nor did he attempt to build a constituency during the quarter century he directed the department. Under his tenure the FEPD had a dual role: it represented the UAW to the national civil rights community, to the NAACP, the Urban League and the more liberal federal agencies and congressmen; and it served to route, usually back to the regional directors, discrimination complaints as they percolated up from the African-American membership and the occasional UAW local. Oliver's FEPD kept tabs on African-American sentiment within the UAW but played no mobilizing role throughout the formative years of the civil rights revolution. 'We are a fire station,' admitted Sheldon Tappes, who periodically served in the department under Oliver, 'and when the bell rings we run to put out the fire.'[11]

THIS CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE UAW'S OWN ANTI-DISCRIMINATION SET-UP is particularly important because Herbert Hill seems to think that my biography is oblivious to the relative ineffectiveness of the union's FEPD. Indeed, Hill claims that, after interviewing him in Madison and Washington, exchanging letters, and xeroxing scores of pages from his own files, Lichtenstein "knew that in order to make his rationalizations and excuses for Reuther's record on race seem credible, it was necessary to omit much relevant material."[12]

But I took much of my line, especially on the internal UAW FEPD set-up from Hill himself, and I cite, among many other sources, both his 1967 interviews with Sheldon Tappes and an interview I conducted with Hill on June 19, 1987.

However, Herbert Hill is largely correct in his charge that my book uses relatively little material from his files. I chose to minimize my reliance on documents and letters provided by Hill, and the interviews I conducted with him, for the following three reasons. First, much material I copied out of his personal collection was already in the public domain (congressional testimony, letters and records on deposit at Wayne State's Reuther Library, etc.), and it is standard academic practice to reference them in this more accessible format. Second, as every scholar knows, interviews conducted close to the events in question are almost always more reliable than those recorded a score or more years later: thus I relied as much as possible on the publicly available interviews on deposit at Wayne State and the Meany archives wherever possible, including several excellent ones conducted by Hill himself in the late 1960s.

And third, I chose to avoid reliance on Herbert Hill's personally-held material, and upon the interviews I had conducted with him, because of his increasingly eccentric and self-serving reputation among those scholars who were also knowledgeable about mid-century trade unionism and its relationship to the NAACP and the civil rights struggle. Few doubted that Hill's analysis of the way that white union leaders sought to contain and deflect black activism was a valuable one. But I had a growing impression that Herbert Hill takes a proprietary and legalistic approach to much of this history; as readers of his work are quite aware, Hill casts his account as a lawyer's brief rather than as a well-integrated social and political narrative. So for example I quote above F. Ray Marshall, rather than Herbert Hill, on the "ceremonial and symbolic" character of the UAW's FEPD department.

One example of why I find Herbert Hill a less than reliable guide actually arises out of one of his few legitimate criticisms of my use of something he wrote. He's right: there is no "blistering" attack on racial discrimination within the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union in Hill's 1961 NAACP report, "Racism Within Organized Labor." Indeed, Hill compliments that union for integrating its Atlanta units. But in his *New Politics* attack, as well as in an earlier *Reviews in American History* blast, Hill just leaves it there, scoring a point against my sloppy citation. But this makes him the author of a larger distortion, because Hill made much of his reputation, in the early 1960s, as quite the "blistering" critic of the ILGWU, thus generating a high level of tension between that once liberal wing of organized labor and the NAACP.[13]

Herbert Hill's effort to turn me into an apologist for Reuther's racial regime is nothing more than a hair-splitting insult. The UAW leader's complicity with the auto industry's system of racially-coded employment came under attack, within the UAW itself, when the Trade Union Leadership Council burst on the scene late in the 1950s. Led by articulate blacks like Horace Sheffield and Willouby Abner, TULC successfully challenged Reuther's claim to speak as a principled advocate of black auto workers. Indeed, I spend several pages detailing the politics of this caucus within the UAW because the rise of the TULC and other black insurgencies, combined with their eventual containment by the Reutherite bureaucracy, explains more than any other phenomenon the racial politics at work within the UAW during the 1960s. Once you know why Reuther fought TULC — and later the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement — a reader does not have to spend much time detailing the extent to which the top leadership of the UAW did not seek a vigorous enforcement of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Had Sheffield or Abner won a seat on the UAW executive board they would have inserted into the highest union councils the views and power of an independent insurgency within the UAW, and in the process challenged the politico-legal posture of Reuther and his caucus. This would have forced the UAW to confront the covert racists and stand-pat ethnic machine politicians which had become a mainstay of so much of the Reutherite UAW.

Herbert Hill knows all this very well indeed, but he somehow believes that if I do not catalogue, after 1965, each and every discrimination case that worked its way up through the EEOC and the courts, then my biography stands as an apologia for Mr. Reuther's leadership. He is particularly vexed by my assertion that after 1959 "...the UAW began a more vigorous effort to desegregate southern and border-state UAW organized factories and upgrade black workers out of janitorial ranks." But Hill fails to quote those lines in my book which make it clear that this initiative comes as part of the Reutherite effort to contain the TULC challenge. Thus the UAW did finally move against overt segregation in the Memphis Harvester local and it did seek, unsuccessfully, to insert anti-discrimination clauses into the major auto contracts. And later in the decade the UAW bargained for inverse seniority clauses, which would have kept more minority workers on the job during recessionary layoffs. Too little? Of course, but it would be foolish to argue, as Hill does, that Reuther and his top lieutenants made no accommodation to the civil rights pressures that were boiling up from below during the 1960s.

Now, let's turn back to George Lipsitz's indictment of America's union leadership during the heyday of the civil rights era. It's largely true. Although you would hardly know it from Hill's assault, my biography offers up an even more detailed discussion of how and why Reuther both supported the 1963 March on Washington, and why he also sought to contain its politics and turn them toward the agenda advanced by the Kennedy Administration. He did win a place at the Lincoln Memorial podium, because the UAW, unlike Meany's AFL-CIO, actually endorsed and financially supported the big march. But my biography makes crystal clear that this Reutherite support came with a large political and organizational price tag, which the most advanced guard of the civil rights movement had to pay, both at the 1963 march, and then at the Atlantic City convention of the Democratic Party a year later.

Since Hill thinks my biography is tone deaf to all this I offer the following from my book in rebuttal:

> Reuther ... was organized labor's most vigorous and powerful champion of the civil rights insurgency, and for this he momentarily won a well-deserved place within the high councils of movement decision making. But throughout these crucial months of 1963 and 1964, Reuther used his influence to serve that of the President within these councils. He saw no contradiction, for the UAW President had become convinced that the corridors of power were now open to labor-liberals for the first time in almost a quarter century; a great realignment in American politics seemed in the offing. Reuther had been at the margins of power for so long that he took even Kennedy's limited accommodation as signifying an intimate collaboration...one senses again the powerful seduction to which Reuther had succumbed. Though he complained of Kennedy timidity, Reuther gave his Administration, and that of his successor, the kind of political trust which was certain to be broken.
>
> Beginning in late June the Kennedys worked through Reuther, as well as the white philanthropist, Stephen Currier, to make certain that the thrust of the March and that of the Administration ran along parallel paths. To step up the work of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights and move its operations from New York to Washington, Reuther funded two additional staffers and provided the office space at IUD headquarters. With strong support from Roy Wilkins, Reuther also proved instrumental in giving his 'Coalition of Conscience,' a broader leadership by encouraging Randolph to add the Protestant notable Rev. Eugene Carson Blake, the Jewish leader Rabbi Joachim Prinz and the Catholic layman Matthew Ahmann to the 'Big Six' civil rights leaders (King, Wilkins, Randolph and SNCC's John Lewis, the Urban League's Whitney Young and CORE's James Farmer) who composed the March on Washington steering committee. This restructuring into a 'Big Ten,' including Reuther, diluted the social democratic content of the March on Washington, shifting it toward an exclusive endorsement of the Administration's rather limited civil rights bill, which at this stage did not even contain an FEPC provision. Randolph and Rustin had seen a full employment economy as central to the well-being of black America, but this demand now evaporated, as did the urgent necessity for a two dollar minimum wage,

which white religious leaders vetoed.

News of the impending march brought to the surface the atavistic fears of a deeply racist society. Washington was still a Southern city and even among partisans of the Kennedy civil rights bill, few imagined that thousands of blacks could pour into town without some outbreak of violence, drunkenness or racial conflict... To monitor the situation, Robert Kennedy set up a Justice Department planning group which came to play an increasingly large role in the management of the march itself. The Attorney General was particularly interested in making sure the gathering was peaceful and orderly, keeping the rhetoric within bounds and getting the focus of the demonstration turned from the Capitol to some other part of the city. The President and his brother also wanted to make sure that when the gathering did take place it would be of impressive size and with noticeable white participation.

Reuther and Jack Conway, who represented the UAW President with both the Justice Department and the march organizers, played key roles in moving the demonstration in this direction. In several New York planning sessions for the march, Conway argued that only a large and unobstructed area away from the Capitol could comfortably contain the 200,000 now expected for the rally. Downplaying the political significance of the switch, Conway convinced Randolph and other organizers that the Lincoln Memorial would work best for such a large turnout: of course, Reuther's IUD would foot the $16,600 bill for the large and expensive sound system necessary to reach an audience now awkwardly divided by the monument's reflecting pool. That was the 'clincher' remembered Conway.

By late August the UAW had shifted a sizable proportion of its entire staff to Washington in support of the march...But the night before the ceremonies Reuther faced one last threat to his conception of the civil rights coalition essential for a successful March on Washington. Jack Conway had found a freshly mimeographed copy of SNCC Chairman John Lewis' speech for the Lincoln Memorial rally.

Justice Department aides got their copy at almost the same moment and passed on the text to Robert Kennedy and his assistants. All were alarmed. The speech said that SNCC could *not* support the Kennedy civil rights bill because it was 'too little and too late.' 'We are now involved in a serious revolution,' read the text, which was the joint effort of several SNCC staffers, some fresh from the frustration and brutality of southwest Georgia. Lewis' rhetoric would soon become the common coin of the New Left, but in 1963 his language was certain to outrage many of the more moderate civil rights supporters the Kennedys and Reuther had been so anxious to involve in the leadership of the march. 'This nation is still a place of cheap political leaders who build their careers on immoral compromises and ally themselves with open forms of political, economic and social exploitation' the text declared, 'We will take matters into our own hands...If any radical social, political and economic changes are to take place in our society, the people, the masses, must bring them about.' And Lewis vowed a transformation of the South: 'We will march through the Heart of Dixie, the way Sherman did. We shall pursue our own 'scorched earth' policy and burn Jim Crow to the ground — nonviolently.'

'Here was the Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee calling for open revolution,' Reuther told his executive board a month later. 'That Negroes could not get redress of their grievances within the framework of the legal structure...It was really something.' Appraised of the contents of Lewis' speech by Robert Kennedy, several Catholic notables threatened to issue a denunciation and pull out. Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle, the prelate of Washington, declared he would not offer the invocation or share the same platform with Lewis.

Working in tandem with the Justice Department, Reuther turned his considerable powers of persuasion and organization into getting the speech modified and the leadership coalition reunified. A late night meeting with Lewis and others in SNCC proved inconclusive, so the dispute continued on the morning of the march. It was still unresolved when Reuther, King, Randolph and other march leaders assembled at the Lincoln Memorial. Reuther laid out the issues as if he were at a union caucus:

> 'Look. We have got a decision to make real quick, and there is no use debating it because we haven't got time...If John Lewis feels strongly that he wants to make this speech, he can go some place else and make it, but he has no right to make it here because if he tries to make it he destroys the integrity of our coalition and he drives people out of the coalition who agree to the principles and he stays in when he doesn't agree. This is just immoral and he has no right to do it, and I demand a vote right now because I have got to call the Archbishop.'
>
> As Lewis and his comrades retyped their speech, Reuther called O'Boyle's hotel room and reached an agreement with the prelate that if the Protestant churchman, Eugene Carson Blake, were given a veto over the revised draft, then the Catholics would again participate. The deal struck, O'Boyle and his contingent were soon spirited to the Memorial by a secret service detail and opened the ceremonies as scheduled. Lewis delivered his revised speech and was immediately followed by Reuther who thought he might have to 'pick up the pieces in case it became necessary.'
>
> At the podium Reuther first offered a well-worn but still vital query: 'If we can have full employment and full production for the negative ends of war, then why can't we have a job for every American in the pursuit of peace?' He cautioned the movement to 'rational and responsible action,' but his seven-minute speech also contained several of the day's most radical and pointed phrases. He denounced the nation's 'pious platitudes' and 'high octane hypocrisy;' after which he put a sharp barb in Kennedy liberalism itself: 'We cannot defend freedom in Berlin so long as we deny freedom in Birmingham!'...
>
> It was a good speech, but two decades of such talk had long since devalued Reuther's brand of social democratic rhetoric. Indeed, the summer of 1963 may well be taken as the moment when the discourse of American liberalism shifted decisively out of the New Deal-Fair Deal-laborite orbit and into a world in which the racial divide colored all politics. When March leaders met in the White House cabinet room at 5:00 p.m that day, Martin Luther King knew he had given the speech of a lifetime, but one which might well evoke a large measure of jealousy from other civil rights leaders. So he deflected a Presidential compliment for his "I Have a Dream" oration by asking Kennedy if he had heard the excellent speech of Walter Reuther. 'Oh, I've heard him plenty of times,' replied Kennedy. Both President and nation had turned their ears to another messenger and another message.[14]

And as for Reuther's infamous role at the 1964 Democratic convention and in the closely linked and equally important set of General Motors negotiations and strikes that immediately followed, go read my book. If Herbert Hill believes that one reader in a hundred (Ron Radosh is undoubtedly within that minority) will come away from these accounts of Reutherite betrayal and behind-the-scenes horse trading with an elevated opinion of the UAW leader, then they have a problem in reading comprehension. Hill certainly has that problem, because he seems to think that when my account records how Reuther tried to strong-arm Martin Luther King by reminding him "of how much money the UAW had provided his organization," I am somehow endorsing Reuther's checkbook liberalism.[15]

LET'S NOW RETURN TO THE FIRST THEME UPON WHICH Herbert Hill launches his attack on my biography of Walter Reuther. Hill's venom toward me rests on a single sentence from my book. "The trade union movement, both the AFL-CIO and the UAW, was primarily responsible for the addition of FEPC, now rechristened the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), to the original Kennedy bill."[16] Hill calls this a "myth that is frequently repeated by those who ignore the role of the civil rights movement and of the black leadership" in this history. Hill goes on to assert that "An examination of the legislative history of Title VII and the conflicts that developed during the struggle for the 1972 amendments to the statute reveals a history of ambivalence, resistance and finally opposition to Title VII by organized labor, a history very different from Lichtenstein's version."[17] Given such an attack, a reader of Hill's essay might reasonably come to the conclusion that my biography of Walter Reuther includes a rather extensive discussion of the origins, enactment, administration, and litigation involving Title VII. But in fact all of Hill's scholarly bluster is directed at some other target, because this Reuther biography is simply silent on labor's post 1964 role in the legal and administrative evolution of Title VII's history.[18]

Hill's critique is disorganized, disjointed, and ahistorical, but I've been able to separate out three elements. The first questions the extent to which the trade unions were in fact responsible for the inclusion of Title VII (FEPC) in the 1964 civil rights bill itself. The second argues that the union understanding of Title VII's meaning in 1964 itself subverted their claims to racial liberalism. And the third element consists of a long post hoc argument tracing the AFL-CIO's growing opposition to what we have come to know as "affirmative action," thus further questioning the validity of the Federation's original Title VII support.

I'll stand by my claim that the unions were "primarily" responsible for the actual inclusion of a FEPC title in the original 1964 civil rights bill. During many of the crucial bill drafting negotiations of 1963 the UAW's Joe Rauh and Jack Conway pounded away at Assistant Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, the Kennedy Administration point man on this issue. And as for the AFL-CIO, Richard Bolling, who was the FEPC whip in the House, understood both the self-serving aspects of George Meany's Title VII politics and the weight of the labor federation in pushing the bill forward. As he later told Meany's biographer, "We had a hell of a time with both of the Kennedys, and with Nick Katzenbach. Katzenbach finally got the message, that the AFL-CIO had to have the umbrella of the law. We never would have passed the Civil Rights Act without labor. They had the muscle: the other civil rights groups did not."[19]

The meaning of Title VII, as it was understood in 1963 and 1964, has been subject to much debate, and this is the second element in Hill's long discussion of the 1964 law. I don't even touch upon this complex question in my Reuther biography because I don't think Reuther's understanding of Title VII the central question in an evaluation of UAW racial politics in this era. The real issue, as I emphasize over and over again, is the distribution of power within the UAW itself and inside the factories where the union represented so many workers. Of course, Herbert Hill has devoted much of his adult life to Title VII litigation, but here's a case where his expert knowledge just distorts an understanding of the larger politics.

For example, in his discussion of Section 703 (h), which insulated established union seniority systems from EEOC review, Hill ignores the role played by conservatives and Dixiecrats in generating a liberal/labor interpretation of

Title VII that would later become embarrassing. Led by Everett Dirksen and John Tower, GOP conservatives and Dixiecrats tried to throw a roadblock in front of the civil rights bill by arguing that Title VII would wreck union seniority arrangements, including those which preserved the racial privileges of so many white workers. For a brief and expedient season, the Bourbon South claimed for itself the championship of union seniority rights. To counter this gambit, spokesmen for organized labor, as well as key civil rights leaders, rushed forward to deny that existing seniority systems would be undermined or disturbed by passage of Title VII barring employment discrimination. This was the context in which Reuther's Industrial Union Department issued its "Legislative Alert" stating that Title VII "has nothing to do with the day-to-day operations of business firms or unions or with seniority systems."[20]

Although no evidence exists in any of the several published histories of Title VII, Hill claims that the AFL-CIO would not have backed the bill had not Section 703 (h) been included, i.e. only if "the law was limited to future discriminatory practices and only if it insulated established union seniority systems." But the AFL-CIO did not have to put such conditions in place because there was, in 1964, little in the way of a judicial or political tradition to support it. This is one reason that George Meany could so easily endorse the 1964 bill. He thought it would merely end the most blatant examples of segregation, especially in all-white Southern locals, thus saving the national AFL-CIO a lot of embarrassment. Indeed, in 1963 and 1964 few on the center-left understood how enormously important EEOC efforts to rectify the embedded, historically-rooted structures of racial discrimination would become. Even Hill admits this, writing that "Reuther no more understood the potential of Title VII than Meany did, and that neither anticipated how the law would develop once enacted." And neither did Roy Wilkins, Hubert Humphrey, Joe Rauh or any other racial liberal of that era.[21]

THE THIRD ELEMENT OF HILL'S CRITIQUE is a long, critical discussion of AFL-CIO opposition to the work of the EEOC in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Of this topic, Hill asserts that "Lichtenstein's treatment of this history is uninformed and misleading in many crucial respects."[22] But Reuther had little or nothing to do with the formulation of the Federation's growing hostility to what we have come to call "affirmative action." He was George Meany's bitter enemy all through the 1960s. Indeed the UAW quit the AFL-CIO in 1968, and Reuther died in May 1970. I therefore found amusing the considerable energy Hill devotes to recounting the AFL-CIO's effort to weaken Title VII when it came up for amendment in 1972. His views may be right or wrong, but they are certainly ahistorical, since he uses the Meanyite racial politics of 1972 to justify an interpretation of Reuther's motives and mentality eight years before.

Such post hoc justifications aside, it occurred to me that perhaps Hill knew something that had not appeared in the UAW *Proceedings* of those years, i.e. that the UAW did in fact support AFL-CIO efforts to weaken Title VII or align itself with the Federation's particular legal strategy in matters regarding race, employment, and seniority. I'm far from an expert on this administrative/legal history of Title VII. Moreover the issue is endlessly complex: the building trades did not always agree with the Steelworkers, while the AFL-CIO itself changed its views over time.[23] So I called up a number of scholars to ask — in general —

if the UAW, either before Reuther's death or after, aligned itself with the posture adopted by the AFL-CIO, which is what Herbert Hill certainly implies in his essay. They answered in the negative, keeping in mind of course, that in the auto industry the UAW faced its own failures and dilemmas in transforming a factory job hierarchy that remained highly exclusionary. I spoke with William Gould, a UAW attorney in the 1960s, later chair of the NLRB, Michael Parrish, biographer of Joseph Rauh, John Bracey, an historian of the NAACP, and Hugh Graham, author of *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy*.[24]

However, none of this gainsays the fact, as Hill does point out, that in the 1960s and 1970s the UAW was the subject of a growing number of complaints of racial discrimination, directed either to the union's own Fair Employment Practices Department or to the EEOC itself. Well naturally. The African-American liberation movement was reaching flood tide. But Hill seems to feel that if I do not retail such statistics or recount his version of the NAACP legal strategy, then I am somehow an apologist for Walter Reuther's regime. But my book makes quite clear the character of Reuther's reputation among African-American militants in the late 1960s. Consider the following passage:

> By the difficult standards of 1969, neither Reuther nor his principal collaborators were racist, but with the UAW's structural incapacity to accommodate the new wave of shop activism, militancy quickly turned to cynicism. At the very moment Reuther sought to revitalize the labor movement and champion the insurgencies sweeping America, he faced the scorn of a newly politicized generation. 'Put Walter in a halter,' they chanted. Vainly did Reuther assert himself in a 'state of continuous revolt against the status quo...the Establishment,' but his widely reported appearances at each flash point of the civil rights battlefront had 'not fooled black workers,' charged the African-American Marxist Charles Denby. 'When they see him marching on a picket line in Charleston or Selma...they know that he hasn't been on a picket line with his own UAW workers for so many years he's forgotten what it's like.' This charge was factually inaccurate, but it contained a mythic truth that was devastating in New Left circles, both white and black.[25]

IF THIS EXCHANGE BETWEEN HERBERT HILL AND MYSELF is to be something more than an exercise in scholastic pedantry, then we are obligated to put our politics on the table. Despite Reuther's many failures, both moral and political, his legacy nevertheless retains much of value because we judge him by a standard that is altogether higher than that of virtually any other major trade union leader of his time. This is because Reuther, unlike George Meany or David J. MacDonald or Jimmy Hoffa, always aspired to make labor once again the core of a dynamic social movement. He saw the unions as a powerful lever with which to change the world. When he subverted that quest, in word or deed, we properly charged him with hypocrisy and opportunism. And the bitterness of that betrayal still lingers in the history of that era.

Today, a new set of unionists have come to the leadership of the AFL-CIO and some of that organization's most important affiliates. And their ambitions have once again raised the standard by which we judge their leadership and that of the entire union movement. Indeed, John Sweeney's most radical and successful initiative has been purely rhetorical: he has asserted that for the unions to survive, they must transform themselves to once again become the core of an expansive social movement. He is putting an official leadership stamp on a long-overdue, multiracial redefinition of how we conceptualize the American working class. This is enormously healthy, although Sweeney and Company will undoubtedly disappoint us in many particulars. He may fail utterly, but in the process the left now enjoys a far larger and more welcome space in which to project its ideas and initiatives. We should seize that opportunity.

NOTES

1. Readers of *New Politics* will remember Hill's caricature of the late Herbert Gutman and his history of interracial unionism in the United Mine Workers, first published in these pages. But Herbert Hill's one-dimensional thrust has been effectively answered by Daniel Letwin's brilliant new book, *The Challenge of Interracial Unionism: Alabama Coal Miners, 1876-1921* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), which demonstrates the complex character of both the solidarity and the regional racial norms, as well as the enormous power of capital, in structuring coal mining unionism. See also Eric Arnesen, "Up from Exclusion: Black and White Workers, Race, and the State of Labor History," *Reviews in American History,* 26 (March 1988), 146-174.

2. Herbert Hill, "Lichtenstein's Fictions: Meany, Reuther and the 1964 Civil Rights Act," *New Politics* VII (Summer 1998), 83.

3. *Ibid.*, 99.

4. *Ibid.*, 100.

5. *Ibid.*, 101

6. *Ibid.*, 101.

7. *Ibid.*, 102.

8. Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 326. The University of Illinois Press has recently published the paperback edition under the title *Walter Reuther: the Most Dangerous Man in Detroit.*

9. *Ibid.*,372-73.

10. Hill, "Lichtenstein's Fictions," 99.

11. Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*,373-75.

12. Hill, "Lichtenstein's Fictions," 98-99.

13. See Hill's own account of NAACP-ILGWU tensions in "Black Workers, Organized Labor, and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act: Legislative History and Litigation Record," in Herbert Hill and James E. Jones, Jr. *Race in America: the Struggle for Equality* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 291-305.

14. Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit,* 383-87.

15. *Ibid.*, 394; Hill, "Lichtenstein's Fictions," 101. Hill's problem in reading comprehension sometimes descends into outright distortion of the text. Reuther was a member of the NAACP Board of Directors. In a footnote on page 100 of his essay Hill recounts the 1966 effort of some young NAACP leaders to challenge Reuther's reelection. He was among those high-profile figures who rarely or never attended a Board meeting. But Reuther was reelected. Hill quotes one sentence from my account of this incident: "Reuther felt entirely vindicated when his name came in at the very top of the NAACP ballot." And then Hill comments, "Lichtenstein is being disingenuous, as he knows that Reuther's reelection was virtually bought and paid for. Unlimited sums of money were spent on his reelection and a well-organized campaign using UAW staff was involved."

But Hill needs a new pair of glasses because my text (pp. 411-12) is clear on the background to this incident:

> ...Reuther was not simply a white liberal incapable of standing up to the new militancy. When a group of 'young turks' on the NAACP's national board dropped Reuther's name from the organization's reelection slate late in 1966, Reuther fought back as if his very honor were at stake. Mobilizing the union's potent resources within the na-

tional community of NAACP loyalists, Reuther's black staff waged a vigorous, successful campaign for an 'independent slate' of Association veterans. Reuther felt entirely vindicated when his name came in at the very top of the NAACP ballot.

16. Hill, "Lichtenstein's Fictions," 83.

17. *Ibid.*, 83.

18. Indeed, Herbert Hill's attack may be literally misplaced because he lifts at least a dozen paragraphs almost verbatim from a 1993 essay written well before the publication of my Reuther biography. See Herbert Hill, "Black Workers, Organized Labor, and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act: Legislative History and Litigation Record," in Herbert Hill and James E. Jones, Jr. *Race in America: the Struggle for Equality.*

19. Joseph Goulden, *Meany: the Unchallenged Strong Man of American Labor* (New York: Antheneum, 1972), 322; and see also Kevin Boyle, *The UAW and the Heyday of American Liberalism, 1945-1968* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 173-76.

20. Quoted in Hill, "Lichtenstein's Fictions," 87.

21. *Ibid.*, 89. Evidence for such an AFL-CIO condition is absent in the work of Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 139-41; and in Paul Moreno, *From Direct Action to Affirmative Action: Fair Employment Law and Policy in America, 1933-72* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 222, who specifically rejects Hill's claim.

22. Hill, "Lichtenstein's Fictions," 94.

23. For a politically and economically incisive exploration of many of these issues, see the remarkable new book by Judith Stein, *Running Steel, Running America: Race, Economic Policy, and the Decline of Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

24. Perhaps I should have called Herbert Hill himself because he also provides evidence that the UAW took a different line than the AFL-CIO when it came to pushing for EEOC "cease and desist" power late in the 1960s. Hill cites a 1970 letter to Reuther from Joe Rauh, who still handled some civil rights issues for the UAW, to the effect that the AFL-CIO was backing away from the right of an aggrieved individual to bring suit against either management or the union. This was a "damn shame" because it would make passage of legislation strengthening EEOC more difficult. See Hill, "Black Workers, Organized Labor, and Title VII of the 1964," 318.

25. Lichtenstein, *Most Dangerous Man in Detroit*, 435.

Lichtenstein's Fictions Revisited: Race and the New Labor History

Herbert Hill

NELSON LICHTENSTEIN IN HIS REJOINDER RELIES ON LONG EXTRACTS from his biography of Walter Reuther to convince the reader that my criticisms are "wildly off-base," but he fails to address the specific points I make. Before focusing on the substance of his response, however, a few comments are in order on the tone and style Lichtenstein employs and which, in an exchange such as this, also reveal much about content and methodology.

My review of Lichtenstein's book, if severe, was supported by detailed documentation, copious references and what I believe to be judicious arguments. Yet Lichtenstein responds with outrage and the shocked disbelief of an innocent victim of a savage and unprovoked "assault" by a Herbert Hill wildly shooting from the hip as he splatters his target with "venom" and "invective." Since Lichtenstein charges me with violating proper standards of scholarly discourse and debate one would expect his response to be a model of historical objectivity and personal decorum. But this is not the case, since Lichtenstein does not hesitate to dismiss my criticism as the work of someone who is "blind, willful and self-contradictory." Pleased with his selection of pejorative adjectives, he repeats his diagnosis of Hill as "willfully blind," the author of a work that is "disorganized, disjointed and ahistorical," suggesting that I suffer in addition from a mild form of mental retardation, i.e., a deficiency in "reading comprehension," or that, at the very least, "Hill needs a new pair of glasses. . . ." Such juvenile polemical thrusts are unworthy of comment. What I do object to, however, is Lichtenstein's insidious, mendacious and defamatory attack on my life's work and reputation, the consequence I can only conclude of his inability to make a credible defense of his treatment of race in the Reuther biography.

My specific criticisms of his book reveal that according to Lichtenstein, "Herbert Hill's world is one of Manichaean polarities." More serious, if less pretentiously put, is the claim in his opening paragraph

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that my criticism of his biography "will further [!] damage [Hill's] reputation as a legal scholar and civil rights historian" and that "Herbert Hill's failure to grasp the actual argument offered by my Reuther biography. . . brings into question the reliability of his historical work and the validity of his judgments on a whole range of parallel issues."

Even Lichtenstein retreats from this rash judgment in his next sentence when he acknowledges that "Herbert Hill played a historic and heroic part in the African-American struggle for liberation. His place in the annals of that movement is secure." But this qualification does not right the wrong of his previous calumny since it is a logical absurdity. My "reading comprehension" might not be up to Lichtenstein's standards but I do comprehend that if the reliability of my historical work is legitimately brought "into question" then my place in the annals of the movement cannot possibly be "secure." And how "secure" can my reputation be in Lichtenstein's eyes when in a pitiable effort to explain his failure to use the considerable and pertinent material I supplied to him at his request, he now writes: "I chose to avoid reliance on Herbert Hill's personally held material, and upon the interview I conducted with him, because of his increasingly eccentric and self-serving reputation among scholars who are also knowledgeable about mid-century trade unionism and its relationship to the NAACP and the civil rights struggle." Who are these scholars? What have they written? Why does he not name them?

On a related point, Lichtenstein writes that "Hill made much of his reputation in the early 1960s, as the 'blistering' critic of the ILGWU, thus generating a high level of tension between that once liberal wing of organized labor and the NAACP." Lichtenstein has now decided that regardless of my positive historic role of a few pages earlier, it was Hill and the NAACP which, in combating the discriminatory practices of Lichtenstein's "once liberal" garment workers union, were in fact the negative and divisive parties in the developing antagonism between the ILGWU and the NAACP. It follows from the tone and substance of Lichtenstein's formulation that he is a partisan of the ILGWU leadership in this conflict.[1]

In this context it is necessary to note Lichtenstein's response to my charge that he misrepresented material that appeared in an NAACP publication. I had stated in my review that Lichtenstein demonstrated "A complete disregard for accuracy when he wrote that 'Hill's 1961 NAACP report, 'Racism Within Organized Labor: A Report of Five Years of the AFL-CIO' included a blistering exposure of institutionalized discrimination in the industrial unions, especially the ILGWU. . . .'" I went on to point out that:

> . . . there is no such criticism, "blistering" or otherwise of the ILGWU in the report, on the contrary, the only mention of that union is complimentary as it describes how with the assistance of the Association, they integrated their Atlanta units. This report was originally published in 1961 as an NAACP document and later reprinted in *The Journal of Negro Education*. (It should be noted that at his request a copy of the original document was made for Lichtenstein.)

Confronted with this evidence, Lichtenstein invokes what he calls his "sloppy citation," implying that his inaccurate account of the report is of little consequence. But this is not a matter of an incorrect reference, of an inadvertent slip in attribution. The issue is not a "sloppy citation," since it involves misrepresentation of the text. Lichtenstein invented material that is not in the document and then used the altered text to serve his purpose.

In trying to absolve himself, Lichtenstein states that Hill is "the author of a larger distortion." This is followed by a reference to my having been the "blistering critic of the ILGWU" after all, responsible for "generating a high level of tension. . ." etc., etc. Try as he may I don't think Lichtenstein will succeed in convincing many readers with such nonsense, arguing that it's all Herbert Hill's fault anyway. In his attempt to squirm out of his predicament, Lichtenstein becomes ridiculous.

On another matter I wrote that:

> Lichtenstein informs the reader that Reuther made an impassioned plea for FEPC legislation, but he does not tell the reader that once enacted into law, Reuther did nothing to make the law effective, on the contrary, the UAW together with other labor unions resisted change. When Reuther finally had the opportunity to directly alter the racial employment pattern in auto manufacturing and in other industries where the UAW held contracts, he failed to attack the racial *status quo* where it mattered greatly, and where he had the power to do so.

Lichtenstein's response is most interesting: "all of Hill's scholarly bluster is directed at some other target, *because this Reuther biography is simply silent on labor's post 1964 role in the legal and administrative evaluation of Title VII's history*." (emphasis added) Why does Lichtenstein end his discussion before the enactment of Title VII? Could it be because the union's response after the law went into effect was less than admirable? In the matter of Title VII, Lichtenstein does not tell the whole story.

Lichtenstein and Title VII

IN THAT PART OF MY REVIEW CONCERNED WITH THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY of Title VII, I concluded that Lichtenstein's treatment of this history is uninformed and misleading in many crucial respects. In his rejoinder, Lichtenstein confirms my judgment. Without providing any factual information he challenges my interpretation of organized labor's role regarding the inclusion of Section 703(h) in Title VII. An extensive record shows that the leaders of organized labor believed that this section insulated established union seniority systems as the statute would in this manner be limited to future discriminatory practices. This interpretation was made abundantly clear in the course of subsequent litigation involving labor unions.

Soon after Title VII went into effect, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission began accepting complaints involving the discriminatory effects of union seniority. On May 5, 1966, AFL-CIO officials met with representatives of the Commission to insist that under their conception of Section 703(h), the EEOC must not assert jurisdiction over seniority complaints involving labor unions. After some hesitation, the EEOC rejected organized labors position and declared in its Second Annual Report that:

> 1. A seniority system which has the intent or effect of perpetuating past discrimination is not a bona fide seniority system. . . .
> 2. The fact that a seniority system is the product of collective bargaining does not compel the conclusion that it is a bona fide system.
> 3. Seniority systems adopted prior to July 2, 1965 (the effective date of the Act), may be found to be discriminatory where the evidence shows that such systems are rooted

> in practices of discrimination and have the present effect of denying classes of persons protected by the statute equal employment opportunities.[2]

The EEOC could not initiate litigation until the Act was amended in 1972, but invoking the decision in *Udall* v. *Tallman*[3] where the Supreme Court ruled that "great weight" must be given to an agency's view of the statute under which it operates, the Commission filed *amicus curiae* briefs urging courts to adopt its position in interpreting Section 703(h).[4]

Based upon the great number of complaints received from black workers employed in diverse industries over decades, the NAACP had concluded that many unions played a major role in structuring and maintaining racial inequality within the labor force. The Association had been attacking this problem for many years and with the advent of Title VII, it was hoped that the new law would be effective in eliminating discriminatory seniority systems and segregated work units.[5]

In 1968, in the first case concerned with seniority issues under Title VII, *Quarles* v. *Philip Morris, Inc.*,[6] involving the Tobacco Workers International Union, the EEOC filed a brief recommending a strong enforcement posture and rejecting organized labor's interpretation of the statute. In *Quarles*, it was found that the union had negotiated contracts establishing racially segregated departments with black workers limited to the lowest paying unskilled jobs and that through the bargaining agreement it tried to perpetuate the discriminatory pattern after the effective date of Title VII. The union contract also established that black workers seeking to transfer into departments from which they had been previously excluded would lose their accumulated seniority and be required to start over again as new employees subordinate to whites with less seniority. In *Quarles*, the district court rejected the union's defense of its discriminatory labor agreement and stated that "the legislative history indicates that a discriminatory seniority system established before the act cannot be held lawful under the act." The court also held that "a departmental seniority system that has its genesis in racial discrimination is not a *bona fide* seniority system." "Congress," it said flatly, "did not intend to freeze an entire generation of Negro employees into discriminatory patterns that existed before the act." It might be noted that the author, then Labor Secretary of the NAACP, filed the black workers' complaints in *Quarles* with the EEOC and that lawyers from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund represented them in the litigation against the employer and the union.

In the landmark decision of *United Papermakers & Paperworkers, Local 189* v. *United States*,[7] the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, a year after the *Quarles* case, further advanced the position taken in the earlier decision. This was the beginning of a line of cases involving union seniority under Title VII, each invoking the decisions in *Quarles* and *Papermakers, Local 189*. Among these were *James* v. *Stockham Valves & Fittings Co.*[8] involving the Steelworkers Union (also a defendant in *Taylor* v. *Armco Steel Corp.*)[9] *EEOC* v. *United Airlines Inc.*,[10] involving the Machinists Union, *Wattleton* v. *International Brotherhood of Boilermakers*[11] (the author testified as an expert witness in this case), *Sears* v. *Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Ry*,[12] involving the United Transportation Union, *Williams* v. *Mead Coated Board, Inc.*[13] involving the Paperworkers Union, and *Lorance* v. *AT&T Technologies Inc.*[14] involving the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

In *United States* v. *Bethlehem Steel Corp.*,[15] as in many other cases, the employer joined with the union in arguing that the seniority system was protected and that relief under Title VII was prospective only. But the court rejected their position and found that:

> The pervasiveness and longevity of the overt discriminatory hiring and job assignment practices, admitted to by Bethlehem and the union, compel the conclusion that the present seniority and transfer provisions were based on past discriminatory classifications. . . . Job assignment practices were reprehensible. Over 80% of black workers were placed in eleven departments which contained the hotter and dirtier jobs in the plant. Blacks were excluded from higher-paying and cleaner jobs.

Observing that discriminatory contract provisions were embodied in nationwide master agreements negotiated by the international union in 1962, 1965, and 1968, the court also noted, "The Lackawanna plant was a microcosm of classic job discrimination in the North, making clear why Congress enacted Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

On October 4, 1971, the court issued a decree defining as members of the affected class some sixteen hundred black steelworkers, who were entitled to receive benefits as a result of the court's decision. It is significant that in the Bethlehem Steel case, the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit stated that the job expectations of whites, based on past union seniority practices,

> arise from an illegal system. . . . Moreover their seniority advantages are not indefeasibly vested rights but mere expectations derived from a bargaining agreement subject to modification. . . . If relief under Title VII can be denied merely because the majority group of employees, who have not suffered discrimination, will be unhappy about it, there will be little hope of correcting the wrongs to which the Act is directed.

This case was initiated by the Justice Department in response to charges filed by the NAACP with the EEOC on behalf of black steelworkers many of whom were members of the Buffalo Branch of the NAACP. In *Williamson* v. *Bethlehem Steel Corp.*,[16] a companion case brought by the Association against the company and the union, the NAACP succeeded in obtaining additional relief not sought by the government for black workers.*

As a result of litigation under Title VII there was increased recognition that seniority rights are not vested and immutable interests, rather they are expectations of future employment status which exist subject to law. For ex-

* The Brief *amicus curiae* of the EEOC in a 1969 case against the Steelworkers Union and the Timken Roller Bearing Company in Ohio describes the union's racial practices in a northern plant five years after the adoption of Title VII. The EEOC's *amicus* brief states, "The seniority provisions of the current collective bargaining agreement are indicative of the long standing rules, jointly formulated by the Defendants, which effectively freeze Negroes into the low paying, dead-end jobs. Defendants jointly adopted a 'departmental' seniority system whereby an employee's seniority for the purposes of promotion, transfer, etc., is based on his length of employment in a given department. If a Negro who was hired in 1952 as a janitor wishes to transfer to an all-white production department, where pay and chances for advancement would be greater, he would lose all of his accumulated seniority and be treated as a new hire in the all-white department. Thus, under pain of losing their 'departmental seniority,' Negroes are effectively prevented from transferring from their menial jobs to more desirable departments" (*Head et al*. v. *Timken Roller Bearing Co.*, 486 F. 2d 870 [6th Cir. 1973]. See Brief *amicus curiae* of EEOC, Statement of the Case, filed Aug. 15, 1969).

ample in *United States* v. *Jacksonville Terminal Co.*,[17] the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a railroad seniority system that had been developed through fifty years of collective bargaining agreements was not immune from remedial measures intended to provide relief to black workers. It held that work rules and other provisions in union contracts in the railroad industry were susceptible to court ordered remedies and relief under Title VII. According to the 5th Circuit, union contracts "do not carry the authoritative imprimatur and moral force of sacred scripture, or even of mundane legislation." In 1977, the Supreme Court in *International Brotherhood of Teamsters* v. *United States*,[18] in requiring that an intent to discriminate in the genesis of a pre-act seniority system be established, made it more difficult for plaintiffs to prevail in seniority cases, but litigation continued.

Lichtenstein claims that he could find no evidence for this history. But that is an indication of his limited competence as a historian, as he obviously does not read litigation documents and related material. Instead, he relied upon a very limited selection of flawed secondary sources. Perhaps if Lichtenstein had heard the oral arguments and read the *briefs* of union lawyers in seniority cases as they repeatedly called attention to the "understanding" regarding the interpretation of Section 703(h) he might be better informed. The body of case law on this issue is extensive and Lichtenstein has simply ignored a vast amount of primary documentation while passing judgement on matters about which he knows virtually nothing.

Lichtenstein's Selective Silence

THE PROBLEM OF LICHTENSTEIN'S ARBITRARY CUT-OFF POINT IS REPEATED when he writes ". . . I chose not to comment on the state of affairs in the year 1975, half a decade after Reuther's death. . . ." It is true, as he explains in his book, that as a consequence of Reuther's efforts in 1945, Local 34 of the UAW in Atlanta admitted "black sweepers to membership . . . 120 black sweepers were formally enrolled in the local, but none won production jobs." Commenting on this, I wrote in my review "that 30 years later, with but one exception, blacks employed at this plant were still janitors, locked in a labor classification in the union contract that limited them to work only as janitors, with no possibility of promotion into jobs reserved exclusively for whites. Furthermore, this was the pattern in many UAW organized plants in the South and border states."

The only defense of the UAW Lichtenstein can muster in response to this history is to assert that "In Atlanta, like Memphis, Norfolk and Dallas, white unionists defended the segregation of African-Americans, keeping them confined to the janitorial work," claiming that local white unionists were to blame. Thus Lichtenstein tries to absolve the UAW leadership from the obligation to intervene. Not a word from Lichtenstein about the failure of the International Union to take action, not a word about the acquiescence of the UAW leadership. It was well known in the South that the UAW's civil rights policy could be violated with impunity and once again Lichtenstein simply evades the issue.

Lichtenstein claims that "Meany insisted upon an EEOC to give his office a new weapon with which to force integration of literally hundreds of still segregated southern locals." Commenting on this statement, I wrote "But there is no evidence in the 34 years since Title VII was enacted that Meany or the executive council of the AFL-CIO ever took action against affiliated unions that were violating VII." Although, the accuracy of his statement was directly challenged, Lichtenstein chose to ignore this issue. Here was an opportunity to prove me wrong, but not a word in response.

Here, as elsewhere, when race is the issue, Lichtenstein has no facts, no evidence, he just "knows" that "labor unions are a progressive force" that must be defended and on this basis he fabricates conclusions that are completely erroneous. This is a characteristic of Lichtenstein's writings on race and labor and that is why a review of his book devoted exclusively to his treatment of racial issues is required. Lichtenstein complains that "My biography of Reuther consists of 19 chapters and an epilogue. . . . Herbert Hill has chosen to focus only upon a small portion of that narrative. . . ." That was precisely my intention; to do a close analysis of Lichtenstein's treatment of race in the UAW with emphasis on organized labor's response to Title VII. With the exception of a brief comment in my conclusion about "Reuther's early years, including the period he worked as a machinist in the Soviet Union that readers will find of interest. . ." I deliberately limited my review and made this clear in the subtitle, "Meany, Reuther and the 1964 Civil Rights Act." Whatever virtues other parts of Lichtenstein's biography of Reuther may have, the egregious distortions in his treatment of race warrant special attention. I am aware that some reviewers identified with a Left perspective, such as Martin Glaberman[19] and Michael Goldfield[20] have criticized other aspects of Lichtenstein's book, but although they too were critical of his approach on racial matters, the extent of his distortions, omissions and evasions in writing on this issue had not been intensively discussed before my review.

Lichtenstein's Fictions Revisited

In my review I questioned Lichtenstein's statement that in 1960 ". . . the UAW began a more vigorous effort to desegregate southern and border-state UAW organized factories. . . ." I wrote "Lichtenstein offers no evidence for this statement and in fact there was no such vigorous effort." His rejoinder provided Lichtenstein with an excellent opportunity to refute my charge by providing some data, some evidence to sustain his statements about "a more vigorous effort." But he provides not a shred of factual information. Instead Lichtenstein engages in polemical fakery. He repeats his false statement and adds that "Hill is particularly vexed" by it and that I failed "to quote those lines in [Lichtenstein's] book which makes it clear that this initiative came as part of the Reutherite effort. . . ." But in fact there was no "effort," no "initiative" in the first place. It is one of Lichtenstein's fictions. This is the issue I raised in my review and invited Lichtenstein to provide some evidence to the contrary, but he has failed to do so. During the period in question I worked closely with dissident black groups in the UAW, and based upon my own experience, I can attest to the falsity of Lichtenstein's statement. However strongly he wishes that an "effort" should have been made, the record shows that no such "effort" occurred.

A major charge in my review was that even after Title VII went into effect, the UAW continued to negotiate contracts containing discriminatory provisions in violation of the law. For purposes of illustration I discussed *United*

States v. *Hayes International Corp.*[21] where a Federal appellate court found that under a 1965 UAW contract:

> black employees performed the lowest paid, unskilled jobs. . . . This condition remained substantially unchanged even after the effective date of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The black employees were segregated in their jobs in a manner which deprived them of the opportunity for advancement that white employees enjoyed.

I wrote that in this case as in so many others:

> the UAW violated its own formal civil rights policy, acting on behalf of whites in maintaining their privileged position in the factories. In 1957 the NAACP, assisting black UAW members, filed charges against Hayes International and the union with federal agencies seeking cancellation of government contracts because of the discriminatory racial pattern. During the eight year period between this action and July 2, 1965, the effective date of Title VII, the UAW, fully aware of the complaints filed, had ample opportunity to eliminate the system of racial job segregation codified in the union contract at Hayes and at other companies. Not only did it fail to do so, but it repeatedly renegotiated union contracts containing discriminatory seniority and job promotion provisions even after the Civil Rights Act became law. The Department of Justice, acting on charges filed by the NAACP on behalf of black workers, initiated a Title VII lawsuit against the employer and the union, both of whom were found to be in violation of the statute.

DURING THE COURSE OF HIS INTERVIEW WITH ME I indicated to Lichtenstein the significance of this record, because in all of these cases Reuther could have acted once Title VII became the law. He had the power within the union to insist that the UAW comply with the same law that the organization had, according to Lichtenstein, enthusiastically supported. This was not a civil rights issue in Mississippi far removed from the auto plants, here the UAW could have directly intervened and made changes in the racial employment pattern but did not do so. The fact that Lichtenstein is silent about this history speaks for itself.

In my review I documented the charge that Lichtenstein was repeating a fabrication when he asserted that “The trade union movement, both the AFL-CIO and the UAW was primarily responsible for the addition of FEPC, now rechristened the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to the original Kennedy bill. . . .” The evidence is incontrovertible that the bill Kennedy submitted to Congress did not contain a fair employment practices provision, the bill that Congress eventually enacted with Title VII was another bill, Johnson’s bill, that reflected the influence of Randolph and Wilkins.[22] Lichtenstein evidently thinks that if he repeats his argument enough times it will become true.

Furthermore, I argued that “An examination of the legislative history of Title VII and the conflicts that developed during the struggle for the 1972 amendments to the statute reveals a history of ambivalence, resistance and finally opposition to Title VII by organized labor, a history very different from Lichtenstein’s version.” Lichtenstein gives no evidence to refute my statement but instead accuses me of ignoring “the role played by the conservatives in shaping Title VII.” This is no excuse for not responding to the issues I raised in my review.

It might be noted that I was reviewing Lichtenstein’s book, not writing a comprehensive history of the statute. Elsewhere I have written in detail on these matters.[23] At several points, without any evidence, Lichtenstein implies that I fail to criticize conservative forces. I remind Lichtenstein that as NAACP Labor Secretary I filed literally hundreds of Title VII charges against major corporations (among these were General Motors, AT&T, Lockheed, United Airlines, U. S. Steel, etc.) and many of these became the federal court cases that were significant in the development of Title VII law. I continue this work now and frequently testify as an expert witness in federal court litigation against employers and labor unions responsible for job discrimination in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

In my continuing study of the black workers' experience with white organized labor, I have repeatedly raised the issue of union racism and refuted the myth of a progressive labor movement struggling for a better life for all people. I have documented the historical experience of black and other non-white workers with organized labor and revealed a record that contradicts the views of Lichtenstein and others who share his political ideology. This is the reason for the intense hostility that animates his rejoinder.

Lichtenstein As Apologist

LICHTENSTEIN IS INFURIATED THAT I REGARD HIM AS AN APOLOGIST for Walter Reuther, and to prove that I have maligned him he repeats in his rejoinder long passages from his book where he is critical of Reuther. These self-serving excerpts are entirely beside the point. I am aware that Lichtenstein criticizes Reuther in his biography and I made mention of that fact at several points in my review. I consider Lichtenstein to be an apologist, not a publicist or slavish sycophant. One can be an apologist for a social system, a party, movement, historic personality, etc., and still be critical. Indeed, it is criticism that is often used to give credibility to an apologia.

For example, Nelson Lichtenstein and the readers of *New Politics* remember that during the war in Vietnam there were many liberals, even Social Democrats and people of the Democratic Left, who looked upon the war as "tragic," were appalled by the dictatorship in South Vietnam, and critical of the Johnson Administration's conduct of the war, but for all their criticisms they remained nonetheless opposed to the unilateral withdrawal of American troops. They were, in effect, apologists for a war and a political administration of which they were indeed critical.

At the other end of the political spectrum there were those, including scholars and historians, who lamented the crimes of Stalin and Stalinism yet, at the same time, perceived Communist totalitarian societies as being historically progressive. For all their criticisms of the Gulag and the terror, these people were accurately described as apologists. Similarly, for all his criticisms of Reuther, Lichtenstein remains an apologist for the UAW leader. I not only established this in my review but it is clearly demonstrated by the fury with which Lichtenstein responds to my criticisms. Toward the end of his rejoinder and for all the lengthy excerpts from his book critical of Reuther we have this eulogistic overview:

> Despite Reuther's many failures, both moral and political, his legacy nevertheless retains much of value because we judge him by a standard that is altogether higher than that of virtually any other major trade union leader of his time. This is because

> Reuther, unlike George Meany or David J. MacDonald or Jimmy Hoffa always aspired to make labor once again the core of a dynamic social movement. He saw the unions as a powerful lever with which to change the world.

This is not an apologia? How can one possibly say that Reuther "always" had such noble aspirations when the record is so clear to Lichtenstein as it is to me that Reuther never sought to make labor unions the core of a dynamic social movement. As if aware of how preposterous this apologia is Lichtenstein qualifies his assertion with the statement that "[W]hen he subverted that quest, in word or deed, we properly charge him with hypocrisy and opportunism." It is a qualification that cannot be taken seriously if for no other reason than it is utterly illogical. For if Reuther "always" aspired to such noble ends then logically he could never have "subverted that quest," at least not in the world where logic, reason and reading comprehension prevail.

Lichtenstein's Mythical Version of Organized Labor

I WANT TO RETURN TO LICHTENSTEIN'S ATTEMPT TO IMPALE MY ARGUMENT on his three-pronged rhetorical pitchfork when he says that Hill's critique is "disorganized, disjointed and ahistorical." While it is difficult to understand why he should consider so "disorganized and disjointed" a critique worthy of a 10,000 word "refutation," it is the charge that my review is "ahistorical" that I wish to comment on here.

Why "ahistorical"? Because, among other reasons, Lichtenstein finds my critique to be the latest chapter in an ongoing "effort to reduce the trade unions, both past and present, to little more than a white job trust." Though intended as a sarcastic and disparaging jab, I actually find "a white job trust" to be a well-turned and appropriate phrase, one I might borrow in the future. Lichtenstein, on the other hand, apparently believes the notion of unions as "a white job trust" to be a self-evident absurdity although he is surely familiar with the vast literature detailing the racial practices of a multitude of locals and international unions which did indeed operate as a white job trust, as some continue to do even today. In ridiculing the notion of unions as "white job trusts" in both the *past* and present, he is implicitly denying the rampant racism that was a characteristic of many of the affiliates and a high proportion of the leadership of the early American Federation of Labor. It was Gompers and the AFL which excelled in the choice of the most noxious racial epithets to vilify Chinese workers, as they shielded their "white job trust" from the contamination of black people and all others of color.[24] Sadly enough, even many social-democratic and socialist trade unionists were tainted, sometimes heavily coated with racist ideology. The fact is that the struggle for racial justice remains an uphill battle for black, Latino, and Asian workers not only in American society at large but in the trade union movement, as well.

I take strong exception to Lichtenstein's effort to paint me as someone who simplistically, and truly ahistorically believes that the entire trade union movement for the whole of this century has been and remains infected by racism. I am as aware as Lichtenstein that the racist beliefs of Gompers and his collaborators did not go unchallenged within the American Federation of Labor and that the history of American trade unionism is not confined to the AFL. There are, for example, the struggles of the IWW which recruited migratory laborers, foreign born workers, factory hands and thousands of black laborers, the most alienated and dispossessed, held in contempt by Samuel Gompers and the core craft unions in the AFL. No less than Lichtenstein do I pay homage to the memory of those union organizers who risked (and sometimes lost) their lives in campaigns to organize black and white sharecroppers in the South. I also know that A. Philip Randolph and his Sleeping Car Porters — hardly a white job trust — and the segregated locals and all-black auxiliaries were no less a part of the labor movement than George Meany and his lily-white Plumbers. I am sensitive to the differences in the 30s and 40s between the emerging CIO and the AFL. And although my criticism of the Reutherites allows for no apologias, I still do not equate the record of the UAW leadership, albeit disgraceful, with the overt racism of the railroad brotherhoods and the construction unions.

I have always been aware of the degree of diversity within the trade union movement; of its conflicts and contradictions, and of the pressures from within and without the organized labor movement that have ameliorated conditions for black and other workers, forcing open the doors of some "white job trusts," if only partially. Among the most effective of these pressures have been struggles by dissident groups within unions, collaborating with concerned organizations outside the labor movement. It is Lichtenstein who invents a trade union movement that never was, as when he writes that "Over the sweep of the 20th century, trade unions have been, generally speaking, a progressive force in American life and social policy." Lichtenstein no doubt feels that he has delivered himself of a pithy, sweeping historical overview of the trade union movement. To my way of thinking, it is "generally speaking" a fanciful flight from reality.

It is important to remember that the labor movement Lichtenstein sums up is not defined by DeLeonists in the weak Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance waging war against capitalism, or by Wobblies fighting company goons and AFL bureaucrats or by any of the militant struggles from the turn of the century to its end, including the struggles waged by P-9 workers against both the meatpacking industry and labor officialdom, and the efforts of Teamsters for a Democratic Union today. To make his case coherent and historical, Lichtenstein has to demonstrate that it was the mainstream of the American trade union movement — the AFL, the AFL-CIO, the UAW as an autonomous organization, and the contemporary unified labor movement — that fought the good fight for political and social justice.

This is a challenge that neither Lichtenstein nor anyone else can possibly meet. As if aware of the difficulties in supporting his euphoric generalization, he qualifies his assurances with the hedging phrase, "generally speaking." If it is only true "generally speaking" that the labor movement served as an agent of social justice and political progress, that means *specifically* speaking there were times when the labor movement played a more dubious, even reactionary role. I would suggest to Lichtenstein that even a quick survey of the record of the labor movement in this century reveals that "generally speaking" it has taken positions which were anti-democratic and anti-social, often in violation of the needs and interests of its membership and the working class at large.

On questions of war and peace, from the Spanish-American War to the war in Vietnam, on questions of foreign policy, on issues of civil liberties, on the movement for women's rights from the suffragettes to women's liberation, on independent political action, on the struggle for racial justice, the labor movement "generally speaking" took positions which contradict Lichtenstein's mythical version of organized labor as a progressive force in American political and social life.

Impoverished Labor History

IN MY REVIEW I STATED THAT "Lichtenstein's explanation for Reuther's behavior, as when he admits that the UAW, in refusing to integrate its executive board, by 1959 lagged behind other industrial unions," is that "Reuther had become a prisoner of the institution he did so much to construct." In commenting, I wrote that "Lichtenstein offers this impoverished formulation as a catch-all excuse for Reuther's deplorable positions on racial and other issues and he fails to acknowledge that Reuther had options and made choices. . . ." In his rejoinder, Lichtenstein again fails to discuss the issue I raised. I characterized Lichtenstein's statement as impoverished because it explains nothing about the complex nature of the individual's relation to institutions and society. Human agency is never simply the product of bureaucratic formations over which individuals have no control as Lichtenstein suggests. My use of the word "impoverished" was also meant to convey my opinion of the quality of thought in Lichtenstein's work.

Over a period of many years and in many contexts I have challenged the distortions in the treatment of race by labor historians and have criticized the "impoverished" quality of their work. A major issue in my writing is the history of white working class and union racism, and the way it is frequently misrepresented by labor historians. Thus, in many respects this argument between Lichtenstein and myself is a continuation of earlier battles regarding the work of labor historians, especially that of Herbert Gutman.[25]

Commenting on the scholarship in Gutman's influential essay "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America,"[26] Nick Salvatore recently wrote:

> In a devastating critique that leaves Gutman's historical veracity in tatters, Hill revisited Gutman's sources, noting in painful detail the truncated citations or entirely omitted letters in Gutman's handling of the primary evidence. All too often, what is at stake, Hill notes time and again, is not a different emphasis or a subtle meaning rather the very core of Gutman's argument. My own independent check of both of their footnotes leaves little doubt but that Hill was accurate in his demolition of Gutman's historical research and of the argument that grew from it. In his charge to overturn those traditional interpretations and replace them with a new synthesis based on a class analysis of American society, Gutman traduced the historians fundamental responsibilities. That is the burden of Herbert Hill's critique.[27]

Salvatore's summary of my analysis of Gutman's essay, might with some variations, be applied to the work of other new labor historians as they manufacture myths and engage in distortions about the racial practices of labor unions.

For many generations organized labor excluded blacks and other non-whites, and even later when they were admitted into some unions, continued to discriminate against them after they were granted union membership. Today we have the sorry spectacle of Lichtenstein and other new labor historians eliding union racism from the historical record. Needless to say, Lichtenstein and the others do not elide union racism completely. How could they? But they try to reduce its importance while they exaggerate the significance of the rare exception. They try to explain away racist behavior even as they lament it as an unpleasant chapter in an otherwise glorious history.

Charles Mills, in his book *The Racial Contract*[28] posits a "racial contract" in opposition to the social contract that is relevant to this discussion. He writes:

> Unlike the social contract, which is necessarily embarrassed by the actual histories of the politics in which it is propagated, the "Racial Contract" *starts from* these uncomfortable realities. Thus it is not, like the social contract, continually forced to retreat into illusory idealizing abstraction, the never-never land of pure theory, but can move readily between the hypothetical and the actual, the subjunctive and the indicative, *having no need to pretend things happened which did not, to evade and to elide and to skim over*.[29] (Emphasis added)

Why this need "to evade and to elide and to skim over?" The answer can be found in the second paragraph of Lichtenstein's rejoinder. He construes my criticism of his book as an "effort to reduce the trade unions, both past and present, to little more than a white job trust" and frets that this "does a disservice both to the history of America's working class movement and to the possibility of a genuinely progressive trade union revival." As noted earlier, this is what motivates Lichtenstein's writing, and as a consequence, he finds it necessary to minimize racism in labor history because these inconvenient facts sully an imagined past that he wishes to recover. He and others like him are engaged in constructing a usable past to serve the current labor leadership. To this end the racism of the white working class and of its unions must be denied or reduced to the margins of history.

Even if I grant Lichtenstein his dubious premise about the prospects for a progressive trade union revival, this goal will not be served by burying the ignominies of the past. Rather, if this alleged revitalized movement is going to be progressive, it must come to terms with the past, not by burying the truth, but by confronting it fully and acknowledging, without temporizing, injustices that were done. These were tragic not only for the non-white victims of union racism, and not only because they perpetuated and exacerbated the racial divisions that continue to afflict American society, but also because they betrayed the ideals of organized labor itself, and the possibility that it would be a genuinely progressive force in a racially divided society.

There is another problem, however. Lichtenstein knows that his compatriots in the "new" labor movement have no intention of confronting labor's sordid history on race. To do so would carry a moral and political obligation for the labor movement to commit itself to genuine racial inclusiveness in leadership as well as in membership and to initiate a sustained attack against the racism that still permeates many unions. Here, alas, "past" and "present" come together.

Just as the labor movement by uncritically retelling labor's story does not want to confront the fact that for many generations it was a *white* labor movement, labor historians are guilty of producing a *white* narrative — that is, one that reflects a white point of view, and that "evades and elides and skims over" the unpleasant realities of race, then and now. Lichtenstein's perspective on this entire history would be turned inside-out if, even as a mental exercise, he put himself in the place of those black workers who confronted the patently discriminatory practices of the UAW and other labor unions. Were he to assume the vantage point of the racial other, he would not treat race as a minor chapter in an otherwise epic story. It is perhaps worth repeating here, that in my review I deliberately challenged only one aspect of Lichtenstein's book, just because he gave the issue of racism short shrift does not obligate me as reviewer, to repeat his error.

Lichtenstein ends his book with a triumphant flourish that contradicts much of what he has written in the previous 444 pages. Having consulted a necromancer who knows 25 years after Reuther's death what his position would be regarding current labor union policies, Lichtenstein writes that "Reuther emphasized that a sense of justice and solidarity underlies the very essence of the union idea," and strongly suggests that were Reuther alive today he would be leading the charge for a militant labor movement. This, of course, is sheer nonsense, and is one more example of how Lichtenstein writes history to serve his political agenda.

Waiting For Lefty!

IN THE PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH OF HIS REJOINDER, Lichtenstein, now playing the role of the tough "Lefty," declares that unless "we put our political cards on the table," our debate is no more than an exercise in "scholastic pedantry." One might assume, in the light of such a statement, that Lichtenstein would follow up with a pointed summary of his political position. What we get instead is an approximately 100-word tribute to Walter Reuther, revealing nothing about Lichtenstein's so-called political cards, now presumably on the table. The tribute to Reuther is followed by an equally brief concluding paragraph informing the reader that after a twenty-five year hiatus Walter Reuther has finally found an heir in John Sweeney, who is committed, at least rhetorically, to the notion that for trade unions to survive they must "transform themselves to once again [?] become the core of an expansive social movement."

Lichtenstein's prose and spirit soar as he brings the good tidings that the new leadership has placed the stamp of approval on "a long-overdue, multiracial definition of how we conceptualize the American working class," a statement in which I find only empty rhetoric, but in which Lichtenstein finds a development that is "enormously healthy."* Thus though he anticipates that Sweeney may disappoint us in many particulars, and in fact may "fail utterly," we are nonetheless assured that the Left now enjoys a larger space in which to

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*Of course, John Sweeney, as head of the AFL-CIO is not precisely the same man who, for many years, headed the corrupt Local 32-B 32-J of the Service Employees International Union in New York City. (See Bob Fitch, "Sweeney Among the Warlords," and Michael Hirsch, "Job Selling at the Janitors' Local": {New Politics}Winter 1997.) He does make overtures to social activists, intellectuals and the young. For all that, the image of Sweeney as a born-again visionary dedicated to transforming unions so as to make them the core of an "expansive social movement" is but another of Lichtenstein's fictions.

Social unionism is inseparable from the cause of trade union democracy. And the cause of trade union democracy is alien to the Sweeney leadership. More than three years have passed since the Sweeney forces took control of the AFL-CIO and the union movement remains bureaucratic, often corrupt and disgraced by discriminatory race and gender practices.

project its “ideas” and “initiatives.” With a final rallying cry urging us to “seize the opportunity,” Lichtenstein concludes his political discussion and his rejoinder to my review.

What “ideas” and what “opportunities”? And toward what social and political end should we “seize the opportunity”? Lichtenstein does not say. I am left with no alternative therefore but to stand by my view that Lichtenstein’s treatment of race in the Reuther biography as well as in his defense of it, confirms Nell Irvin Painter’s considered judgment that “The new labor history has a race problem.”[30]

NOTES

1. For a detailed account of racial issues in the ILGWU during the 1950s and 60s see Herbert Hill, “Black-Jewish Conflict in the Labor Context: Race, Jobs, and Institutional Power,” in *African-Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century: Studies in Conflict and Convergence*, edited by V.P. Franklin and Genna Rae McNeil, University of Missouri Press, forthcoming.

2. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Second Annual Report, 1968, pp. 43-44.

3. 380 U.S. 1 (1965).

4. For a discussion of this practice and its effect, see Herbert Hill, “On the Use of the *amicus curiae* Brief by the EEOC,” an unpublished paper given at the Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association, University of Minnesota, May 20, 1978. Copy in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison. For a discussion of early Title VII litigation, see Herbert Hill, “The New Judicial Perception of Employment Discrimination: Litigation Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” *Colorado Law Review*, Vol 43, No 3, March 1972, pp. 243-268.

5. For an example of the consequences to black workers of segregated seniority and job promotion lines in a unionized industry, see Robert J. Norrell, “Caste in Steel: Jim Crow Careers in Birmingham, Alabama,” *Journal of American History*, Vol 73, No 3, December 1986, pp. 669-94.

6. 279 F. Supp. 505 (E. D. VA. 1968).

7. 416 F. 2d 980 (5th Cir. 1969).

8. 559 F. 2d 310 (5th Cir. 1977).

9. 429 F. 2d 498 (5th Cir. 1970).

10. 560 F. 2d 224 (7th Cir. 1977).

11. 686 F. 2d 586 (7th Cir. 1982).

12. 645 F. 2d 1365 (10th Cir. 1981).

13. 836 F. Supp. 1552 (M. D. ALA. 1993).

14. 490 U.S. 900 (1989).

15. 446 F. 2d 652 (2nd Cir. 1971).

16. 468 F. 2d 1201 (2nd Cir 1972).

17. 451 F. 2d 418 (5th Cir. 1971).

18. 431 U.S. 324 (1977).

19. Martin Glaberman, “Walter Reuther and the Decline of the American Labor Movement,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol 11, No 1, 1997, pp. 73-99.

20. Michael Goldfield, “On Reuther: Legends and Lessons,” *Against The Current*, #67, March-April 1997, pp. 31-37.

21. 415 F. 2d 1038 (5th Cir. 1969).

22. Among many other sources see “The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission during the Administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson” (unpublished document, Nov. 1, 1968, in the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, Tex., p. 5), *Legislative History of Titles VII and XI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission, 1966, pp. 8-10, Charles Whalen and Barbara Whalen, *The Longest Debate: A Legislative History of the 1964 Civil Rights Act*, Cabin John, Md.: Seven Locks Press, 1985, p. 22, 82-83, and Robert Mann, *The Walls of Jericho, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Russell and the Struggle for Civil Rights*, New York, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1996, pp. 386-392.

23. See for example, Herbert Hill, "The Equal Employment Opportunity Acts of 1964 and 1972: A Critical Analysis of the Legislative History and Administration of the Law," *Industrial Relations Law Journal*, Vol 2, No 1, Spring 1977, pp. 1-96. Also Herbert Hill, *Black Labor and the American Legal System*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, especially chapters 1 and 3.

24. For a description of the racist AFL campaigns against Asian workers during the Gompers' period, see Herbert Hill, "Anti-Oriental Agitation and the Rise of Working-Class Racism," *Society*, Vol 10, No 2, January-February, 1973, pp. 43-54.

25. See Herbert Hill, "Myth-Making As Labor History: Herbert Gutman and the United Mine Workers of America," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol 2, No 2, Winter 1988, pp. 132-200.

26. Herbert Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers of America, the Career and Letters of Richard L. Davis and Something of Their Meaning: 1890-1900," in *The Negro and the American Labor Movement*, edited by Julius Jacobson, Anchor Books, Garden City, 1968, pp. 49-127. Reprinted in Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1976, pp. 119-208.

27. Nick Salvatore, "Herbert Gutman's Narrative of the American Working Class: A Reevaluation," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol 12, No 1, Fall 1998, pp. 43-80.

28. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1997.

29. Ibid. p. 130.

30. Nell Irvin Painter, "The New Labor History and the Historical Moment," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol 2, No 3, Spring 1989, p. 369.

Book  Reviews

An Atlas for Our Time

Reviewed by Margaret Willig Crane

GLOBALIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS: ESSAYS ON THE NEW MOBILITY OF PEOPLE AND MONEY by Saskia Sassen. The New Press, New York, 1998.

FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, Saskia Sassen has been exploring and mapping the terrain of globalization — a set of processes that many believe distinguish the present from all earlier periods. A creative theorist with no qualms about thinking big, Sassen crosses half a dozen disciplinary lines to tease out fact from fiction about what has changed and what hasn't. She illuminates the connections between such seemingly far-flung phenomena as the Internet, free trade, human rights, the condition of women, the labor market, patterns of immigration, and the rise of what she terms the "global city" as a primary nexus of global integration. And by articulating what is unknown alongside what is known, she clears the way for future research.

In *Globalization and its Discontents,* her latest collection of essays, Sassen builds on a body of ideas she has been developing since the early 1990s. Her previous books include *The Global City*, *The Mobility of Labor and Capital*, and *Losing Control*. As a professor of urban planning at Columbia University, she has made her mark by using the city as an analytical lens through which to view and understand the world.

Everyone seems to agree on the central *fact* of globalization — the stepped-up process of economic, political, and cultural integration of all nations into a single world system. But while some hail it as desirable and others oppose it categorically, Sassen allows us a glimpse of a more nuanced picture.

Much of the globalization debate thus far has centered on the identity of the state itself. Whether mainstream or left-of-center, scholar or activist, most have tended to see the global system's gain as the state's loss. According to this thesis, economic activity has been "denationalized," freed up from the legal and regulatory confines of the nation-state — a trend that is most vividly exemplified by the vastly accelerated rate of capital mobility and the emer-

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gence of a global marketplace. The state, some say, is increasingly powerless to block the inexorable march of this global juggernaut as it levels all barriers to trade and investment and rides roughshod over labor rights, the environment, and social protections of any kind. Wall Street is delighted with the prospect of a McWorld-like global village. By contrast, the perceived weakness of national governments has left many progressives adrift on a sea of political anomie.

Sassen points to a way out of this fatalistic ideological trap. She shows the state as the primary author of multiple transnational processes, including deregulation, flexible labor markets, and new legal regimes to guarantee the rights of capital. But in the process of ushering in the global economic system, she argues, the state has undergone a transformation itself, characterized by "the ascendance of agencies linked to the domestic and international financial markets . . . and the loss of power and prestige of agencies associated with issues of domestic equity" — most notably, those identified with the "outmoded" welfare state.

Weaving together many lines of argument, Sassen reveals a global grid of highly unequal forces and relationships that are coming into ever sharper conflict. And even though production and consumption are dispersed throughout the globe, she describes a new "economic geography of centrality and marginality," with strategic resources concentrated in the business districts of a select number of urban centers: New York, London, Tokyo, Paris, Frankfurt, Zurich, Sydney, Los Angeles and Hong Kong, among others.

A two-tiered economy thus emerges within global cities, as well as within and between entire countries. The financial industry flourishes, while traditional manufacturing continues to decline. The former generates high-wage jobs and the latter relies on an increasing supply of low-wage and immigrant labor. All in all, globalization has served to privilege financial firms and the high-end services on which they depend, enabling them to earn super-profits. And even given substantial consumer demand, manufacturing firms simply can't compete, even when they're moderately profitable.

Sassen may not delve into the root causes of late capitalist development, but she takes on significant chunks of its functioning, explodes myths and exposes the hidden links between economic internationalization, migration flows, and the restructuring of the labor market. By focusing on the city, she shifts our gaze from the usual suspects — transnational corporations, banks, governments and international financial institutions — and exposes the infrastructure and production complexes that form the underpinning of the global economy. She moves us, therefore, from structures and entities to functions and processes. For the student of globalization, then, the global city becomes a laboratory. Here, we can observe polarization as it plays itself out in the use of land, the organization of labor markets, the housing market, and the structure of consumption. Sassen offers a compelling diagnostic of a new pattern of growth that contributes to inequality rather than expansion of the middle class — a set of arrangements that constitute the beginnings of a "new economic regime."

DISCERNIBLE IN THIS NEWEST GROUP OF ESSAYS is a thread of feminist inquiry. Sassen devotes an entire chapter, "Toward a Feminist Analytics of the Global Economy," to investigate the growing presence and participation of women in the global arena. She builds on earlier research on women's role in subsistence farming and the feminization of the proletariat in manufacturing, and explores what she terms the "strategic nexus" of gender itself. Even though export-oriented Third World manufacturing accounts for a relatively small percentage of overall manufacturing jobs, she argues, it is undeniably a strategic feature of global economic reconfiguration. Entire export industries, including textiles, toys, and small electronics, have been shifted to low-wage countries, relying on an indigenous female workforce and displacing thousands of workers in the higher-income importing countries of Europe and North America. Thus, Sassen shows gender as pivotal to economic restructuring and class formation and consolidation in the present period.

But women's increasing participation turns out to be a very mixed blessing. Certainly, the incorporation of ever-greater numbers of women into the labor force is a welcome development. Wage employment has undeniably increased women's power in the household, the community and the public sphere — a fact that holds true for both working- and middle-class women in rich and poor countries alike. When Sassen turns our attention to the plight of women at the bottom of the wage scale, however, we see the dark side of labor market inclusion. These are the service workers, largely immigrants, who work in the interstices of global cities. They are the invisible layer without which the super-powerful financial sector couldn't function and, as such, are employed in a "leading industry." But unlike their predecessors in heavy industry one or two generations ago, they are not candidates for upward mobility. In the United States, they are the "systemic equivalent of the offshore proletariat."

Sassen is less persuasive when discussing the emergence of women as political actors on the international stage. At her most sanguine, she lays out the following line of argument: new developments in international law have combined with a number of supranational trends to erode state sovereignty. Now, joined together in hundreds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women and other disenfranchised groups are making their voices heard at the international level. The world's invisible are thus becoming visible in international courts, at world conferences, and at the United Nations itself. But Sassen has little to tell us about the real-world impact of this increased visibility. After all, an NGO can be anything from a guy with a business card to a multi-million-dollar non-profit enterprise. It might even represent corporate interests outright, like the Business Council for Sustainable Development. Unlike progressive political parties and social movements, many are broad, dispersed networks that lack constituencies in real geographical space. It is important not to confuse this buzz of transnational networking with the real cross-border solidarity that will be needed to push for greater equity and justice in actually existing workplaces and communities.

Which leads me to a final point. Although Sassen has addressed *Globalization and its Discontents* primarily to her academic colleagues, she rightly hopes its insights will reach — and influence — policymakers as well. We can all hope her words will be read, understood, and taken seriously by those in power. But it is not at the level of public policy that meaningful change will occur, no matter how well-meaning the intention or how enlightened the policy. Globalization notwithstanding, there's still no substitute for human beings engaged in common struggle to change the world.

Voluntary Consent?

ACRES OF SKIN: HUMAN EXPERIMENTS AT HOLMESBURG PRISON: A TRUE STORY OF ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION IN THE NAME OF MEDICAL SCIENCE by Allen M. Hornblum. N.Y.: Routledge, 1998. 297 pages, including notes and index.

Reviewed by Mark Dow

EXPERIMENTING WITH THE CHOLERA VIRUS, a professor of medicine "infect[s] with plague a group of criminals condemned to death." Elsewhere a group is overfed molasses to test the danger of high doses of sulfuric acid, which is used in its manufacture; the subjects do not object "because it wouldn't do any good if they did," explains one approving administrator. Yet another group of prisoners participates in non-therapeutic testicular transplants — from rams, goats, and boars to the men — so that a researcher can "pursue the truth, wherever it may lead."

You'll have guessed from the title under review that these were not Nazi experiments but American ones. They were performed in the Philippines, Mississippi, and California, respectively. Nazi doctors did, however, play a role: they "revealed" these experiments in court, testifying in their own defense at the 1946 Doctors Trial in Nuremberg. In fact, writes Allen M. Hornblum, "it was during the war years that the federal prison system swung into action as a major source of human subjects for research experiments."

Hornblum's detailed study — don't be misled by the tabloid-like second subtitle — is framed by the Nuremberg Code and its emphasis on the meaningful voluntary consent of test subjects. Hornblum calmly exposes the layers of hypocrisy at work; not only were American researchers doing things for which Nazi doctors were being tried — albeit "with just a little more diplomacy," as one American prisoner put it — but "the view that American medicine deserved an exception in the Code was expressed during the Nuremberg trial before the Code itself was drafted." American doctors who began their careers just after the war nominally subscribed to the American Medical Association's "Rules of Human Experimentation" requiring the voluntary consent of the subject, while in practice following the lead of "prestigious medical journals [which] published articles reporting and recommending the use of vulnerable, institutionalized children or prisoners as 'ideal' test subjects."

The Tuskegee Syphilis Study and the CIA's use of prisoners to test psychedelic drugs are well-known. Their supposed uniqueness implies, of course, that such horrors are not what our society is all about. Hornblum puts these infamous examples in context. While focusing on experiments at Holmesburg Prison in Philadelphia, he also sketches the outlines of three decades following the

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Nuremberg trial in which "physicians abuse[ed] the rights of patients on a scale unparalleled in American history, unaccompanied by protests or sanctions by the AMA," or by serious scrutiny from the media or oversight by the federal government. There is no conspiracy, just old-fashioned complicity. University research institutions, pharmaceutical companies, federal agencies, and ambitious doctors all shared what Hornblum straightforwardly calls a "utilitarian" view of confined subjects. "All I saw before me were acres of skin. It was like a farmer seeing a fertile field for the first time," emoted one Dr. Albert M. Kligman, the book's central character, on recalling his first visit to Holmesburg. (Hornblum writes about this jail because it was the site of a wider variety of testing and larger number of subjects than any other single facility in the country, and also because he stumbled into the story when he was teaching adult literacy at the nearby Philadelphia Detention Center.)

Kligman's training was in dermatology, and many of his experiments at Holmesburg in conjunction with the University of Pennsylvania were devoted to lotions, deodorants, and other cosmetic products. The long list of corporations sponsoring his work over the years includes Hoffman-Larouche, Parke-Davis, Abbott, Lederle, Pfizer, and Smith Kline & French, as the captive subjects became "the lab animals of choice for the burgeoning drug industry." Kligman's research at the prison had begun with athlete's foot in the early 1950s, and comparably mundane studies would remain "the backbone of the operation." But by the mid-60s, the Holmesburg medical research had grown to include a "climate chamber," used to test the effects of extreme temperatures on human beings, as well as "the capability to study numerous radioactive isotopes, conduct unprecedented dioxin testing, and administer sophisticated experiments for the Army." Kligman also worked with R.J. Reynolds at the prison in the mid-60s to investigate the relationship between smoking and bladder cancer.

What about the Food and Drug Administration's oversight of drug experiments on humans? At one point the agency did halt Kligman's work temporarily, not for ethical reasons, but for the sloppiness of his science. Similarly, the U.S. Army would later question Kligman's work because of the conditions of his lab at the prison. (The Army, writes Hornblum, conducted human experiments related to chemical warfare agents from about 1955 to 1975.) But profit and the easy availability of willing subjects won the day. The FDA ban would last only about a month, and Kligman's research at Holmesburg continued until 1974. The conjunction of increasing negative publicity and congressional hearings brought it to an end, an end which Kligman would later describe as "a very good case of the triumph of the do-gooders."

IN ADDITION TO INTERVIEWS WITH MEDICAL RESEARCHERS and the use of documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, Hornblum has spoken to ex-prisoners/subjects, and he combines the factual and the anecdotal. He is committed to letting the men who participated in the prison experiments speak for themselves, even at the risk of complicating his own thesis, which is that these men "acquiesced in their own exploitation." The prisoner-subjects regularly cite one major incentive for their participation: money. (The Army experiments, by the way, paid significantly better than most.) With minimal editorializing, Hornblum elucidates the dilemma in which "do-gooders" oppose the experiments on ethical grounds while prisoners themselves often insist on their right to choose to participate. "'I have a right to do what I want with myself,' said . . . a veteran of nearly two dozen experiments and, at the time, part of a $300-a-month 'heart-regulating drug study' at a Michigan prison." William McCafferty was a Holmesburg prisoner from the start of the research program in 1951. He tells of harmless experiments testing various soap brands.

> Some experiments were far more offensive to the test subjects' hands. On one test, the university doctors proposed to extract one fingernail at $50 a piece from each of the six inmates. With the other inmates looking on, the doctors took the first volunteer, numbed his finger with Novocain, and placed his hand in a vice to immobilize the finger. But when the inmates saw the doctor grab a large pair of pliers and approach the volunteer, they panicked at the primitive methodology. Yelling 'Hell no, not for fifty bucks,' they refused to cooperate any further. A quick bargaining session yielded a three-fold increase in pay, 'but the inmates were sorry when the Novocain wore off.' 'Two or three hours later that son-of-a-bitch really started to throb and hurt like hell.' McCafferty believes the university doctors were interested in 'the wound, [how a] manhandled finger reacted to abuse.'

Organized opponents of the Upjohn/Park testing site, which ran the Michigan heart experiments, were unprepared for the widespread prisoner resistance to their activism. Likewise, two ex-prisoners who worked with the Philadelphia ACLU on the issue of prison experiments in the 70s had to face the opposition of some of their former fellow inmates. One of those prisoner activists, Allen Lawson, apparently expressing Hornblum's own view, would insist that "choice" predicated on the realities of a prison economy was no real choice at all. Many of the Holmesburg subjects were in pre-trial detention, and they often participated in order to raise their own bail. A con man at Holmesburg (serving time for check fraud) made his own profit by becoming a research assistant with the authority to choose test subjects. Then he set up a "lucrative experiments-for-sex arrangement." The details of this scam were disclosed after a court-ordered investigation by then-District Attorney Arlen Specter's office turned from allegations of sexual abuse against prisoners to the Holmesburg experiments. Soon Allen Lawson, the prisoner activist, would be testifying before Senator Edward Kennedy's 1973 investigating committee: "any claim of voluntary participation by prisoners in human experiments [is] a cruel hoax." Jessica Mitford's *Kind and Unusual Punishment* was published the same year, and Hornblum underlines its importance in precipitating the reforms. It was the end of an era. "Things were simpler then," Dr. Kligman would reflect on the good old days. "No one asked me what I was doing. It was a wonderful time."

And it was not so long ago. Although Hornblum saves his philosophizing for the last section of *Acres of Skin*, where he cites Maimonides and Hans Jonas, his history touches on many issues that remain with us: medical ethics, corporate profit, and the booming prison industry. Underlying all of these is our willingness, perhaps our need, to dehumanize those whom we marginalize. In the coup de grace of dehumanizing rationalization, Kligman — who had once written of the "freely available" biopsy material from retarded child subjects — articulated this humanitarian view of his Holmesburg subjects: "Many of the prisoners," he told a reporter in 1966, "for the first time in their lives, find themselves in the role of important human beings."

The Centrality of International Socialism

NATIONALISM AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT: THE IDEA OF THE NATION IN SOCIALIST AND ANARCHIST THEORY by Michael Forman.University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998. pp. 212 + xi.

Reviewed by John Ehrenberg

CONSERVATIVE PERIODS ARE OFTEN MARKED BY A PERVASIVE SKEPTICISM about the possibilities of political action, and the present one is no exception. It differs from its predecessors only in the unrelenting intensity of its assault on living standards and in the ideological confusion and political ineffectiveness of what passes for the left. Aping the antistatism of the right, a complaining and moralizing communitarianism asks us to embrace a romanticized 19th-century vision of a small-town rural social order constituted by localism and particular interest. Postmodernism continues to posture as a subversive "cultural" critique of modernity and a hostility to history, politics, the Enlightenment, reason, progress, freedom and all "metanarratives." Neo-Tocquevillean theorists of "civil society" locate authentic democratic activity in the local organizations and voluntary associations which lie between the market and the state. Almost everyone seems to agree that knowledge is local, identity and "difference" are the key categories of contemporary life, social relations are constituted by language and "discourse," "culture" is the decisive site of struggle, and no single agent of human liberation can even be theorized. Celebrations of fragmentation, parochialism and discontinuity support insistent claims that there is no objective basis for collective action which can cut across the multiple, ever-shifting and self-defined "identities" that constitute the social world. There are no more collective agents, class no longer drives politics, the state has disappeared from view, mass parties of the working class are a thing of the past, and isolated individuals and eclectically-organized groups now create meaning for themselves. Mutualism, localism, self-limitation and solidarity are the new values of democratic theory and practice, for the left's traditional inclination to use state power against the market is a dangerous enchantment which leads straight to the Gulag. The breadth of view and comprehensiveness of scope that only politics can provide has disappeared from much left theoriz-

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ing, replaced by the particular goals and narrow interests of the "new social movements." The deterioration of the labor movement finds its reflection in the claim that the decentered "politics of identity" have replaced the left's traditional orientation toward the working class and the capture of state power. Marxism is an outmoded ideology, socialism is a dangerous fantasy, and the centrality of the working class is a remnant of a vanished "Fordist" past.

These dismal claims are familiar enough, and it's no accident that they have become so dominant at a time of an historically unparalleled intensification of exploitation and concentration of wealth. The United States is the most unequal industrialized nation on the planet, and the left's inability to formulate a credible political strategy of economic redistribution is a direct — and deserved — cause of its impotence.

Enter Michael Forman's *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement*, an enlightening historical analysis of the relationship between nationalism and internationalism. More than good history, though, its contemporary usefulness comes from the author's fruitful mining of the three Internationals in search of a universal international ethic which can reinvigorate contemporary leftist political thought.

REFLECTING 19TH-CENTURY MATERIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS, the First International articulated an internationalism which could orient the struggles of working classes that were taking shape within discrete national boundaries. Its internationalism took the form of proletarian solidarity across borders, and class alliances were the weapons to counter national particularism and the state-organized solidarity of the bourgeoisie. Bakunin — really the only anarchist Forman covers — conceived of nations as the products of historically-constituted communities and distinguished between them and their political expressions as sovereign states. He was sure that conflict came from political activity and embraced a mutualist federalism which would respect the existence of nations and replace inherently oppressive states with a world federation of communes. Marx shared Bakunin's hostility to the state but conceived of nations as political creations which were only contingently linked to cultural forces. From 1848 on, he located political activity at the center of socialist theory and practice. *The Communist Manifesto*'s important claim that "the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle [and the] proletariat of each country must first of all settle matters with its bourgeoisie" described an orientation toward state power that was always formulated with an internationalist perspective. Marx's fusion of republicanism, democracy and internationalism argued that nations receive their expression as states, but his well-known preference for centralized political formations was always fused with his understanding that international capitalism required a cosmopolitan proletarian response.

The Second International was forced to grapple with the consequences of colonialism and the existence of multinational proletariats. Lenin, Luxemburg and Bauer made important contributions to the left's ability to forge class alliances among workers from different countries. An active internationalism was deployed to counter national particularism, for a broader set of problems than those which confronted the First International and led Lenin to define internationalism as the right of nations to political separation. Forged in the course of Russian Social Democracy's early struggles with the Bund, Lenin's refusal to countenance federalism in the party or cultural-national autonomy in the state defined the self-determination of nations in terms of the interests of a vanguard political apparatus. His solution of the national question expressed a right to political separation that was never absolute but would always depend on its wider political effects. The interests of the revolution always came first for Lenin, and everything else was contingent. Forman is concerned about what he sees as an indifference to democracy which left little room for the political expression of "ethnic groups" and left Lenin open to Luxemburg's criticism. Her unflinching opposition to nationalism and uncompromising internationalism led her to attack the right of nations to self-determination as a dangerous Leninist concession to a bourgeois category. Class solidarity was the only way the workers could avoid the divisiveness of nationalism and establish the parameters of their own struggle. National liberation could not be understood apart from the final victory of socialism and the workers should never participate in any sort of national project, Luxemburg argued — up to and including defense.

IT WAS THE AUSTRO-MARXISTS WHO HAD TO CONTEND with multinational states, and Bauer theorized the national question as a matter of the structure of the working class itself. His desire to maintain the integrity of the Empire stemmed from Marxism's traditional partiality toward large units, and in the end he advocated a democratic federation which afforded juridical protection to national minorities in cultural matters. Forman is attracted to this approach because it moved theorization of nationhood beyond objective factors like language, history and economic intercourse. Indeed, Bauer was more willing than most of his contemporaries to consider the cultural determinants of nations and thought of them as "relative communities of character." Breaking the connection between nations and states allowed him to treat nations as communities of persons who do not have to inhabit the same territory. A federal republic would be composed of corporative associations organized on the basis of "nationality" rather than territory. Each citizen would be free to define his or her own identity and each nation would have control of its own national and cultural affairs, with the federal state taking responsibility for matters of common concern.

But the vicissitudes of the Russian Revolution intervened to transform twentieth-century Marxism into an ideology of state-building and the Third International into an instrument of the Soviet Union. Under the circumstances of a revolution which occurred in a backward, mutilated and isolated society, internationalism came to mean an alliance of vanguard parties organized in support of the USSR. Democracy and genuine internationalism slowly atrophied as the needs of the Russian Revolution came to trump all others and the defense of "socialism in one country" came to define the content of internationalism. As the construction of socialism and the defense of the Soviet state became the overwhelming priority for the left, the socialist project was reduced to the needs of nation-building. Forman argues that both Stalin and Gramsci accepted this line of argument, and it wasn't long before the working class was replaced by the party and the state as the central figure and decisive agent of social transformation. Internationalism became an instrument for consolidating the position of the world's first socialist state. For all his originality, says Forman, Gramsci accepted the basic Leninist formulation that the nation was the political unit within which the working class, led by its party, would establish its hegemony and build its state. The later identification of Marxism with national liberation followed this "nationalization of socialism" as a matter of course. As socialism became an ideology of modernization, the unambiguous triumph of nationalism reflected the decay of the universalistic, cosmopolitan and international content of the socialist vision.

NEW THEORETICAL CONCEPTIONS OF NATIONALISM, Forman concludes, must reinvigorate its international content in the light of contemporary political and economic conditions. This demands a reversal of contemporary priorities and requires that nationalism be approached from the starting point of international politics and universal claims. National interests can be supported only by democratic institutions and general interests, but it is difficult to see where this leads. If an internationalist vision is the only progressive counterweight to nationalist parochialism, then more is required than invocations of capitalist globalization, reminders of Marx and references to Kant's "cosmopolitan intent." In the world of NAFTA and neoliberal austerity, democratic accountability must be buttressed by the organized political power of the working class. Forman knows this of course, but more is required than the French Revolution's civic conception of the nation, popular sovereignty, civil and political rights and the rule of law. It is not enough to conceptualize socialism as a critical ethical stance. Developing a distinctly socialist internationalism remains a central theoretical and political task of any left which purports to address the profound questions Forman raises throughout this important and provocative book.

Commitment to Freedom

SURREALIST WOMEN: AN INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY by Penelope Rosemont, ed. University of Texas Press, Austin, 1998, 516 pp.

Reviewed by David Roediger

EVERYBODY KNOWS A LITTLE SOMETHING WRONG ABOUT SURREALISM. The word surreal gets thrown around regularly in the popular press, where it loosely means odd, wild, unreal, weird, escapist and distorted — psychedelic with less bright colors. Those who have suffered through art history survey courses know surrealism as a long-ago, mostly French, movement of painters. The professor talks about Freud a little, and revolution less. He stresses Salvador Dali. Even so, the slides are so playful and funny that their images stick with students

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somehow. Two things are supposed to be clear: surrealism *is* over and it *was male*. If you go on to graduate school, the plot thickens. Not only were surrealist artists and writers male, books near the cynical cutting edge argue, but the movement embodied and encouraged a deep sexism, indeed misogyny.

Not much of this misinformation survives the reading of Penelope Rosemont's massive and brilliant collection *Surrealist Women*, which stretches over three-quarters of a century and gathers the work of over a hundred writers as well as four dozen illustrations. In trenchant introductions to the anthology and to each of its sections, Rosemont underlines what the individual selections show. Surrealism, in this view, has affirmed freedom, poetry, the Marvelous, imagination and black humor for most of this century. Far-flung and remarkably resilient, it has opposed not only misery, but also the "miserabilist" systems which keep a new society unimagined. Revolutionary and anti-Stalinist, in full opposition to capitalism, imperialism and racism, surrealists have deployed a critical Freudianism in the service of "the production of disquietingly antirational images" that disrupt the sureties of reactionary common sense. At the very times when reformists of many stripes have striven to christen themselves as the "left wing of the possible," surrealists have reminded us, in Clara Reeve's words, that "It is hard to say what is impossible." In all of this, women have taken, and take, increasingly central roles. Rosemont establishes the full extent of their centrality not only by sampling relatively celebrated contributors to surrealist exhibitions, periodicals and initiatives — Frida Kahlo, Leonora Carrington, and Rikki Ducornet, for example — but also by rediscovering lost voices. Sixty percent of those whose work is reprinted have never before been anthologized.

Rosemont groups selections chronologically, beginning with the 1924 to 1929 period, in which women were "only rarely at the forefront of surrealist activity." She nonetheless finds significant early influences by women on *La Revolution Surréaliste*. Rosemont points particularly to rebels against sexual repression and to such figures as the class and race traitor, the white heiress Nancy Cunard, and Nadja, the sales clerk, dancer and visionary who set the daunting goal, "Not to weigh down one's thoughts with the weight of one's shoes," and inspired surrealist theorist/artist/militant André Breton to write his best-known book.

The section on the 30s emphasizes striking growth of women's creativity as surrealists, showing the extent to which revolutionary socialism and direct surrealist response (some of it by the young Jacques Lacan) to sexist hysteria which swept France following two celebrated murder cases fuelled that growth. From animals to Hegel, from alchemy to anti-fascism, this desperate and promising decade saw scores of women follow the maxim of the Spanish surrealist painter and photomontagist Maruja Mallo who cast her work as an "indictment of the cemetery of garbage that surrounds us."

A third major section, "Neither Your War Nor Your Peace," surveys the thought and resistance of surrealist women with Europe and much of the world in flames. Not surprisingly, a quickened critique of "the West" emerged during World War Two. The remarkable work of the Martiniquan manifesto writer Suzanne Césaire left no doubt that surrealism, in the service of anti-imperialism, would be anything but a "European" set of ideas. It was, she declared to "rising people" of the world, the "tightrope of our hope." Rosemont uses the useful concept of a "surrealist diaspora" to describe the movement of people, publications and ideas during these years. Migration, driven by wanderlust, love and (increasingly) repression, made surrealists often occupy the creative spaces claimed by those whom Coco Fusco has called "stateless hybrids." The celebrated painter Frida Kahlo, for example, was of Hungarian Jewish and Spanish/Mexican descent and lived in Coyoacán. Her first exhibition was in Paris and was arranged by Breton, who termed her work "a ribbon around a bomb." Kahlo, whose considerable involvement with surrealism is reduced by many critics to a "brush," for a time perfectly reflected the ways in which surrealists claimed virtually everything, except nationalism. She wrote: "I am a bird. I am everything, without more confusion…The lands. the great grove. the greatest tenderness. the immense tide. garbage. bathtub. letters of cardboard. dice…" The genius offering the most sustained surrealist analysis of gender in the 1940s, the English-born Australian Mary Low, fought in the Spanish Civil War with the Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista (POUM) and was active in the overthrow of the Batista regime in Cuba. Her reprinted reflections on women in the Spanish Revolution and her "dialectical glance" at "Women and Love Through Private Property" teem with insights which the new millenium will do well to catch up with.

In the World War II years, Césaire and others opposed the idea that surrealism was already finished. In Césaire's case the apt emphasis was on the fact that surrealism was both a movement and a "sense of movement." It therefore would prove most difficult to contain, and would emerge autonomously in new places and times. The final three sections of *Surrealist Women* very much underline Césaire's point. Moving through the Cold War, to the upheavals surrounding and following the May 1968 revolts to very recent surrealist "challenges to the twenty-first century," Rosemont offers scores of writings illustrating the "against-the-current tenacity" of surrealist women. As in other sections, the participation in surrealist games produces highlights. In 1953, for example, Elisa Breton, Anne Seghers and Toyen played "Would you open the door?" serially considering what they'd do if Freud, Lenin, Gauguin, Goya, Cezanne ("No," three times), Marx and a host of others came knocking. To a considerable extent, women write general defenses of the movement, and like Rosemont herself, its history. Dreaming never ceases, in prose and on canvas. The stirring jazz-drenched poetry of the great Jayne Cortez is generously reprinted with all of its uncompromising beauty: "So say it forget it / and have a drop of grappa / The frog spits through the uterus in December." Leonora Carrington's 1970 essay "What Is a Woman?" rejects all masters as convincingly as any revolutionary call-to-arms ever. Five years later she would add, "Once a dog barked at a mask I made; that was the most honorable comment I ever received." The Iraqi-born Haifa Zangana, whose 1978 collage "Destruction of a Map" is among the most striking of the book's images, promises to continue to disturb the "living coffins" of a profit- and power-mad world. She adds the definitive answer to surrealism's chronically premature obituaries: "Freedom is the most persistently lingering of all desires."

Surrealist Women, a monumental work of translation, research, commitment and homage, clearly stands as the definitive work on its subject. More than that, it stands with André Breton's *What is Surrealism*? and a very few other works as the perfect introduction to the surrealist project.

Ethics and Politics

ETHICS INTO ACTION: HENRY SPIRA AND THE ANIMAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT by Peter Singer, Rowman & Littlefield, 1998. $22.95 hardback. ISBN: 0-8476-9073-3.

Reviewed by Kent Worcester

HENRY SPIRA BECAME ACTIVE AROUND THE ISSUE OF the treatment of animals in the mid-1970s, after 30 years in the labor and radical movements. As far as I am aware, he was the only person to achieve prominence in the animal rights movement who specifically came out of Trotskyist politics. While his leftist background does not explain his involvement in the cause of animal rights, it does provide a context for understanding his distinctive approach to questions of strategy and tactics in what might be called the animal movement.

Until his involvement in animal rights, Henry Spira's political trajectory was similar to that of other immigrant New Yorkers of his generation who gravitated to the anti-Stalinist left. He became a supporter of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1944, at the age of 17, and joined the Merchant Marines the following year. Part of the attraction of radical politics was that he loved to argue. A fellow student later remembered that "dealing with him was like chewing a heavy duty rubber band instead of chewing gum; there was little satisfaction in the endeavor…His arguments were tidal waves of high intelligence, some knowledge, huge amounts of scorn and often brilliant swordsmanship…[Henry] would skewer the most doughty defenders of Stalin with dripping sarcastic derision and leave them, unconvinced but panting in exasperation and exhaustion."

As a merchant marine Henry participated in onboard union meetings and supported dissident currents inside the National Maritime Union (NMU), which at that time was dominated by the Communist Party. In 1952 he was kicked out of the industry on the grounds that his continued presence was "inimical to the security of the U.S. government." Ironically, this meant he was eligible for the draft, and he spent two years in the Army before being expelled for "subversive and disloyal activities." With the help of the Workers Defense League he received an honorable discharge. After that, he worked for a year on the assembly line at the General Motors plant in Linden, New Jersey, and later returned to the maritime industry, where he became active in the Committee for NMU Democracy. As maritime employment dried up, he landed a job as a teacher in the New York City public schools. Early retirement from the school system afforded him the opportunity to devote himself full-time to animal causes.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Henry remained active in the SWP, although, as Peter Singer notes in this new biography, he "found branch meetings largely pointless and avoided them." His major contribution involved writing articles for *The Militant*, the SWP's newspaper, under the name Henry

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Gitano. In 1956, he traveled to Montgomery, Alabama and Tallahassee, Florida, to cover the bus boycotts that were underway in both cities. A few years later, he wrote about a campaign to integrate restaurants, motels, and beaches in St. Augustine, Florida. He also compiled a twelve-part series on the Federal Bureau of Investigation that ran in *The Militant* in 1958 and 1959. The Bureau regarded the series as "defamatory," and one U.S. senator denounced the articles as a "Moscow plot" to undermine "human decency and sound democracy."

Henry appreciated having the chance to write for a politically engaged audience, but he eventually drifted out of the SWP after concluding its members didn't have their "feet on the ground." He complained that party activists

> were totally out of synch with everything. Even the language they were using — if you weren't a Trotskyist you would hardly know what they were talking about... was totally unimaginative, totally uncreative. The most important thing for those people was whether they would make it on to the political committee or even the national committee of the organization in their own lifetime. That became the life force of the organization, as though the organization was almost substituting itself for the real world.

Henry's interest in building a movement to reduce the suffering of animals was sparked by his first experience of living with a cat. His leftist activism supplied him with an extensive background in grassroots organizing and journalism, which he used to notable effect in the context of animal rights. His approach emphasized the importance of researching issues, raising clear demands, building alliances, working with media contacts, and using small victories to achieve larger ones. He retained a trade unionist's sense of steady, step-by-step determination from his days in the NMU. He was also fond of Trotsky's concept of the "transitional program," and sought to apply Trotsky's insight that certain radical demands could provide a catalyst for even more audacious initiatives to the work of the animal movement.

The paths of the professional philosopher Peter Singer and the freelance activist Henry Spira crossed when Henry wandered into a continuing education course at New York University taught by Singer and based on his then unpublished book, *Animal Liberation* (1975). As Singer writes in the biography:

> One man stood out from the others. He certainly wasn't a typical "animal person." His whole appearance was different: His voice had too much of the accent of the New York working class. The way he put things was so blunt and earthy that at times I thought I was listening to a character from a gangster movie. His clothes were crumpled, his hair was tousled. In general he struck me as an unlikely type of person to enroll in an adult education course about animal liberation.

Peter Singer and Henry Spira offered an interesting match. Singer had developed a broadly utilitarian case for taking animals seriously, on the grounds that they distinguish between pain and pleasure and are therefore worthy of moral consideration. Henry accepted this position but impatiently sought to find ways to win concrete victories that would give activists the confidence to achieve bigger goals. He was particularly struck by the fact that antivivisection groups had been publicizing the cruelty of animal experimentation for over a century without managing to accomplish anything for the animals. For this reason, his first campaign focused on animal-based research at the American Museum of Natural History, where scientists were using government funds to explore the effects of gross physical trauma on the sexual practices of cats.

"We wanted an issue," he later said, "which we merely had to describe in order to put our opponents on the defensive. Here we had just such an issue: "Do you want your tax monies spent to deliberately mutilate cats in order to observe the sexual performance of crippled felines?"

Singer tells the story of the cat campaign with flair, showing how activists were able to bring an end to the Museum's research program into feline sexuality despite the opposition of the scientists involved, who insisted that only qualified experts could determine whether the research had any merit. Their pro-experimentation case received a major blow when a journalist for *Science* reported that "of the 21 articles…published on the cat study since 1962, 14 have never been cited in the scientific literature" and the rest had received scant attention from other scholars. The lesson was that activists should carefully pick their targets to achieve maximum impact. Rather than pursuing a politics of purity, the animal movement could accomplish more by building broad, media-savvy campaigns around egregious cases of animal abuse. As Henry once explained, "audacity must be fused with attention to detail, with an awareness of social attitudes, power relations and scientific possibilities."

HENRY'S NEXT MAJOR CAMPAIGN WAS PROBABLY ALSO HIS MOST FAMOUS — the campaign to end the Draize test on rabbits by cosmetic companies. As Singer explains, the Draize test requires that concentrated solutions of a toxic substance are "dripped into the rabbits' eyes, sometimes repeatedly over a period of several days. The damage is then measured according to the size of the area injured, the degree of swelling and redness, and other types of injury…their eyes may be held permanently open by the use of metal clips which keep the eyelids apart." Henry's position was that there was no compelling reason to conduct these tests each time the cosmetics industry came out with a slightly altered formula. Even those who adamantly supported medical research on animals to tackle life-threatening diseases and so on were hard pressed to defend the routine testing of reformulated shampoos on hundreds or thousands of rabbits.

A public campaign around the cosmetic tests eventually convinced Revlon and other major companies to explore alternatives to tests on animals. The campaign not only challenged industry practices but raised consumer awareness and helped sparked the move toward "cruelty-free" products.

Each of the campaigns that Henry became involved in, through the aegis of his apartment-based organization, Animal Rights International, was designed to extend public awareness and bring about practical measures that would reduce animal suffering.

In the 1990s he highlighted the conditions that both workers and animals faced in the chicken plants of the notorious union-buster Frank Purdue, arguing that safer conditions for workers would be beneficial for the chickens, and vice versa. Purdue, he said, was "not just bad news for the animals, but bad news for the environment, bad news for feeding the billions, bad news for the water…" Another high-profile campaign centered on the conditions of animals in the factory farms supplying McDonalds. Over time, his emphasis shifted from vivisection to farm animals, on the grounds that "whereas the number of animals used in research seems to be falling, the number of farm animals used is rising rapidly." Apart from convincing people to eat less meat, animal activists could find ways of dramatically improving the conditions of animals in factory farms if they mobilized sufficient pressure against the companies involved. And every time activists won a small campaign, they gained the confidence and skills to address larger concerns.

Singer's biography provides extensive coverage of these various campaigns, and in doing so offers an illuminating overview of the emergence of the modern animal rights movement. It also makes clear how much Henry's approach differed from other tendencies within the movement — such as the long-standing animal welfare community, with its emphasis on fund-raising, and the more recent moralist-absolutist current, with its high-handed rejection of all forms of animal use/exploitation. The obituary for Henry Spira that appeared in *The New York Times* reflects the individual I came to know as a friend during the last ten years of his life:

> Mr. Spira was a careful assembler of facts, a cynical humorist, a devoted practitioner of thank-you notes and, above all, disarming in his dealings with both friends and adversaries. Though willing to put on a coat and tie if necessary to meet with business executives, he was never able to look comfortable in them. Perhaps it was his insistence on wearing sneakers. He drew a salary of $15,000 from ARI, plus a few thousand dollars annually in expenses, and never wavered in his scorn for bureaucracies, including those of some of his allies.

After two decades of constructing imaginative campaigns designed to call attention to the plight of farm and lab animals, which followed 30 years of labor and civil rights activism, Henry died from esophageal cancer this past September, at the age of seventy-one.

History & Relevance of the Russian Question

THE FATE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION, LOST TEXTS OF CRITICAL MARXISM Vol. 1, edited by Sean Matgamna, Phoenix Press, London, 1998.

Reviewed by Barry Finger

THE PURPOSE OF THIS AMBITIOUS VOLUME is to acquaint the socialist public with the living political legacy of the Workers Party/Independent Socialist League (WP/ISL). A Marxist tendency which germinated as a minority within the American Trotskyist movement, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), at the end of the 30s, never numbered more than 600-700 hundred members, endured less than 20 years, led no revolutionary insurrections, the WP/ISL nevertheless came fully into its own by developing a full-throated defense of revolutionary socialism, free of the fatuous and still fashionable insistence that Stalinism was the inevitable outcome of Leninism and, for some, of Marxism.

This volume, however, is not a political history of the WP/ISL, although its intellectual evolution can surely be pieced together from the material contained, but a compendium of public documents and internal polemics of the movement. These essays long out of print and inaccessible to all but the most persistent researchers, consists primarily of the works of Max Shachtman, the movement's leading theoretician, and to a lesser degree, of Hal Draper, Joseph Carter, C.L.R. James and others who fashioned what was to become known as "third camp" or the "independent socialist" tendency. The introductory essay by Sean Matgamna is a fascinating analytical assessment and overview of how this overhaul of Trotskyism was pursued and of its continuing relevancy. In an age in which the "general idea of socialism" is invariably linked in the public mind with the fate of the Soviet Union, they stood virtually alone in categorically rejecting the notion that what went awry was simply the results of "mistakes," "serious errors" or even "crimes" and went on to decisively dismiss the notion that Stalinist Russia was any kind of workers' state, "degenerated" or otherwise.

If Stalinism sought to pervert the liberating doctrines of socialism into a means of enslavement and, for a while, marched relentlessly ahead on that basis, the many non-Stalinists of the left were reduced to wringing their hands and shaking their heads balefully while they rationalized Stalinist terror as the dialectical way "history" chose to march forward. So insisted some soothsayers of the social democratic left, e.g., the Coleses and Bauers and Dans; and even more flagrantly, such adepts of post-Trotsky Trotskyism — the Deutschers and Mandels and Cannons. The stormy spectacle of doctrinal hairsplitting and organizational reconfiguration within official "Trotskyism" generally reflected

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the degree of accommodation with which this or that faction greeted or apologized for Stalinist imperialism or its national manifestations. Like the vaudevillian lament over the restaurant whose food was so atrocious, and, what's worse, served in such miserly portions, Trotsky's dogmatic followers bemoaned Stalinism's atrocities while castigating its irresolution whenever it eluded a supposed opportunity for expansion.

"Orthodox" Trotskyism never truly outgrew the faction fights of the 1920s when Marxists considered Stalinism to be a legitimate — if errant and conservative — faction within the broader socialist and working-class movement. It never, in practice, assimilated the evolving dynamic of Stalinism, that would generate a new social organization of labor serving an historically new ruling class. Instead, it held fast to a bizarre definition of Stalinism as "a petty bourgeois tendency" within the revolutionary and broader labor movement. Accordingly, the deans of Trotskyism found confirmation in Trotsky's view that Stalinism was capitulating to capitalist restoration whenever a peasant in Siberia was found to have owned a cow. The Stalinist Czech coup of 1948 was cited as proof of Stalinism's capitulation to capitalism, even as the Czech Communist Party was preparing the social (sometimes physical) liquidation of the Czech bourgeoisie. And just days before the Chinese Stalinists' armies defeated Chiang, they continued to insist that Mao's and Stalin's prime objective was — appearances notwithstanding — to surrender to Chiang and the Chinese bourgeoisie!

Trotsky insisted that the key to developing Russia on a socialist basis and thereby breaking the stranglehold of the nationalist bureaucracy lay in ending Russia's enforced isolation. In this he faithfully reflected the perspective of the bolshevik revolution. What Trotsky was unwilling to concede was not merely that the Stalinist bureaucracy might mutate into a new ruling class, but that it had already created a new type of party, a new type of international movement, and a new type of imperialism. In contrast, Shachtman and his comrades recognized Stalinism as a new international force operating within the working class which sought to wrap itself in the trappings and traditions of the socialist movement at the same time that it savagely victimized the working class wherever it took power. It sought the destruction of world capitalism but in terms of its own *reactionary* bureaucratic-collectivist class interests.

Wherever else Trotsky's investigations led him, he left unquestioned the theoretical viewpoint of the 1924 Opposition that the Soviet Union represented a "degenerated workers state" and that the responsibility of the working-class movement was to defend that state unconditionally if threatened by war or intervention. But whereas the revolutionary movement could still make the case in 1924 that, despite draconian inroads against democracy, workers still tacitly exercised considerable control over the conditions of social life through elective bodies in the Soviets, trade unions and cooperatives, the consolidation of bureaucratic power extinguished these remnants of revolutionary rule and in so doing fundamentally transformed the revolutionary responsibilities of the left. The original program of the left aimed to *reform* and thereby salvage the gains of the revolution by means of an invigoration, extension and deepening of workers' democracy; by reining in the bureaucracy and subjecting it to decisive subordination under Party authority. Yet the society that Trotsky fought to revive was simply a different conception of humanity than that which he ultimately confronted in Stalinist Russia. Trotsky implicitly acquiesced to this judgment by dropping the “reformist” strategy of redirecting the Communist movement, invoking instead the need for a political revolution predicated on a new International.

In this acquiescence lay, tragically, a greater obfuscation. For it had been the inherited understanding of the revolutionary movement that a given class is the ruling class when the entire economic and social structure is in conformity with *its* mode of production and its social domination, and is not compatible with the rule of any other class. Because the working class is not a property-owning class, its social rule must be bound to its political rule, and therefore cannot exist — in contradistinction to the capitalist class — where it has no political rights. Trotsky, for whom revolutionary socialism was also inseparable from workers’ democracy, was forced into the untenable position of offering unconditional defense to a society where the political mechanisms of working-class social domination had been irrevocably obliterated and replaced by a socially autonomous bureaucracy. Thus the dilemma: either abandon the cause of unconditional defensism or revise the Marxist criteria for judging the social character of the Soviet state. Trotsky — who, better than any contemporary, had demonstrated that Stalinist Russia by reason of its politics, policies and activities, by its internal structure and world strategies, was a mortal enemy of socialism and the working class everywhere— shifted disastrously toward the latter alternative.

That this was a provisional judgment is clear from Trotsky’s final essays, as members of the Workers Party soberly pointed out. But for his followers in the SWP majority, the defense of the Soviet Union was now to rest on the existence of nationalized industry and state planning, on juridical forms rather than the (unexamined) exploitative property relations. Socialism was no longer immutably identified with democracy, a workers’ state with workers’ power. Russia was a workers’ state in which the workers exercised their social dominance, as it were, from jail. When Stalinism at the end of the war expanded its domain, by dint of bayonet and coup, Trotsky’s followers initially pronounced these satellites to be reactionary police states, incapable of progressive anticapitalist measures. But after their economies were taken under bureaucratic wing, replicating Stalinist Russia in every essential detail, other than in having overthrown a workers’ revolution, the Fourth Internationalists declared yesterday’s reactionary bonapartist police-states to be workers’ states of a new “deformed” variety. If “workers’ states” could be fashioned entirely from above and maintained without the participation of the masses and even against their expressed desires, the gap between post-war Trotskyism and Stalinism had become appreciably narrowed.

THE WP/ISL OPERATED FROM AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING. The rise of Stalinism was situated within the broader disintegrative tendencies of society between the two World Wars. Unable to resolve the once acute, now chronic problems of mass poverty and unemployment on a capitalist basis through accumulation, unable that is to rationalize the technological advances which capitalism itself engendered, a vacuum was created. The working class, which Marxists have always looked to as that force uniquely qualified to fill that vacuum, proved unable to mobilize its forces and emancipate society. But the imperative to hold society together in an epoch of rampant dissolution required some form of collectivization, some third social force from outside the ranks of capital capable of substituting a new dynamic for the flagging mechanisms of capitalist expansion. That need was answered through the pervasive growth of the *state* bureaucracy, of bureaucratic controls and regulations supplanting the market as a method of allocating resources and distributing the social product, and necessarily operating on a world scale, though at different, uneven and hybrid stages of completion. Directed by technocratic and managerial elites, products of capitalism as is the working class, but unable to express their will through the fusion of political and economic democracy, these tendencies could only be realized in the form of minority domination from above. Whatever problems may have been rationalized by the exercise of bureaucratic collectivization, the resulting social stabilization was secured without the exercise of any new power or expanded participation of the working masses in the life of society. The means of production and exchange which fell to the disposal of the state under such circumstances could be collectivized but not socialized.

The rise of the state bureaucracy as a social tendency necessarily operated through different social channels throughout the capitalist world. It had as its precondition, however, the partial paralysis of capital coupled with a pervasive sense of weakness on the part of the working class, wherein self-awareness — socialist consciousness — was replaced by bureaucratic dependency. Where managerial elements in the West move in this direction they are constrained by their direct ties with immediate capitalist interests. As soon as individual members of the bureaucracy acquire sufficient capital, they are reabsorbed into the existing network of class relations. By siphoning off promising members of the state bureaucracy, the private sector temporizes the appetites of the state and paralyzes its effectiveness. The revolving door between the state and capitalist managerial functionaries, provided that it is well lubricated, blunts the rise of an *independent* bureaucratic class consciousness and thereby limits the scope of its social vision. Bureaucratic tendencies operating within an existing bourgeois context therefore necessarily operate in contradictory fashion. They bind capitalism together and to that extent act as the implementors of capitalist interest, while bearing the as yet unrealized seeds of an alternative social formation.

The Stalinist bureaucratic counterrevolution, on the other hand, was the extrapolation of the existing disintegrative tendencies of interwar capitalism brought to fruition. Post-revolutionary Russia, though revived by the limited capitalist openings of the NEP, found itself unable to advance by capitalist methods, yet equally unable to modernize on a socialist basis due to the enforced isolation of the revolution. Those elements latent in Russian society, technical and professional personnel no longer able to vouchsafe their privileges through service to capital, coalesced in positions of bureaucratic power in a milieu virtually absent of external constraint beyond the enfeebled resistance of a war-weary working class. When these last vestiges of independent, organized working-class power and influence were broken with the bloody suppression of all opposition tendencies, the bureaucracy was able to constitute itself as a ruling class in every significant sense of the term. In Max Shachtman words, this bureaucracy was "no longer the controlled and revocable 'managers and superintendants' employed by the workers' state in the party, the state apparatus, the industries, the army, the unions, the fields, but the owners and controllers of the state, which is in turn the repository of collectivized property and thereby the employer of all hired hands, the masses of the workers, above all, included." The new ruling class administered the property forms created by the revolution, but by transforming them into a vast apparatus of bureaucratic power and exploitation they drained them of their emancipatory purpose. The triumphant Stalinist state wasted no time in modifying in kind the revolutionary world view it inherited. The teachings of Marx and Lenin were scoured and brutally purged of all their democratic, revolutionary and working-class features for which a monstrous state-worshipping, soul-crushing caricature was substituted.

Stalinism established itself as one of the most virulently class conscious and expansive of all reactionary ruling classes. It had its mass movements everywhere and successfully made a powerful appeal to the wretched and exploited of the underdeveloped capitalist world by virtue of its commitment to an anti-capitalist *program*. Yet the economic "freedom" that Stalinism offered was nothing but a cynical cover for the brutal reality of another form of oppression and domination. All Communist parties abroad were obliged to participate in working-class struggles only to the extent and in a manner that served Kremlin interests. Where Stalinists were aligned with New Deal capitalism during World War II, or with Nazi Germany in the early phase of that war, or where they had limited potential for gaining control over revolutionary events such as in the Paris uprising of 1968, the Stalinist movement advanced or preserved its own interests by sabotaging working-class interests. It was, in the words of the WP/ISL a "reactionary, totalitarian, anti-bourgeois and anti-proletarian current *in* the labor movement, but not *of* the labor movement."

FINALLY, MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF MAX SHACHTMAN'S MORAL AND POLITICAL COLLAPSE, as if the politics Shachtman came to adopt in support of the Democratic Party, of the labor bureaucracy and of American intervention in Vietnam, were genetically programmed into his revolutionary critique of Stalinism and of Trotsky and Trotskyism. Matgamna deals with this issue pointedly, insisting that the true corpus of Shachtman's work constitutes a "lineal defence, elaboration and continuation of Trotsky's ideas...as they really were *developing* at Trotsky's death"(emphasis added). Whether Matgamna overstatses the case for continuity, it is unquestionable, as he suggests, that Trotsky's orthodox followers lived for decades in a fantasy-world of their own making, clinging to all the tentative, contradictory positions of their mentor, ultimately moving into the camp of bureaucratic collectivism, while "Shachtman and his comrades kept alive Marxist method, culture, political memory and the aspiration to working-class liberty in the age of political barbarism."

Socialism or Barbarism

UN ENGAGEMENT POLITIQUE ET INTELLECTUEL DANS LA FRANCE DE L'APRÉS-GUERRE by Philippe Gottraux, Lausanne, Editions Payot, 1997.

Reviewed by Dominique Frager

ALL THOSE WHO REMAIN ATTACHED TO THE IDEA OF A FREE SOCIETY are strongly advised to read this book. Based on often unpublished sources, including the direct testimony of the former leaders of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (Socialism or Barbarism), it is the first important study of this postwar politico-intellectual avant-garde.

Indeed, this is the first time the history of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* has been studied thoroughly and in depth. Philippe Gottraux rejects the reductive approach usually taken by commentators. In the book's clear and readable first section, in which Gottraux traces the group's history chronologically, he invalidates the dominant interpretation of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* as a project of simple intellectual clarification associated only with the names of Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort. Gottraux recalls that "one cannot ignore the obstinacy shown by the group during its entire existence that it was not to be mistaken for a collective of intellectuals producing simply a critical and more or less learned journal." Whence his attempt to construct an historical sociology of the *Socialisme ou Barbarie* avant-garde, giving an account of the group as a whole in the context of its times — a group that aspired to create the foundations of a proletarian revolutionary organization.

The first section, entitled "Journey to the Heart of a Collective Adventure," is virtually a book within a book. The group began life as an opposition within the Trotskyist *Parti Communiste Internationaliste* (PCI) over the nature of Stalinism (seemingly all-powerful at the time), refusing to defend the USSR.

The alignment of the Trotskyists, at the end of 1948, with the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which had entered into opposition to the USSR, sealed the split in January 1949. The "*socio-barbares*," as they were known, did not wish to remain in an organization that had merely chosen one bureaucracy over another. For *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, Soviet Society was bureaucratic state capitalist; socialism meant something more than the statification of the economy and society. For them, only the administration of the economy by workers organized in councils could bring about this transformation. It was assumed that the proletariat exercised its political power through its own organs of political control, the workers' councils, after having destroyed the state power of the ruling class.

Thus, for *Socialisme ou Barbarie* a socialist perspective entailed a thor-

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oughgoing rupture with Stalinism in the first place, but it also required breaking with all bureaucracies willing to accommodate Stalinism.

The years 1951-1952 were hard times: the Korean War chilled the entire society and was seen as the prelude to a third world war. The years 1953-1958 allowed a partial emergence from the desert. *Socialisme ou Barbarie* analyzed the French strike wave and the revolt in East Berlin as evidence of the possibility of independent workers' action against trade union and state bureaucracies. At that point, the group began to envisage practical interventions. Gottraux relates the experiences of activists from the group among Renault workers (publication of a workers' paper, *Tribune Ouvrière*), and the formation of an independent employees' council among life insurance workers. The creation of the paper, *Pouvoir Ouvrière*, followed. But it was above all at the time of the Hungarian Revolution and the events in Poland in 1956 that the group gathered strength and deepened its analysis of bureaucratic societies, including China. The book also analyzes the group's relations with other avant-gardes, such as the libertarians and the situationists, in France and internationally.

Militantly engaged in the struggle against the war in Algeria, without any Third-Worldist illusions, after De Gaulle's return to power and the accession of the Fifth Republic, the group split for the first time over organizational questions. Already in 1951, a conflict had pitted those who favored an organization based on a body of theoretical work and an action program against those around Claude Lefort (Montal) who advocated a more "spontaneist" conception of the movement. At the beginning of the Sixties a more serious crisis was generated by the theses of Pierre Cardan (Castoriadis): "The Revolutionary Movement Under Modern Capitalism." These amounted to a rejection of Marxism, which was identified — by one who had used the Marxist method against the Stalinist vernacular — with simple economic determinism. To the group Castoriadis defended a new vision of modern capitalism, capable, according to him, of mastering its economic development, assuring continuous growth, eliminating unemployment and regularly augmenting the living standards of the workers. The source of the revolutionary project was no longer to be found in problems connected with exploitation, but in a sort of general alienation in which all but "an infinitesimal number" at the summit of the bureaucratic pyramid could be impelled to combat the system. The contradictions of capitalism were located in the division between *dirigeants* — directors or managers — and *executants* —those who carry out assigned tasks. This "idealist" orientation was strongly challenged by the half of the organization that was involved in activity centered around *Pouvoir Ouvrier*, which continued to accept the Marxist method and the positions of the first 30 issues of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. The "moderns" were more sensitive to the new social movements; thus an issue of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* was devoted to the student movement.

The split having taken place in 1963, the P.O. group (around Albert Vega, Pierre Souyri and Jean-Francois Lyotard) carried on until 1969, witnessing in May 1968 the first confrontation between the modern proletariat and contemporary capitalism. As for Castoriadis, under a pseudonym he published an essay, "The Breach," with Lefort and Edgar Morin. The "moderns" published the journal until 1965. One year later *Socialisme ou Barbarie* dissolved. Castoriadis, passing from the political to the intellectual arena, drafted several works, *Les Carrefours du Labyrinthe* and especially *L'Insitution*

Imaginaire de la Société.

IN THE SECOND PART OF HIS BOOK, "For a Sociology of a Disengagement," Gottraux, using the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu, seeks to explain the political disengagement of the leaders, notably Castoriadis. He attempts to show us why the group had an incredible aborted rendez-vous with May 1968, and to explain the ambiguity of Castoriadis's and Lefort's welcoming response to the "Gulag effect." Made possible by the anti-totalitarian conjuncture of the times, this response took a selective form; only the critique of the USSR and Marxism was retained, while the critique of Western "liberal capitalism," as well as the revolutionary finality that governed the critique of the Stalinist imposture, were forgotten. In short, says Gottraux, hailing in his own way the bitter victory of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, "the posthumous reading of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, the symbolic capital of which is henceforth accumulated by the duo Castoriadis-Lefort, occurs through a selective, self-serving reading, conforming to the new ideological conjuncture as more and more rally to liberal democratic ideals." The author notes that Castoriadis did not remove this ambiguity. Thus his very controversial work, *Devant la Guerre*, designated the USSR as the principal threat of war at the moment when the U.S. was launching a program of large-scale armament. The interviews given by Castoriadis to *Paris-Match* (February and October 1982), "The West is Already One Battle Too Late," and other texts illustrate these ambiguities.

In his later, highly theoretical texts, Castoriadis attempted to encompass the profound crisis of the imaginary "significations," or meanings, that had defined modernity. Thus, the "imaginary" of an indefinite expansion of rational control began to encounter its limits in the form of its own products: pollution and the destruction of the environment, the inanity of exclusively economic values, etc.

This is a book that should inspire debate. Rejecting both detractors and apologists, Gottraux restores the complexity of the collective enterprise of one of the most fecund avant gardes of the postwar period. He enriches our understanding of the political attitudes of intellectuals and helps us to be more lucid in our present commitments.

Film Review

Why Private Ryan Did Not Save Us from Vietnam

Kurt Jacobsen

DON'T BLAME IT ALL ON JOHN WAYNE OR HOLLYWOOD CENSORSHIP codes or our sociobiological wiring. The boys — average age nineteen — who shipped off to the craggy hills of Khe Sanh and the paddy fields of the Mekong Delta would have thought it over a hell of a lot more carefully if only their relatives had talked openly about their own gruesome war. Today the media appear to be just as awed to discover in Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* that World War II was hell as they are to learn that a President can diddle someone other than his wife. Reviewer after reviewer gushes that those veterans at last have found an honest and trenchant voice. It's way too late.

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During the "good war," as Studs Terkel so aptly quote-marked the occasion, my father was a ho-hum home front worker but uncles Wally and Joe, both city cops, served in infantry units in the European "theater," as though American GIs had strolled across a vast and exciting stage. As a child I easily ferreted out their souvenir Luger pistols and officers' daggers, gazed at that evil but extinct Nazi flag and carefully inspected their old khaki uniforms adorned with combat infantryman's badges — signifying 30 days or more under fire — plus assortments of campaign ribbons.

None was awarded for special valor, but I didn't sneer. The military was far stingier with decorations than they later were in Grenada or Panama where a nosebleed in a helicopter flying high overhead seemed to net you a Purple Heart and a Distinguished Flying Cross too. It was pretty much the same story all over my city neighborhood. Every family seemed to have its contingent of tight-lipped veterans — including the anguished ones who lived out furtive lives in basement flats — and every kid grew up fully expecting to be a soldier. Oliver Stone's film of Ron Kovic's *Born on the Fourth of July* caught this subtle martial atmosphere nicely: war was a mysterious but compulsory rite of passage. I'd have killed anybody Uncle Sam wanted me to. Why some people fretted so much about the threat of commie brainwashing, I never understood.

Pestering my uncles for war stories got me nowhere, but over the years I doggedly pieced together fragments of their tales. Wally served in the 106th Golden Lions Division, a rookie outfit which was shattered (two-thirds killed, wounded or captured) in the initial Wehrmacht attack in the Battle of the

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Bulge in December 1944. He survived and by V-E Day had lumbered into the Fatherland aboard a half-track. Joe fought with Patton's Third Army and stayed on afterward as a white helmeted guard at the Nuremberg trials where, most unwillingly, he once prevented a Jewish GI from strangling Hermann Goering in his cell. They laughed off all my inquiries, but I recall that Wally once said that in the next war he wanted the first bomb to drop with pin-point precision on his noggin because he didn't want to go through a replay. But at least my uncles — unlike the cast of stock characters in *Private Ryan* who, as the British ditty goes, are all there because they're there because they're there — had some positive notion of what they were fighting for. Their parents were Poles and the Nazis weren't a boon to anyone — most especially the Jews — in Poland. It was a "good" war and so, evidently, afterward all American wars had to be "good" wars too.

I reached my teens as Vietnam heated up and my uncles themselves would snort and call it a stupid and pointless thing and yet halt in the middle of persuasive tirades to look me squarely in the eye and say, almost nervously: "But you will go if you are called up— won't you?" It was quite confusing, this mixture of salty cynicism and knee-jerk duty, and it was universal. I was no different than any other kid I knew. This hard-bitten reticence left the explanations, illustrations and justifications of war mostly to John Wayne movies, mediocre war novels and prolific Pentagon liars.

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I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE ABOUT DIRTY HARRY'S .357 MAGNUM, but in *Saving Private Ryan* Steven Spielberg proves once and for all that a 20mm shell can blow your head clean off. Spielberg also proves that jittery cameras and a washed-out film "look" impart a vivid 1940s' feel, nice American boys weren't always nice to one another let alone the Krauts, and yet again, as in *Schindler's List*, that graveyards give good footage. Other than that, *Private Ryan* is little more than an extended episode of the old 1960s Vic Morrow *Combat* TV series, only with rules relaxed about how many gallons of gore and four letter words pass the actors' lips. The acting in *Combat* was probably better. Are Tom Hanks, Ted Danson, Matt Damon and Ed Burns anyone's idea of heavyweight actors? At least with names like that no one can accuse the director of resorting to the obligatory melting pot platoon of flamboyant ethnics.

The spectacularly violent set-piece battles opening and ending the film are glued tenuously together by Spielberg's trademark mix of sentimentality and cynicism. Naturally, the United States war machine obliterates the Axis single-handedly, rather as Errol Flynn defeated the rodent-like Nips in *Objective Burma*, which "theater of war" was largely a British show in the shards of their waning empire. Still, a soldier rather understandably cares only about the lethal ordnance hurtling at him personally. Whatever front one served on, the average combat soldier had slim chances of surviving unharmed; casualties were 100% -plus in many forward American units during the long bloody slog into Germany.

Private Ryan's stunning D-Day sequence opens with a close-up of a quivering hand, the hand of the scared shitless but gutsy Captain (Tom Hanks) aboard a landing craft shuddering its way to Omaha Beach where a crossfire of machine guns and mortar fire slices his platoon into spurting flesh and flying limbs. The beach is buzzsawed by burning tracer bullets, mutilated men scream and drown, and the dirty grey water churns rapidly into a foaming shade of scarlet that could have been plucked out of one of Roger Corman's old Edgar Allen Poe movies. An officer retrieves his own severed arm. Every GI becomes an insanely powerful magnet for all the high-caliber metal filings in the world as they converge upon that tiny shredder of a shoreline. Hanks eventually leads them over barbed wire barriers and into a machine gun bunker complex and, yes, in the heat of the moment they kill surrendering Germans who moments before were busy mowing them down. Not very sporting, but — credit Spielberg — understandable.

Cut from a face-down corpse stenciled "Ryan" to a montage of more Ryans killed that day to a shot of their idyllic Iowa farm family home. One expected Auntie Em to run out hollering for Dorothy. (Why not parents more like Ma and Pa Joad, fresh out of a Hooverville and in decent-paying defense jobs, who get notified that son Tom dies fighting fascism, and see how they cope with it?) Cut again to serene Washington D. C. where General George Marshall, who knows long poignant passages from Abraham Lincoln's letters by heart, orders that the last surviving brother must come home safely no matter the cost. It's a strange mission — though how does that really differ from most? — but someone's gotta do it. A savvy eight-man Ranger squad trawls the deadly countryside for paratrooper James Ryan. The Spielberg stand-in (according to Spielberg in a British television interview) is a comically clumsy clerk grabbed from the typing pool for his language skills, even though the colloquial term FUBAR somehow eludes him. (It translates here as "fucked up beyond all recognition" versus the usual "fucked up beyond all repair" but why be pedantic when the film isn't ?) After taking a German machine gun nest the squad members bicker about whether to kill a prisoner who, at the clerk's imploring, is released only to come back to haunt them. The lesson for the youngsters in the audience evidently is that mercy is always misplaced. (Kill 'em all — let the audience sort them out.) The crusty and trusty sergeant and a Brooklyn wiseass barman start a minor *Platoon*-style rift a moment later. It's familiar screen stuff; the surprise, I suppose, is that this poisonous sort of dissension went on before Vietnam too.

The single truly sardonic moment is the squad coming upon a glider that crashed because a Brigadier General had heavy armor plates slapped on to protect him which instead destabilized it and cost his own and 22 more lives. It's a mighty good thing Spielberg is Jewish for it guarantees a briefly upbeat progressive moment as a GI taunts the master race prisoners that he is Jewish. Playing Edith Piaf phonograph records in a bombed out French town where the climactic battle occurs is more Spielberg's style. Manliness is a craven little clerk creeping out of his hiding place to kill — or, as it is portrayed, execute — a German with his hands up. It's as if he must finally prove that war is for cold-blooded grown-ups and not for filmmakers who, as in *Empire of the Sun*, feel no compunction about having a little British lad cheer triumphant Japanese fighter pilots. For little boys think the bushido code and its pale Western equivalents might be really neat.

One churlishly wishes Spielberg clued us in to what the elderly Ryan, weeping at the Normandy graveyard with his blonde brood in the background, supposed that a good man was? He desperately asks his wife if he was one. Did the ex-paratrooper Ryan belly up to the bar at VFW meetings, hound pinko teachers out of town, and believe that extremism in defense of liberty is no vice? Or did he join the veterans against the Vietnam war? Did he devote his life to a private insurance company or to school teaching? Whatever he did obviously was fine in Spielberg's eyes because the war and his comrades' (often inadvertent) sacrifices consecrated it. Well and good, but one can't suppress thoughts of Franco or, for that matter Ronald Reagan at Bitburg, offering solace for fallen fascists too. If only Spielberg dwelled a bit on examining, or even raising the question of what makes the difference in having a good life or just a sentimental one. Ah, but that's a question for a very different genre, isn't it?

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AS IT TURNED OUT, I DIDN'T GO TO VIETNAM. My stepbrother, much older, and a Korean veteran with a combat infantryman's badge of his own, talked me out of enlisting along with my best friend right out of secondary school. Go to university first, he advised, and then let them draft you if the damn thing is still going on. The next year was an extremely eye-opening one and I joined SDS instead. One policeman uncle later came to my door one day fuming because he had been tipped off by a crony that I was under local surveillance as an anti-war activist. He told his Commie dupe nephew to cut it out. I told him I was financially dependent on all that Moscow gold and so I couldn't. Much later we all reconciled.

Only on the day of my mother's (his sister's) funeral a decade ago did one uncle relax and relate a string of droll but ghastly war stories, including an episode of his buddies deliberately directing a jeep full of souvenir-hunting rear echelon American soldiers, whom they heartily despised, into a German-occupied town where they were shot up. So Yanks really weren't all about giving away chewing gum and candy bars, eh? One uncle enjoyed teasing the other for eating candy bars instead of luring local ladies with them.

On the subject of candy bars, many years later as a college teacher, I invited a Vietnam Vet to respond to Peter Davies' Oscar-winning Vietnam war documentary *Hearts and Minds*. The fellow hailed from the same background as I, only he had gone in and served two tours of duty and did a bit of soldier-of-fortuning to boot. He defended American soldiers as doing their best in an inherently vicious guerilla war but also informed my ashen-faced class about "Hershey bar pilots", which were helicopter gunships that would swoop over a village, kick out a crate of chocolate biscuits, and, as villagers were gathering them up, circle back with machine guns blazing. That vet, or that pilot, could so easily have been me.

See Spielberg's film and appreciate the carnage that generation experienced and the courage they exhibited. But neither courage nor carnage have anything whatever to do with whether a war is necessary. The Waffen SS were extremely brave too. It would have helped a lot of us to have heard what these men really felt because it might have made us look more skeptically at conflicts that politicians were edging us into. This widespread gullibility altered only after Vietnam. So, although I understand their reasons, I'm still a bit ticked at a generation that couldn't or wouldn't "talk about it." Today, by the way, Wally and Joe would rather forgo *Private Ryan* and neither will ever set foot in Europe again, no matter how many invitations I extend.

CORRESPONDENCE

Albert Shanker: No Paeans

To the Editors:

HAVING SPENT A 16-YEAR STINT in the NYC high schools beginning in 1952, I cannot remain silent at the distortions and pseudo-history found in Israel Kugler's letter (NP, No. 25).

He claims that the NY Guild "opposed teacher loyalty oaths, and the denial of teaching posts to Stalinists." A survey of the monthly Guild *Bulletin*, 1950-59, the high noon of firings, reveal 2 editorials condemning the Feinberg Law, but also this forceful statement, an "open sesame" and turning the store over to the witch-hunt: "But when one joins a conspiratorial group [Who, but "Stalinists"?]...when one pledges oneself to commit unconscionable acts putting things over on children without getting caught...He is punished for definite acts such as joining a conspiracy utterly out of keeping as a teacher." (May, 1953) Those ugly words recall to mind the first invocation of the extreme anti-Semitic Christian right, "But the Jews killed Christ, and therefore..." The quotation posits the Guild where it was, with the witch-hunters.

In all those years, I don't recall any action undertaken by the Guild to defend teachers under attack. This alone may explain why in his account of that period, *The Teacher Rebellion* (Howard University Press: 1985), David Selden, Guild organizer, acknowledged the existence of McCarthyism, but made no mention of how it victimized New York teachers or teacher organizations.

So involved was the Guild in those activities that my wife, an active high-school teenager at Tilden HS in 1948, who was drawn to the spontaneous student walkout which had broken out in support of the city-wide action by teachers over extra-curricular activities, had her name removed from an electoral list for a history club presidency by Jules Kolodny, chair person of social studies, an active informer against colleagues, and for many years a Guild leader. She and a number of other student activists were interrogated in the principal's office by Principal Abraham Lefkowitz, one at a time, and forced to sit under a glaring lamp, while he pumped them to see if their actions were inspired by "conspiratorial" teachers.

"Early on," Kugler writes, "Al Shanker recognized the need for teacher unity...[and with] organizer Dave Selden fashioned the single-salary schedule [circa 1960] applicable to all teachers regardless of division." Really? Selden treats the same topic in *The Teacher Rebellion*, but in his account Shanker plays an entirely non-negotiatory, secondary, non-role to those involved in settling the problem — Roger Parente, Sam Hochberg, John Baily, George Altomare, Milton Pincus, and Lou Heitner. (p. 32) At the time, Shanker was still a relatively unknown insider who had been hired by Selden in 1959, began manipulating behind the scenes (Selden's view), and would eventually replace and destroy Selden organizationally.

There is more to this story. To write the history of those years even in

Kugler's abbreviated and misrepresentative form without at least mentioning Roger Parente, the man behind the concatenation of events that transformed the timid and parochial Guild into the UFT, is to narrate the events of the Russian Revolution without mentioning Trotsky. Of course, that has been done, too.

The dramatic break toward unionism, in my recollection and those of Selden, came with the successful evening high-school teachers' strike of February, 1959, organized under the aegis of the High School Teachers Association, the only organization capable of bringing all high-school teachers together. An HSTAer, Parente was the most visible strike leader, had made superb organizational arrangements, and enjoyed near unanimous teaching-staff backing. Physically imposing and well-spoken, when Parente openly addressed the cheering hundreds of victorious evening high-school teachers in the Washington Irving auditorium, the high schools seemed to have found their natural leader.

Although I had known about Parente from the early 1930s, living in the Italian Belmont community of the Bronx where my family had settled after being forced to leave Italy because of anti-fascist activity, I met him again as a delegate attending the strike committee for Wadleigh Evening HS. In short order, a series of maneuvers unified HSTA-elements with the Guild to form the UFT (1960); soon it became the representative of the City's teachers. The early militancy of the UFT, again relying on Selden, came from Parente, not Shanker, who tended to back the timid Cogen.

In this period (1962), Parente ran against Cogen but lost, and vanished from the leadership. This was probably the last time the UFT could have developed into a democratic trade union. The significant changes were taking place internally, unknown and unseen by outsiders. The account is found in the Teacher Rebellion. Prompted by Shanker, the Guild faction in the leadership founded (1961) the Unity Caucus. By 1964, Shanker felt strong enough to challenge Cogen, who "was immensely popular, [and] known to the rank and file," notes Selden, whereas Shanker was "less well known, but he was strong within the Unity Caucus where the contest would have been decided." (pp. 89-91) Hence, by then control of the UFT rested less with the rank and file than with this self-contained coterie beholden to Shanker. That particular problem was resolved by sending Cogen to the AFT, leaving the UFT to Shanker (l964).

How matters now stood was indicated by settlement of the evening high-school question. In forming the UFT, Parente had extracted a promise: evening high school faculties would receive functional-chapter status, meaning they had the authority to accept or reject contract terms. Cogen never acted on the promise, and in the spring of 1965, Parente, still the moral leader of the evening faculties, pressed for enactment. Strike action was threatened, and both Parente and Shanker spoke before these faculties. At Wadleigh, Shanker was booed down and ads indicating opposition placed on the Teachers Page of the *Telegraph Sun*, a daily long since gone. By then, the power of Shanker within the UFT was such that the question was given to the Delegates Assembly, dominated by supporters of Unity Caucus, and Parente was defeated. It was a classical move by which a popular leader is out-maneuvered and destroyed despite the feeling in ranks, and power shifts to a central authority. Parente played no further role in a UFT that he, more than Shanker, had helped found.

Inside the UFT, Shanker continued to build his machine. Selden devotes revealing pages to this process. Unpaid committees of teacher volunteers were replaced by a paid staff chosen by Shanker with the nominal approval of officers, all of whom were members of the Unity Caucus. Perquisites and special privileges were used to buy and hold loyalty. By the early 1970s reports circulated in NYC periodicals that Shanker's salary had shot up and through the $70,000-level, already a multiple of the teacher base. The machinery of control, what Selden calls "the ubiquitous tool of autocracy," was being perfected. Even allowing for the animus that arose between those two men which would color their accounts, the bureaucratic and undemocratic internal nature of the UFT has been documented so many times that it needs no further confirmation in this journal. The larger question is why Shanker was able to move so quickly and find so many willing associates.

I suggest the answer goes back to the Guild, its history, and ideology. In her TU history, *The New York City Teachers Union, 1916-1964* (Humanities Press, 1968), Celia Lewis Citron attributes disagreement over "problems of the day," rather than communism, as cause of the 1935 split. (p. 27) That the "split-aways" named themselves after an elitist medieval caste, at a time industrial unionism was transforming the trade-union scene, seems indicative, also. When I entered the high schools, one heard echoes of a 1930s struggle pitting two views on how to handle the much used (and abused) substitute teachers, the temps of their day. Further, Selden begins his narrative identifying himself with some degree of socialist background, but the subject is never again mentioned. In the rambunctious early UFT, Shanker's Unity Caucus offered the leading ex-Guild members power, pelf, and the ability to remain the "masters" in opposition to the many new "journeymen-teachers" in the union ranks. For this, they had to shed loyalty to both a democratic or a socialist commitment, and develop a disdain for the common classroom teacher, which for Shanker proved quite easy. Thus the hidden salaries, the unseen perks, and all that characterizes the rule of the nomenclatura of the Unity Caucus, including Shanker's association with corrupt "pork-chop" unionism, and defense of US imperial destruction abroad. I met these attitudes in 1966-1967, when as chapter-chairman I asked Vito DeLeonardis, head of grievance, for arbitration to enforce the rotation procedures written by George Altomare, and was turned down with a snarl of contempt.

Reigning for many years as head of the AFT (during this time he had the past rewritten to eliminate Selden from AFT history), this intriguer, Albert Shanker, must be seen as a principal reason for the stagnation of public education in the US, for his tenure was posited on the passivity of the classroom teacher who remains locked in the basement of the educational pyramid. Kugler knows all this, since he has been associated with the Unity Caucus from the beginning.

In all those years, I recall no action undertaken by the Guild to defend teachers under attack, although a stout defense of those teachers was mounted by the New York Teachers Union.

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