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Eyeless in Gaza

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The trouble with war is that it has two sides.

Everything would be so much easier if war had only one side. Ours, of course.

There you are, drawing up a wonderful plan for the next war, preparing it, training for it, until everything is perfect.

And then the war starts, and to your utmost surprise it appears that there is another side, too, which also has a wonderful plan, and has prepared it and trained for it.

When the two plans meet, everything goes wrong. Both plans break down. You don't know what's going to happen. How to go on. You do things you have not planned for. And when you have had enough of it and want to get out, you don't know how. It's so much more difficult to end a war than to start a war, especially when both sides need to declare victory.

That's where we are now.

HOW DID it all start? That depends where you want to begin.

Like everywhere else, every event in Gaza is a reaction to another event. You do something because the other side did something. Which they did because you did something. One can unravel this until the beginning of history. Or at least until Samson the Hero.

Samson, it will be remembered, was captured by the Philistines, blinded and brought to Gaza. There he committed suicide by bringing the temple down on himself and all the leaders and people, crying out: "Let my soul die with the Philistines!" (Judges 16:30)

If that's too remote, let's start with the beginning of the present occupation, 1967.

(There was a forgotten occupation before that. When Israel conquered the Gaza Strip and all of Sinai in the course of the 1956 Suez war, David Ben-Gurion declared the founding of the "Third Israeli Kingdom", only to announce in a broken voice, a few dates later, that he had promised President Dwight Eisenhower to withdraw from the entire Sinai Peninsula. Some Israeli parties urged him to keep at least the Gaza Strip, but he refused. He did not want to have hundreds of thousands more Arabs in Israel.)

A friend of mine reminded me of an article I had written less than two years after the Six Day

War, during which we occupied Gaza again. I had just found out that two Arab road-construction workers, one from the West Bank and one from the Gaza Strip, doing exactly the same job, were paid different wages. The Gaza man was paid much less.

Being a member of the Knesset, I made inquiries. A high-level official explained to me that this was a matter of policy. The purpose was to cause the Arabs to leave Gaza and settle in the West Bank (or elsewhere), in order to disperse the 400 thousand Arabs then living in the Strip, mostly refugees from Israel. Obviously this did not go so very well – now there are about 1.80 million there.

Then, in February 1969, I warned: "(If we go on) we shall be faced with a terrible choice – to suffer from a wave of terrorism that will cover the entire country, or to engage in acts of revenge and oppression so brutal that they will corrupt our souls and cause the whole world to condemn us."

I mention this not (only) to blow my own horn, but to show that any reasonable person could have foreseen what was going to happen.

IT TOOK a long time for Gaza to reach this point.

I remember an evening in Gaza in the mid-90s. I had been invited to a Palestinian conference (about prisoners), which lasted several days, and my hosts invited me to stay with Rachel in a hotel on the sea-shore. Gaza was then a nice place. In the late evening we took a stroll along the central boulevard. We had pleasant chats with people who recognized us as Israelis. We were happy.

I also remember the day when the Israeli army withdrew from most of the Strip. Near Gaza city there stood a huge Israeli watchtower, many floors high, "so that the Israeli soldiers could look into every window in Gaza". When the soldiers left, I climbed to the top, passing hundreds of happy boys who were going up and down like the angels on the ladder in Jacob's dream in the Bible. Again we were happy. They are probably Hamas members now.

That was the time when Yasser Arafat, son of a Gaza Strip family, returned to Palestine and set up his HQ in Gaza. A beautiful new airport was built. Plans for a large new sea-port were circulating.

(A big Dutch harbor-building corporation approached me discreetly and asked me to use my friendly relations with Arafat to obtain the job for them. They hinted at a very large gratuity. I politely refused. During all the years I knew Arafat, I never asked him for a favor. I think that this was the basis of our rather strange friendship.)

If the port had been built, Gaza would have become a flourishing commercial hub. The standard of living would have risen steeply, the inclination of the people to vote for a radical Islamic party would have declined.

WHY DID this not happen? Israel refused to allow the port to be built. Contrary to a specific undertaking in the 1993 Oslo agreement, Israel cut off all passages between the Strip and the West Bank. The aim was to prevent any possibility of a viable Palestinian state being set up.

True, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon evacuated the more than a dozen settlements along the Gaza shore. Today, one of our rightist slogans is “We evacuated the entire Gaza Strip and what did we get in return? Qassam rockets!” Ergo: we can’t give up the West Bank.

But Sharon did not turn the Strip over to the Palestinian Authority. Israelis are obsessed with the idea of doing things “unilaterally”. The army withdrew, the Strip was left in chaos, without a government, without any agreement between the two sides.

Gaza sank into misery. In the 2006 Palestinian elections, under the supervision of ex-President Jimmy Carter, the people of Gaza – like the people of the West Bank – gave a relative majority to the Hamas party. When Hamas was denied power, it took the Gaza Strip by force, with the population applauding.

The Israeli government reacted by imposing a blockade. Only limited quantities of goods approved by the occupation authorities were let in. An American senator raised hell when he found out that pasta was considered a security risk and not allowed in. Practically nothing was let out, which is incomprehensible from the “security” point of view of weapons “smuggling” but clear from the point of view of “strangling”. Unemployment reached almost 60%.

The Strip is roughly 40 km long and 10 km wide. In the north and the east it borders Israel, in the west it borders the sea, which is controlled by the Israeli navy. In the south it borders Egypt, which is now ruled by a brutal anti-Islamic dictatorship, allied with Israel. As the slogan goes, it is “the word’s largest open-air prison”.

BOTH SIDES now proclaim that their aim is to put an end to this situation. But they mean two very different things.

The Israeli side wants the blockade to remain in force, though in a more liberal form. Pasta and much more will be let into the Strip, but under strict supervision. No airport. No sea-port. Hamas must be prevented from re-arming.

The Palestinian side wants the blockade to be removed once and for all, even officially. They want their port and airport. They don’t mind supervision, either international or by the Palestinian Unity Government under Mahmoud Abbas.

How to square this circle, especially when the “mediator” is the Egyptian dictator, who acts practically as an agent of Israel? It is a mark of the situation that the US has disappeared as a mediator. After the futile John Kerry peace mediation efforts it is now generally despised throughout the Middle East.

Israel cannot “destroy” Hamas, as our semi-fascist politicians (in the government, too) loudly

demand. Nor do they really want to. If Hamas is “destroyed”, Gaza would have to be turned over to the Palestinian Authority (viz. Fatah). That would mean the re-unification of the West Bank and Gaza, after all the long-lasting and successful Israeli efforts to divide them. No good.

If Hamas remains, Israel cannot allow the “terror-organization” to prosper. Relaxation of the blockade will only be limited, if that. The population will embrace Hamas even more, dreaming of revenge for the terrible devastation caused by Israel during this war. The next war will be just around the corner – as almost all Israelis believe anyhow.

In the end, we shall be where we were before.

THERE CAN be no real solution for Gaza without a real solution for Palestine.

The blockade must end, with serious security concerns of both sides properly addressed.

The Gaza Strip and the West Bank (with East Jerusalem) must be reunited.

The four “safe passages” between the two territories, promised in the Oslo agreement, must at last be opened.

There must be Palestinian elections, long overdue, for the presidency and the parliament, with a new government accepted by all Palestinian factions and recognized by the world community, Including Israel and the USA.

Serious peace negotiations, based on the two-state solution, must start and be concluded within a reasonable time.

Hamas must formally undertake to accept the peace agreement reached by these negotiations. Israel’s legitimate security concerns must be addressed.

The Gaza port must be opened and enable the Strip and the entire State of Palestine to import and export goods.

There is no sense in trying to “solve” one of these problems separately. They must be solved together. They can be solved together.

Unless we want to go around and around, from one “round” to the next, without hope and redemption.

“We” – Israelis and Palestinians, locked for ever in an embrace of war.

Or do what Samson did: commit suicide.

Gaza as Center

By | 2014: vol. 13, nos. 1-2

Behind the blinding media rhetoric and deceptive narratives and justifications, and digressions from root issues, the latest attacks on Gaza are part of a larger plan.

Christian Palestinians voted overwhelmingly for Hamas in 2006. I was in the Jerusalem area, and in Ramallah and Bethlehem, and witnessed this unusual turn. It wasn't the decisive factor in the crushing win by Hamas over the Authority led by Fatah, but it carried much meaning. Not only have Christian Palestinians been subjected to the same dispossessions and harsh treatment as Muslims by the occupiers; like other Palestinians they were voting for an independent voice, less control by the West and by Israel. They were voting for change, out of the stagnation and incompetence brought on by the Palestinian Authority, as well as the intransigence of the Israeli government, which continued to build colonies, imprison, kill, and impose ever more stifling restrictions and dispossessions. People were opting for resistance, for a shift in the balance of power.

I saw the conspiracies against Hamas by all sides beginning on the day it won the election—not only by Israel and the US and some European countries but also (as I personally heard) by Palestinian Authority officials. Over the months and years, parliamentarians in the West Bank were arrested, leaders assassinated, and three massive attacks on Gaza launched by Israel.

Democracy is selective. When the Israelis elect political and religious extremists and when their government is the most peace-obstructive in Israel's history, that's said to be democracy. When Hamas gets the vote or Egypt elects a Muslim Brother as president, everything is done to disrupt the democratic choice and to pacify the population.

In the current media coverage and Israeli propaganda, Hamas is portrayed only as a "terrorist" organization that is sacrificing Gaza's population for its extremist objectives. Conflating Hamas with ISIS is the newest deceptive strategy among Israeli and North American Zionist spokespeople, who are exploiting news of what is happening in Iraq and US bombing there.

We don't have to like Islamic ideological movements to see that the West and Israel are intent on blurring the distinction between legitimate resistance (represented by Hamas and Hizballah) and extremist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaida. The plan is to remove resistance. Hamas has inherited one remaining outlet for resistance in the region against the colonial policies of Israel and the hegemony of the West, regardless of how misguided some aspects of its ideology might appear.

Israel's attack came after all Palestinian factions decided on a unity government, which Israel refused to accept. Although it used other excuses, its real motive is to eliminate any negotiating strength on the Palestinian side. Why "negotiate" with a unity government when the previous Palestinian divisions gave Israel more power to manipulate occupation and Gaza's seige? Destroy Hamas and leave only Abbas and his more pliable group.

And this intention to eliminate Hamas is implemented with the most indiscriminate and pathological acts of murder, and hate statements by many Israeli politicians and religious leaders: calls for killing the mothers of "snakes," putting all the people in concentration camps, "exterminating the nests of resistance" that remain, and finally making the Palestinians "perish from the world."

In political terms, these words and actions demonstrate an intention to destroy what is left of the Palestinian cause, as much as it has been over the decades to destroy the Palestinians as a people. Israel is allowed by the media and many world leaders to justify this slaughter, shifting the responsibility for it to Hamas, ignoring repeated incidents of children playing and civilians sheltered in UN schools killed by US-supplied Israeli shells.The casualty statistics point to the obvious, apparently missed by most Israelis and some in the West: those killed on the Israeli side are soldiers, while in Gaza 80 percent of those killed are civilians. Hamas is making the case for itself as a resistance movement, while Israel is acting as a criminal colonial state apparatus.

Diluting the Palestinian cause, keeping Palestinians under attack, wanting to disarm them completely—all have other objectives. Continuing to demonize Hamas diverts attention from the fact that the great majority of Gaza's population is a product of Israel's creation in 1948. Gaza is the most concentrated and most proximate reminder to the rest of Palestine (city and village populations expelled and their homes destroyed or taken over by Israelis). The 1.8 million Gazans are survivors or descendants of people who lived and owned properties in what are now Israeli-occupied colonies and towns. It is a concentration of the massive Nakba of 1948, an overpopulated and degraded Troy, and now a Guernica multiplied.

Though the original creeds of Hamas are couched in undiplomatic language, they spring out of this original grievance which must be addressed if the conflict is to be resolved with any sense of justice and if reasons for "resistance" are to be addressed. But Zionist ideology abandons justice, claiming entitlement to the "land of Israel" and a mythology that relies on biblical stories—stories that have now been totally debunked by archaeological and historical discoveries.

Destroying Hamas would diminish the Palestinian leadership's ability to influence the Zionist state. It would blur the legitimacy of resistance and the root causes inherent in the colonial-settler nature of Israel.

And the plan is wider.

The regimes in Iran and Syria, (along with Hizballah and Hamas) form an axis that Israel and

the West want to eliminate as a source of power and leverage. It has been a declared objective of many US and Western politicians to destroy this axis. The two regimes and the two allied movements, despite recent Shia'-Sunni friction, are an alliance that is not at all compliant. They do not fit with Western master plans for the region. They do not allow free reign for Zionist and imperialist ambitions—which fragmentation and puppet regimes created in the past are meant to extend into the future.

These resistance movements have emerged out of religious ideologies, which were much less powerful a short time ago. Previous attempts had not succeeded in remedying the historical injustices. The form that they have taken now has emerged, more out of necessity than choice, as a dedicated alternative at this stage.

Israel was facilitated as a creation by Christian fundamentalism allied with imperial designs, well before the Holocaust. While the religious justification for this state has been proven an invention, the inherited sympathies are is still strong in religious and political circles since the same biblically-derived justification myths were used in earlier colonial projects, including what became the US. All kinds of self-interested and profitable investments continue to accrue from following this model.

Religious claims are glorified on one side and condemned on the other, especially when the latter condemnation hides a national robbery by Israel of immense scale. Intellectuals, activists, and fair-minded people must work to expose the strategies that camouflage as righteous claims but perpetuate conflict, exploitation, massacre, and slow genocide. All should also act to prevent the inventions and dispossessions from being enshrined as real and legitimate, for injustices to be forgotten. The rise of extreme positions on the Israeli side is a symptom of strategic national amnesia; on the Palestinian side, it is a symptom of remembered grievances, of continuing injustices—a resistance.

In the absence of fundamental changes, ceasefires and temporary solutions won't work.

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Does Hamas Hate Peace?

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Certainly, the consistent message of Western Media seems to suggest that this is the case. HAMAS represents the most popular wing of that Western bogeyman, Political Islam, in Palestine. It has been labeled by Western governments as a terrorist group, and is seen as an organization bent on the destruction of Israel. It is also a pragmatic organization that has captured a small majority of Palestinian support for its public refusal to accept the most heinous proposals offered by the Israeli occupation in the interminable peace process. There are no small numbers of Palestinians who bitterly oppose HAMAS's policy domestically, but in this bloody summer of 2014, proffer their full support for HAMAS's acts of resistance against the occupation and the siege in Gaza. Here, I hope to provide a critical analysis of the false pretense reproduced as Western media repeats phrases such as "HAMAS rejects Egypt's cease fire proposal" and HAMAS "opposes terms for ceasefire", and to explore the importance of HAMAS in the current political landscape.

I have made the siege of Gaza the focus of my research for the last 5 years, and have had the privilege of entering Gaza multiple times to see, first-hand, the effects of Israeli policy on the civilian population. What I have encountered could be considered nothing other than collective punishment, itself a crime against humanity. The strength of the resolve of HAMAS is that it draws upon the deep frustration Gazans have with Western-oriented FATAH leaders who excuse and accept the continued human rights catastrophe that is the Israeli siege.

It is easy to forget that HAMAS won the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006, largely the result of a protest vote against FATAH leadership who seemed disposed to negotiate Palestine into oblivion. FATAH insisted on using the terms of the 1993 Oslo interim agreement as a starting point with any negotiation with Israel, while Israel regularly violates the terms of these accords. The FATAH Palestinian Authority leadership is ossified, seen by many Gazans as trading the crumbs of VIP checkpoint passes for the politicians in the West Bank and access to international donors' funds for any possible future peace with justice for the wrongs of the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestine. The terms of Oslo were themselves an absurd step backwards for Palestinian liberation, splitting the West Bank into 3 zones (Areas A, B, and C) and fragmenting potential areas of a future Palestinian state into isolated Bantustans. Gaza itself was completely isolated by Israel, and though the Oslo accords treat Gaza and the West Bank as inseparable, Israel has done all in its power to subvert this collective identity. In effect, the very notion of "facts on the ground" was reified by the FATAH leadership, further empowering Israeli intransigence and an unwillingness to negotiate in good faith. The extent of this enabling was documented in the Palestine Papers, published by Al Jazeera, wherein PA negotiators allegedly went so far as to ask Israel to reoccupy the Philadelphi corridor along

Gaza's southern border in order to help topple HAMAS.

In contrast, HAMAS, once it came into power in the Gaza Strip followed another tack: HAMAS insisted that Israel honor UN resolution 242 that demands Israel withdraw to its pre-1967 boundaries, Israel must follow the norms of international law, and in return HAMAS would enforce a 99-year truce with Israel. The idea of this proposal is that while the parties to any current agreement are themselves the victims of countless atrocities, if a 99 year truce can be maintained, the progeny of the signatories would have no personal grudges, no personal experience of the pain of occupation, and would be willing to create a permanent solution. HAMAS has made this proposal numerous times, though these proposals are unsurprisingly missing from US media portrayals of the Islamist group.

To begin with the Oslo accords, and to accept further expansion of settlements and the ever greater limitation of Palestinian political aspirations was more than most Palestinians could accept. In the intervening years, Gazans suffered under the brutal regime of the Israeli siege, and many suffered from problematic policies put into place by the HAMAS government itself, which become more professionalized, bureaucratized, and seemed to be unable to settle on a coherent policy of resistance, the very reason they were voted into power in the first place. When I was most recently in Gaza, earlier this summer, I saw a population that was growing tired of HAMAS refusing to support popular positions, and one that spent the majority of its time quashing resistance and democratic movements among the youth and non-affiliated sectors of the population. This was a HAMAS that prevented groups from firing rockets into Israel and enforced the terms of ceasefire agreements with Israel, a far cry from the bastions of armed resistance that had made HAMAS a popular option in the elections. The HAMAS that signed on to the unity government was not in a position of strength, and as the West Bank PA leadership played games with the terms of the agreement, HAMAS struck back by closing the banks across Gaza, a move sure to further alienate it from a people already suffering from the artificial humanitarian crisis of the siege.

Once the Israeli attacks on Gaza began, it became clear that HAMAS was now in a struggle for its own existence, in addition to being the voice of the armed resistance in Gaza. Their popularity has skyrocketed since the invasion began, and they are seen once again as an alternative to the avarice and cowardice of Mahmoud Abbas's leadership in the West Bank. All of this is in the context of the failure of Arab leaders across the Middle East to take meaningful stands against the occupation. Egypt, after the fall of Morsi, continues to actively aid the Israeli and international community's enforcement of the siege, and to spread propaganda about the threat Gaza poses to the Egyptian homeland.

Israel has emphatically denied the targeting of civilians, and insists on the humanitarian nature of its operation. This claim, however, comes from the same military and civil organizations that for 2 years denied Gazans access to chickpeas for hummus, bath sponges, and unfertilized chicken eggs (GISHA). Instead, Israel has repeatedly targeted civilians and fundamental civilian infrastructure. This same infrastructure has been made all the more vulnerable by repeated Israeli invasions since 2000 and punitive siege measures that prevent the entry of

materials that would allow vital repairs to keep the water flowing and the electricity running.

Many observers fail to understand the importance of this infrastructure. Gaza, as many have pointed out, includes refugee camps which are the most densely populated areas on earth. A lack of electricity is not an inconvenience, it is a calamity. All aspects of clean water provision require uninterrupted electric service, throughout the water chain. This includes the pumps at the wells, the reverse osmosis filters in the desalination plants, the distribution pumps, and even the small electrical pumps in the multistory apartment buildings in the camps, where water and electricity must be present at the same time in order to fill the rooftop tanks. The electricity supplies the refrigerators and the fans in the overcrowded rooms in the camps, often housing 15 people in two 3 by 3 meter rooms, in an area of high humidity and summer temperatures of up to 100 degrees. This same electric supply is all that keeps the lights and incubators on at the hospitals.

This is to say nothing of the sewage systems, again repeatedly targeted in this and all other Israeli bombing campaigns, which create sewage tsunamis, floods, and destruction of the marine ecosystem. This ecosystem sustains the few brave fishermen that return to the seas to face the violence of .50 caliber guns on the Israeli navy ships that patrol the ever decreasing fishing boundaries to augment the protein intake of Gazans and to promote the rich fish-based culinary culture.

Gazans are a resourceful group, by necessity. In the face of the international siege, Gazans moved underground, and created a tunnel economy that by some accounts included as many as 3000 tunnels. These tunnels were regulated by HAMAS, and the goods from the tunnels populated the markets, the convenience stores, and the home goods stores for the entire strip. These tunnels were dug by hand in the sandy soil along the Southern border, using hand-drawn maps. They represented a challenge to the international boundary, and were built in open defiance of the siege. Along with the products smuggled through the tunnels came the expected distortions of Gazan and Egyptian economies. Tunnel owners became relatively wealthy, while the workers were paid less and less as the tunnels became more common. Soon electrical goods flooded the market, from televisions to refrigerators to air conditioners, but what good were these items with no electricity to run them? In the end, this warren of tunnels under the border were ended by the US-supported Sisi regime, and flooded with sewage. The tunnels, for the most part, came to an end, and the largest source of employment disappeared. The economic impacts of the destruction of the tunnels were significant, as more and more Gazans became dependent on international food aid, reaching 80 percent of the population. Population densities in the camps actually increased, as young Gazan families were unable to afford rents on apartments, and moved back in with their extended families. This contributed to an increase in diseases such as scabies and lice, and a resurgence of mumps in the confined spaces of the camps.

Why is HAMAS so reluctant to accept a ceasefire? Because life before the invasion was intolerable. With the ascendence of Sisi to power in Egypt, Gazans are completely dependent on Israel, a hostile occupier, for all goods entering the strip, for electricity, for water, for safe

passage. All the while, Israel denies its responsibilities under international law to maintain the wellbeing of the occupied population, and engages in wholesale transfer of populations, another violation of human rights. All the while, the world turns a blind eye to these violations, and Israel becomes ever more blatant in its disregard for common human decency. This is a scenario no country would accept.

It is important to ask at this time, why would HAMAS increase in popularity so dramatically, if, as Israeli and numerous US media pundits would have us believe, that they themselves are to blame for the massive civilian deaths throughout the Gaza Strip since the beginning of Operation "Protective Edge"? Herein lies the contradiction of collective punishment. Gaza's siege has created unbearable hardship for Gazans throughout the strip, and across class, politics and geography. Gazans that I have met have been harsh critics of the HAMAS regime. Those critiques, by and large, have largely been focused on domestic policy, perceived local mismanagement and the lack of progress in bringing the siege to an end and softening the occupation. HAMAS's support before the current invasion was far greater in the West Bank, where Palestinians suffer under Israeli colonialism and FATAH collaboration with the Israelis. In the end, this is the explanation for the significant expansion of public support for HAMAS in Gaza. They have come to represent resistance. Resistance in the context of the siege, of periodic invasions, the day to day humiliations and injustices, the lack of clean water, electricity, housing, and medical care, the constant firing on fishermen, farmers and rubble gatherers, is the embodiment for many of *sumoud*, the spirit of steadfastness that permeates popular Palestinian society. As one gazan blogger recently posted,

"People find it hard to understand, the youth, we hate Gaza, we only want to leave, but we love it and will fight for it. We will not be refugees again, it is our home."

It is Israel that drops 1-ton bombs into overcrowded housing. It is Israel that attacks UN schools that it acknowledges are shelters. It is Israel that shuts off power and water supplies, and limits the entry of food through the Karm Abu Salem terminal. It is Israel that has killed 1900 Gazans, the overwhelming majority civilians. To blame Gazans or even HAMAS for this is unconscionable, and nonsensical. This was a war of choice, based on false premises. Ostensibly the original justification was the abduction of three teenagers on the West Bank, which all, even Israel, now acknowledges, was not the act of HAMAS. Israel has created and taken advantage of an opportunity to attempt to destroy HAMAS and to try to crush Palestinian resistance through bombs, bullets, and missiles. It will fail, but at an unacceptable human cost. With each Gazan child killed, the pain of international culpability in the siege and the invasion is further exacerbated.

HAMAS's rocket fire and tunnel strategy, as impotent as it may very well appear, may be the only thing preventing a shift to genuine terrorism. The repeated calls in the US congress to denounce HAMAS activities as human rights violations are intolerable hypocrisy in the face of one of the most advanced militaries on the planet deliberately targeting civilians, their homes, and their infrastructure. Israel does this knowing that unless its siege is lifted, it will be almost impossible to rebuild. HAMAS is not the ideal, neither for Gazans, the West or for Israel. They are, however, a group which carries the support of large sectors of the population, and the

democratically-elected leaders of Palestine. This is something Israelis, and the West need to fully comprehend: HAMAS is your partner for peace and for negotiations. Ignore them, or attempt to destroy them at your own peril. It is the very violations of international humanitarian law, the wanton destruction of civilians and UN hospitals, clinics, and schools, and the unwillingness of the world powers to condemn these actions, that makes violent armed resistance, including that aimed at civilian targets, an attractive option to a population that has been deserted by the world. Peace is not a ceasefire. For these reasons, alternatives to violence must be pursued. The most promising of these non-violent forms of resistance is the global grassroots solidarity movement encapsulated in Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. BDS is not only practicable, it is also gaining more and more traction in light of the intransigence and complicity of the West in the violations of decency, humanity, and human rights law.

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Why the Israelis Are Repetitively Violent

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Part I – Rationalizations

With the Israelis once more inflicting collective punishment in Gaza (a tactic which happens to constitute a war crime) it is time to consider the mind-set behind their repeated violent and sadistic behavior. One way to do so is to listen to the rationalizations they use, also repeatedly, to justify their actions.

Among the many rationalizations offered by Israeli leaders for their violent behavior is the assertion that the Arabs, and Palestinians in particular, "only understand force." If you do not use force against them they interpret its absence as a sign of weakness and this only encourages them to stand against the Zionist state. This notion that the Arabs only understand force is one of the holdover stereotypes of a mostly, but obviously not completely, bygone age of imperialism.

Actually, when it comes to the Israelis, this persistent myth is mixed up with their own post-Holocaust determination to "never again" react to a threat passively. They believe that sort of reaction is what killed millions of European Jews, and so it is no longer psychologically acceptable.

The only problem with these lines of thought is that they are seriously misleading – both in terms of Arab/Palestinian perceptions and European Jewish behavior.

Part II – The Palestinians Only Understand Force Fallacy

Since coming into existence in 1948, Israel has attacked Palestinian individuals and infrastructure thousands of times. Israeli conventional wisdom would claim that this has been done in self-defense and to dissuade the Palestinians from future attacks. The self-defense rationale is misleading because Israelis have, from the beginning, been acting offensively: most of what is now Israel and the Occupied Territories was taken violently and then ethnically cleansed of most of its Arab inhabitants with the ongoing goal of setting up a religiously exclusive state. Palestinian violence has always been *a reaction* to Israeli aggression.

The argument that harsh retaliation against Palestinian acts of resistance would dissuade them from further resistance (that is, the Palestinians "only understand force") proved long ago to be false. It has never worked, and yet too many Israelis have clung tenaciously to this lie (a small minority, such as the Israeli journalist Gordon Levy, know the lie for what it is and bravely keep

proclaiming the truth). Why has the lie persisted so long? Well, there is the old adage that doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is a form of insanity, but perhaps that is a bit too superficial for the case at hand.

One reason for Israel's repetitive violence is that if they admit it is a tactical failure and desist, they might have to negotiate a genuine peace treaty with the Palestinians. Many will immediately say that they have, repeatedly, tried to negotiate while always coming up against Palestinian intransigence. However, if one takes a close and objective look at these efforts at negotiation, one finds that they are facades or false fronts behind which we find*Israeli intransigence.* As the liberal Zionist M. J. Rosenberg has pointed out, the Israelis have never negotiated in good faith. When the Palestinians react to Israel's bad faith, the Israelis break off negotiations and blame the Palestinians. Israel then returns to its pattern of repetitive violence. In truth, negotiating in good faith means compromising Israel's ambition to settle all of the land of Palestine, and that is something the hard-core Zionists will not do. As a consequence it is not the Israelis, but the Palestinians who have lacked a partner who will negotiate responsibly.

Another reason is that once Israel has raised several generations of citizens to believe that the Palestinians are implacable enemies who "only understand force," it becomes politically difficult to change the message despite its elemental falseness. The myth of the impossibility of negotiating with the Palestinians is believed by so many Israelis that if a politician started advocating a genuine compromise, he or she would be marginalized or worse. Remember the fate of Yitzhak Rabin, who almost certainly was not operating in wholehearted good faith toward the Palestinians, but was assassinated anyway because of the fear that he was moving in that direction.

Finally, there is the connection the Israelis make between giving up their violence and appearing weak. Yet given their overwhelming superiority in weaponry and the fact that its repeated use has destroyed Palestinian society without stopping Palestinian attacks, why be concerned that switching to non-violent tactics, such as good faith negotiating, would signal weakness? My guess is that the Israelis aren't really afraid that the Palestinians would interpret things this way. They are concerned that they themselves would feel that they would be replicating the alleged passivity of European Jews faced with the Nazi onslaught.

Part III – The Fear of Showing Weakness

In other words, the Israeli fear of showing weakness is not an attitude that references outside groups. It references only the Israeli concern for their own self-image. It is the fear of seeing themselves as akin to European Jews passively going to the gas chambers that stands as the greatest psychological barrier to an Israeli decision to halt their repetitive violence. As noted above, this is so despite the fact that their interpretation of European Jewish behavior is historically misleading.

For hundreds of years Europe's Jews faced discrimination and persecution that periodically

turned violent. These episodes of violence, known as pogroms, were murderous but short-lived. The Jewish communities learned that if they kept their heads down and allowed the storm to wash over them, their casualties were less. They learned this not just by being passive, but by comparing such behavior with the consequences of active resistance.

When in the twentieth century Nazi anti-Semitism emerged, most of the Jewish leadership interpreted it as yet another episode of pogroms, and they reacted to it in the manner that history had taught them would result in the least harm. Of course, they were wrong. The Nazis were a qualitatively different sort of enemy. But the Jews of Europe only discovered this when it was too late. Still, there were plenty of episodes of active Jewish resistance ranging from concentration camp revolts to the battle of the Warsaw ghetto. Unfortunately the Israelis and most other Zionists forget about this history and condemn Europe's Jews for being shamefully passive in the face of mortal danger. Thus was born the slogan "never again." This state of mind also encouraged the Zionists to see the Palestinians, and indeed all Arabs, as latter-day Nazis to be repeatedly vanquished with repetitive violence.

The Israelis would expel or kill a majority of the Palestinians left in their homeland if the world let them (and maybe over time it will). They would do so not only because it would clear the way for Jewish settlement of all of Palestine, but also because it would allow them to feel psychologically redeemed – redeemed from the allegedly sinful passivity displayed by the victims of the Holocaust.

Part IV – Consequences

The consequences of the Israeli state of mind are, of course, catastrophic – first and foremost for the Palestinians, who suffer death and destruction for their justified resistance to oppression. The Zionists see them as latter-day Nazis but in truth they resemble the resisters in the Warsaw ghetto. And, if that rings true, then who do the Israelis now resemble?

That point leads us to ask what are the consequences of Israeli behavior for the Jews and Judaism? After all, Israel claims to represent world Jewry. The consequences have been, are, and will continue to be disastrous.

In relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict there are now three categories of Jews: a) those who have publicly taken a stand opposing Israel's behavior, b) those who publicly support Israel's behavior and its rationalizations, and c) those who stand aside, try to ignore what is going on, and just carry on with their lives. Whatever the people or situation, this last category is usually the largest. It is also the category that concerns me the most for, unbeknownst to many of these Jews, their wellbeing is being used falsely to justify the policies of a habitually violent state and its racist ambitions. There are intimations that this largest group of Jews are becoming conscious of Israel's crimes and this is a welcome and necessary beginning.The next question is what actions, if any, will consciousness bring?

War of Choice – The Real Story of Israel's War against Hamas

By | 2014: vol. 13, nos. 1-2

The war Israel is currently waging against Hamas is a war of choice. Here is how events have unfolded.

John Kerry's Failure

Secretary of State John Kerry failed to restart Israeli-Palestinian final status negotiations. Mr. Kerry made mistakes in managing his initiative, but the main reason for his failure is Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hawkish stance. He refused to accept an American plan for security arrangements in the Jordan Valley, refused to negotiate over East Jerusalem, put the precondition of Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state as a precondition to reopen the negotiations, and expanded settlements on an unprecedented scale. The talks ended when Netanyahu refused to implement what he agreed to: the release of the last group of prisoners.

Abbas' Conclusion

As a result, Mahmoud Abbas became disappointed by Kerry's mismanagement. He had no faith in Netanyahu but he did expect Kerry to put heavier pressure on the Israeli Prime Minister. When his hopes did not materialize he pushed forward the option to establish a joint government with Hamas. Hamas also found itself in trouble: Egypt under General Sisi is hostile, Hamas lost its base in Syria and faced financial problems in the Gaza Strip. Thus, Hamas was ready to moderate its positions and go one or two steps forward in politicizing itself and establish a joint government with Fatah.

The new government was not rejected by the US and European governments. To the contrary, the international community saw it as a chance to test Hamas if not to moderate it. But Israel saw it as a great threat. Mostly as a threat to its status quo policy of de-facto annexation of 60% percent of the West Bank while in the remaining 40% of the territory, Abbas serves as a veritable subcontractor for Israeli security. Moreover, the Israeli policy toward the Hamas regime in the Gaza Strip was to cut it off from the West Bank, to control the area from the outside and achieve Egypt's cooperation in isolating Hamas. Thus, Israel considered a Palestinian National unity government as strategic threat on its control over Gaza Strip and de-facto annexation of the West Bank.

Hamas Kidnapping

Now came the opportunity Netanyahu would sieze upon. A Hamas cell in Hebron kidnapped and murdered three settler boys. The cell acted independently without the approval of the Hamas leadership, in fact the latter denied any relation to the affair. However, from day one it was clear to Israeli authorities that the three poor boys were dead, and it misled its public and world opinion. Israel managed a world wide campaign under the slogan “bring home our boys,” further demonizing Hamas.

Under this campaign Israel arrested more than 400 Hamas West Bank activists, including political and religious leaders. The Israeli aim was to destroy the new Palestinian coalition and undermine its international legitimacy. Israel wanted to rewind the tape and restore Hamas and Abbas to their previous status dancing to Israel’s tune. During this anti-Hamas campaign, Netanyahu fomented anger in public opinion bordering on racism. This led to the murder of a 16-year old Palestinian boy from Jerusalem by orthodox Jewish extremists on July 2nd, followed by violent clashes between angry Palestinian youth and police in Jerusalem as well as a Jewish mob attacking Arabs not only in Jerusalem, but also in cities throughout Israel.

Fighting broke out on July 7 this year when Israeli aircraft bombed a Hamas tunnel. Israel argued that Hamas armed forces planned to implement a terrorist attack through this tunnel. Six Hamas men were killed in this attack. Following this event Hamas began launching massive rocket attacks on Israeli civilians. Up to this point, organizations other than Hamas launched sporadic rocket attacks and fired shells on settlements adjacent to the Gaza Strip. However, from July 7 Hamas took the initiative and began attacking Israeli civilians.

As the Israeli attack developed, Abbas joined forces with Hamas. He and the Fatah leadership have stated that they will not dissolve the national unity government. Moreover, Fatah called its people to confront Israeli soldiers at check points in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Finally, Abbas endorsed Hamas’ terms and conditions for a ceasefire: first and foremost the need to end the blockade Israel and Egypt has placed on the Gaza Strip.

In sum, Israel has failed to topple the Palestinian coalition, created wide international criticism over her army killing and wounding thousands of innocent civilians, and solidified Hamas’ position as a key role in any ceasefire and political settlement.

A Ceasefire Would Beckon Real Leaders to Act

By | 2014: vol. 13, nos. 1-2

The 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire that went into effect in Gaza and Israel Friday morning — for half an hour, before collapsing into total war — should remind us what is needed to quickly shift the focus of discussion and analysis about the Israel-Palestine conflict into the rather convoluted realm of many political actors and their strategic aims, all of which are constantly evolving. The desire by most actors to extend a temporary ceasefire into a permanent one would be a constructive endeavor if it forces all concerned to genuinely grapple with the tough underlying causes of the conflict between Palestine and Israel, mainly the wider, older conflict between Zionism and Arabism.

The issues and the actors keep changing, but it is important not to allow a human desire for permanent calm to distort our analyses of why we experience only repeated conflict, and also of the many actors and aims that now flood the stage. The actors include Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Egypt, Qatar, Turkey, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and its Fateh leadership under President Mahmoud Abbas, Gazans who do not support Hamas, West Bank-Jerusalemite Palestinians who do not support Abbas, Israel and its assorted internal ideological movements, Jews around the world, the United Nations, and many others.

They will all weigh in now on a combination of fleeting and even diversionary concerns as well as critical core issues, and we would do well to recognize the important differences among them. One way to do this is to always ask about cause and effect in assessing any party's behavior. So issues like removing Israel's siege and blockade of Gaza, ending Israeli aerial attacks against Gazans, closing Hamas' tunnels and rocket launching sites, demilitarizing Gaza, and other such issues that now dominate these discussions can only usefully be addressed politically if one is clear about whether they reflect an underlying cause of conflict or simply a reaction to some existing problem that either side finds intolerable.

The most important, enduring and powerful driver of this conflict remains the transformation of historic Palestine from a majority Arab land to a majority Jewish one, culminating in 1947-48 in the creation of the state of Israel and the expulsion, war-time flight, and exile of half the indigenous Palestinian Arab population. It has been the reason why Palestinians and other Arab states have fought and resisted Israel and Zionism since the 1930s. Gaza, Hamas, rockets and tunnels are only the latest manifestation of an Arab determination to redress those core grievances; from the Israeli side, repeated savage attacks against Gaza, jailing thousands of Palestinians, non-stop colonization of Palestinian lands, Judaization of Arab East Jerusalem, and

many other actions similarly reflect a continuation of Israeli priorities in the fundamental Zionism-Arabism conflict that has driven events for nearly three-quarters of a century.

In the short term, this means weighing the Israeli-Zionist demand for the demilitarization of Gaza against the Arab demand for the dezionization of the 1967 colonized occupied territories and redressing the 1947-48 refugeehood of Palestinians — because the resistance movements in Gaza that fight Israel are only a consequence of how Israel has assaulted, occupied, expelled, colonized, killed, jailed, sieged and brutalized the Palestinians for the past 65 years. If Palestinians enjoyed their national rights and lived in peace in their own state and lands, they would have no need to arm and fight Israel.

This also means weighing the Israeli-Zionist demand for returning Gaza to the rule of Mahmoud Abbas against the reality that Fateh-led diplomacy and governance for the past half century, but specifically in the West Bank and Gaza for the past 20 years, has been a massive mediocrity and disappointment for most Palestinians. Israel wants Abbas-Fateh to rule Gaza so it can act as the policeman for Zionist colonization, as it has in the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem in recent decades. How can anyone in their right mind ever possibly believe that this is an option that Palestinians will accept without some gains of equal importance for them?

Similarly, the roles of Egypt, Qatar, the United States and others will now enjoy fresh scrutiny, always within the equation that seeks to benefit either Zionism or Arabism in the wider conflict. Most discussions about Arab actors, whether Egypt, Hamas, Abbas, or other Arab governments, tends to ignore the large gap that still defines relations between Arab governments-leaders and their citizens — the same massive and painful gap that sparked the Arab uprisings in late 2010.

A ceasefire, when it happens, could be an important moment during which all sides should courageously explore their willingness and ability to set aside short-term gains for the elusive but tantalizing long-term prize of genuine peaceful coexistence among Palestinians and Israelis who both enjoy equal national rights in their respective sovereign countries. If any real leaders and statesmen and women exist out there who can respond to this challenge, now is the time to stand up and act.

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The End of Palestine? It's Time to Sound the Alarm

By | 2014: vol. 13, nos. 1-2

Is the struggle for justice in Palestine nearing a crossroads?

It's possible (but still far from certain) that US Secretary of State John Kerry will inflict a historic defeat on the Palestinians. Yet, as disaster looms, Palestinian negotiators praise Kerry as an honest broker and pray for his success, while the Palestine solidarity movement proclaims one victory after another in its campaign to isolate Israel. What's going on? How did it come to pass that we now stand at such a perplexing juncture?

The Kerry juggernaut was impossible to predict a year ago. In hindsight, however, it makes perfect sense.

Kerry is not the first high-ranking American official who has sought to broker a deal. President Bill Clinton endeavored to remove from his legacy the stain of the Monica Lewinsky affair by solving the Israel-Palestine conflict at Camp David in 2000. He ultimately failed, but it's well to remember how close he came. It was only Yasir Arafat's refusal to capitulate, despite enormous pressure, that blocked an agreement. It's also well to remember that Arafat paid a steep price for his principled recalcitrance. Although he was promised beforehand that blame would not be pinned on him if talks proved abortive, Clinton reneged on his word and Arafat was scapegoated, while the Palestinian cause suffered a major setback in international public opinion.

Tainted by association with George W. Bush's disastrous foreign policy, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice tried her hand at solving the conflict at Annapolis in 2008. These talks did not produce an agreement, but did leave behind a rich and illuminating documentary record that was leaked to Al Jazeera and became known as the *Palestine Papers*. The minutes of negotiations and accompanying maps clarified Israel's bottom-line demands (more on which presently), which have been consistent since at least Camp David in 2000.

It accordingly should not surprise if Secretary of State Kerry, strapped with the shared legacy of President Barack Obama's ridiculed foreign policy record, would want to compensate for ever-mounting policy failures, as well as cap his own political career with a Nobel Peace Prize, and possibly make another run for the presidency, by settling the conflict.

The irony is, if Kerry has invested a huge quantum of time and energy, and if Obama has joined

Kerry in this undertaking, and if these efforts are crowned with success, it will not be because a critical American interest was at stake. In all the commentary on the Kerry process, one question has been studiously avoided: *Why has Kerry embarked on this mission now, and why has Obama lent his prestige to it?* The Israel-Palestine conflict is hardly a pressing concern: a surfeit of other crises has sidelined it on the international agenda, while Obama and Kerry already have their hands full with Iran and Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, China and Russia, and the fallout from the Snowden leaks and drone strikes. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians (not that they count) beseeched Washington to intervene. Except for the clinical diagnosis of Israel's defense minister ("misplaced obsession and messianic fervor"), the only plausible explanation for the US administration's interest is the mundane one of *legacy*. The principal impetus behind the US initiative—embarrassing as it might be to the President and his Secretary of State, and deflating as it might be to everyone else—is personal vanity. Like Clinton and Rice before them, Obama and Kerry seek historical vindication. When harnessed to the machinery of a powerful state, vainglory can prove to be an irresistible force, and has often been the root of incalculable human misery. If Obama and Kerry do not strike gold, however, it also means that, once their terms of office expire, the pressure coming from Washington will vanish, until and unless a genuine crisis arises.

It is no secret what the Kerry plan will look like. If he is to have any chance of success, Kerry cannot fight a war on two fronts. Israel constitutes a "strategic asset" of the US and can count on the clout of a powerful domestic lobby. It is consequently in a far stronger position than Palestinians to resist Washington's orders. Judging by both official and insider statements, the Secretary of State has therefore appropriated Israel's minimal demands as his own; the "Kerry process" refers to his efforts to foist these on the Palestinians. Kerry's proposal will see Israel annex some 10 percent of the West Bank, including the critical water resources and some of the most arable land. The new border, which will run along the path of the Wall that Israel has been constructing, will incorporate the major Jewish settlement blocs, put municipal East Jerusalem on the Israeli side (except for some 100,000 Arab Jerusalemites who, along with the neighborhoods in which they reside, will be excluded), and effectively trisect the West Bank. A makeshift arrangement will be worked out enabling the Palestinians (together with the Kingdom of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, or the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) to serve as custodian of the Muslim holy sites in the Old City, while Israel preserves overall sovereignty.

In the 2008 Annapolis negotiations, the Palestinian delegation presented a generous map that would have enabled Israel to keep 60 percent of its settlers in place as part of a two percent land swap, while also maintaining the West Bank's territorial contiguity. The Israeli delegation rejected the map, not, however, on topographical grounds but because it was deemed *politically* infeasible—as then-foreign minister Tzipi Livni insisted, no Israeli leader could accept it and still survive in office.

Stripped of natural resources, tourist revenues from Jerusalem, and territorial contiguity, the so-called Palestinian state envisaged by the Kerry plan will at some point—there's already talk of it—be forced to confederate with the Kingdom of Jordan. The "Jordanian option" dates back to the Peel Commission recommendations in the 1930s; was realized from 1948 to 1967 when

Jordan annexed the West Bank, and was supported by Israel's Labor Party after the 1967 war. But, although shelved after the first intifada and the Palestinian declaration of statehood in 1988, it appears to have been given a new lease on life: Not just in effect but also in fact, Palestine will disappear from the map.

As for the refugee question, a bare minimum precondition and departure point for righting the wrong is Israel's acknowledgment of its responsibility for creating the problem by ethnically cleansing Palestine in 1948. However, Israel has persistently rejected any historical, legal or moral responsibility for the refugees, so its culpability will not appear anywhere in the final document. The Palestinian "chief negotiator" has himself effectively conceded Israel's right to deny responsibility. Adopting post-modern lingo, Saeb Erekat speaks of each side having its own, and not being obliged to adopt the other's, "narrative" of the past. As it happens, in the official Israeli "narrative," Palestinians left of their own volition in 1948; indeed, Palestinians only arrived in Palestine after Zionist settlers "made the desert bloom." Erekat has managed to undercut not only the rights of Palestinians but also their genealogy.

If Kerry's plan reinvents Israel's bottom-line demands as a just solution, why do some Israelis appear to oppose him?

Like the US, Israel does not currently have an urgent stake in ending the conflict. Israel negotiated an agreement with Egypt at Camp David in 1977 because it had suffered a major military setback in the 1973 war, and feared the outcome of a second round. It negotiated the Oslo agreement with the Palestinians in 1993 because it suffered a major public relations debacle during the first intifada, and worried about the army's fighting ability if it got bogged down in policing the occupied territories. Even when compelling motives do exist, moreover, agreements don't necessarily follow. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin drove the U.S. delegation to distraction at Camp David, while Arafat did the same during the various stages of the Oslo negotiations. The treaties only look inevitable in hindsight; politics is a delicate business, and in any such complex undertaking, with so many moving parts, negotiations can easily fly apart. In any event, today there is no motive of equivalent magnitude driving Israel to the negotiating table with Palestinians. The occupation neither figures on the international agenda nor impinges significantly on Israel's daily life. If Israel decides to end the conflict, it will be because of an "on-balance" weighing up of the pros and cons.

On the pro side of the ledger, an agreement will free Israel once and for all of the albatross of the occupation, while enabling it to keep almost everything it wants, and ridding it of what it doesn't (i.e., the Palestinian people); it will normalize relations with the Arab world, opening up new vistas for regional trade, investment and military cooperation; it will enable Israel's fuller integration with the EU, its largest trading partner; and it will further entrench the US-Israeli "special relationship" by placating the Washington establishment, much of which has also grown weary of the occupation. If a treaty is signed, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be the toast of the town in Tel Aviv, Washington, Paris, London, and Berlin, and bag a Nobel Peace Prize into the bargain. If, on the other hand, he refuses to play ball, Netanyahu will incur the wrath of the US and EU. For a person of Netanyahu's outsized ego, the potency of

these incentives shouldn't be underestimated.

Since Kerry launched his initiative, Netanyahu has tacked a pair of new demands to Israel's bottom-line position: an Israeli military presence in the Jordan Valley, and recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. If commentary on the Kerry initiative has homed in on these demands, that's because the core issues—Israeli retention of the major settlement blocs, nullification of Palestinian refugee rights—are already a done deal.

The Jordan Valley possesses zero strategic value. If Netanyahu now demands it, it might be so that he can later pretend to be making a "gut-wrenching concession for peace" by ceding it, or he might be calculating that Israel can keep significantly more arable land than it originally envisaged because Palestinians are now so politically enfeebled. Still, in any scenario, Israel will maintain some (perhaps joint) military presence on the Jordanian border, the modalities of which have already been pretty much resolved.

The demand that Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state lacks both precedent and sense. Neither Egypt nor Jordan recognized Israel as a Jewish state when they signed peace treaties with it. It figures neither in the text of the Oslo agreement nor in Bush's 2003 Roadmap for Peace. In addition, Palestinians would be hard-pressed to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, when no two Israelis agree on who is a Jew, let alone what is a Jewish state. If Israel were truly invested in such recognition, it could simply rechristen itself the *Jewish* State of Israel, just as the mullahs, after the 1979 revolution, rechristened Iran the *Islamic* Republic of Iran. The recognition of Israel (a Rubicon that Palestinians crossed long ago) would then go hand-in-hand with recognition of its "Jewishness."If Israel hasn't taken this step, it's because the 20 percent of non-Jewish Israelis would be outraged, as would be the (dwindling number of) resolute Israeli liberals. Perversely, Netanyahu insists that Palestinians do what Israel itself won't do. In a revealing contrast, whereas every Tom, Dick and Shlomo is now weighing in on whether Palestinians, for the sake of peace, should recognize Israel as a Jewish state, one searches in vain for op-eds on whether Israel, for the sake of peace, should recognize its 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

It is widely speculated that Netanyahu threw in the "Jewish state" demand to sabotage the Kerry mission. The likelier explanation is that, if he extracts such recognition, this ideological victory and—the yet more satisfying flipside—humiliation of Palestinians will win over to the Kerry plan his right-wing governing coalition and natural constituency. (The same motive might impel Netanyahu to make acceptance of the Kerry plan contingent on Obama's release of Jonathan Pollard, a cause célèbre on the Israeli right.) The danger lurks that Palestinians might be painted into a corner, such that the more Netanyahu holds out on this demand, the more it becomes framed, *including by Palestinians*, as the defining issue. If Netanyahu reverses himself (another "gut-wrenching concession") or acquiesces in a "compromise" redaction (in which President Mahmoud Abbas recognizes Israel as a "Jewish state and state of its citizens," so as to secure the rights of Palestinian Israelis), Palestinians will be freighted with the rest of the Kerry package: *Wasn't Netanyahu's "Jewish state" demand the crux of your demurral and hasn't he relented, so what's the problem now?* In any event, polls show that an

overwhelming majority of Israelis support the likely terms of the Kerry initiative and do not attach cosmic import to Netanyahu's new fangled demand. Even if Netanyahu is forced to dissolve the current government, he (or another prime minister) can still form a new left-center coalition in order to ratify the agreement.

But why does Kerry harbor hope for success when it eluded his predecessors?

In the first place, Palestinians face unprecedented isolation. Historically, the Palestine struggle has waxed much larger than its actual geopolitical significance. When Palestinians launched a popular resistance campaign in the 1930s against the British Mandate, this revolt resonated throughout the Arab world. Although eventually crushing it, Britain nonetheless effectively rescinded the Balfour Declaration of 1917 in a 1939 White Paper as war with Nazi Germany loomed on the horizon, in order to secure its foothold in the Middle East by appeasing popular Arab indignation.

A groundswell of Arab outrage at the massive expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 also figured as an impetus behind the decision of otherwise reluctant and poorly-coordinated neighboring Arab leaders to invade Israel after it declared independence. In the wake of the humiliating military defeat inflicted by Israel, the cause of Palestine became a rallying point (albeit more in words than deeds) of a resurgent Arab nationalism fanned by Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser. And, after neighboring Arab states endured another trouncing by Israel in 1967, the Palestine struggle reemerged as a symbol of Arab resistance and pride, climaxing in the hero's reception accorded Arafat when he spoke at the UN in 1974.

The Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation in 1987 yet again galvanized the imagination of the Arab world. The courageous nonviolent, mass civil resistance stood out as a beacon of honor and hope in the otherwise bleak landscape of Arab despotism and submission to Israeli diktat.

But the Palestine struggle no longer inspires like it used to. Partly it's because Palestinians themselves have mostly stopped resisting; partly it's because other humanitarian crises—in Iraq, Libya, Syria—have displaced it. [*] For the first time since its emergence a century ago, the Palestine struggle has been reduced to its paltry geographic dimensions. It amounts now to little more than a provincial secession movement.

Because popular regional support has evaporated, Palestinians can no longer count on the backing of Middle Eastern states. Hoping to end crippling US sanctions, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not jeopardize negotiations by going to bat for Palestine. Meanwhile, in their bid to contain Iran's growing influence, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have entered into a tacit alliance with Israel. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan publicly upbraided Israel during its 2008-9 massacre in Gaza, and after Israel killed nine Turkish citizens aboard a humanitarian vessel headed for Gaza in 2010. But in the face of regional reversals (Erdogan bet on the wrong horse in Syria) and increasing domestic unrest, Palestine now ranks low on Turkey's priorities.

In a word, Palestine stands alone.

The internal Palestinian picture is no less desolate. Not just a physical but also a psychological chasm has opened up between Gaza and the West Bank. During the 2008-9 Gaza massacre, few West Bankers ventured into the streets to protest. The people of Gaza are being economically squeezed on all sides—from Egypt, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority—to break their will so that they rid themselves of Hamas. The strategy appears to be working. Gaza's economy is on the brink of bankruptcy, while recent public opinion polls suggest Hamas would be thrashed in an election.

Despondent and depressed, Palestinians have by and large, and notwithstanding noble and brave pockets of resistance, grown cynical of and given up on politics. The economic horizon of short-term calculation has displaced the political horizon of personal sacrifice in the service of a greater national good. Instead of a collective will to resist, it's now *every man for himself*. The Palestinian Authority (PA) is hopelessly corrupt and incompetent. It survives by virtue of mass apathy and dread of chaos if it collapses, the dependence of a large portion of the population on PA-issued paychecks, and an apparatus of repression refined by the CIA and Jordanian torturers, and seconded, as Israel's defense minister put it, by "our bayonets."Amidst the squalid internecine power struggles played out on the public stage (most recently on Egyptian television between Abbas and his arch-rival Mohammed Dahlan), a Palestinian observer despaired, "The Palestinians have become a joke."

The PA in turn is in thrall to US and European Union (EU) handouts. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund periodically issue meticulous reports on the "state of the Palestinian economy." They even juxtapose the Palestinian economy with that of other "developing" countries. But the notion of a Palestinian economy in this sense is pure mystification. It doesn't exist; indeed, how could it? Israel controls half the land in the West Bank and the critical water resources; it controls all imports and exports; the already meager West Bank territorial base is fragmented by a rat's maze of roadblocks and checkpoints, impeding the movement of people, goods and services. If foreign subsidies were suspended, the so-called Palestinian economy would collapse in the blink of an eye.

Put simply, Palestine hangs by the slenderest of threads. The EU and US can sever it at any moment and, since Kerry launched his initiative, they have repeatedly threatened to do just that.

The EU has grown weary of this absurdly interminable conflict, and wearier still of footing the bills that attend it. Formally, the EU has supported the international consensus for resolving the conflict based on international law. But, in practice, it has always proceeded on eggshells so as not to antagonize Washington. The EU now sees light at the end of the diplomatic tunnel and, anyhow, the Kerry mission is, as EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton put it, "the only game in town." In recent months, the EU (together with individual member states) has laid down the law to both of the conflict's protagonists: either you negotiate seriously on the basis of Kerry's initiative or you pay the price. It has threatened to pull the plug on the Palestinian

economy and to impose stiff sanctions against Israel's settlement enterprise. Besides the stick, the EU has also dangled the carrot of an economic windfall—"huge opportunities in trade, research, innovation that will benefit both Israel and the Palestinians" (Ashton)—if they sign on Kerry's dotted line.

Can the PA resist the pressure to capitulate? It's not as if it has many cards to play. The long and short of the Palestinian diplomatic repertoire consists of Abbas and Erekat periodically threatening to resign. After the ten thousandth performance, this shtick begins to wear thin.

A Palestinian capitulation will mark the consummation of the process that commenced at Oslo some two decades ago. It will end just as it began. Arafat signed on to what Edward Said characterized at the time as a "Palestinian Versailles" because the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was broke. After Arafat backed Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf War, the Gulf states retaliated by cutting their subsidies to him. The PLO has always functioned as a patronage machine. Without ready cash, Arafat would have been consigned to oblivion. He grasped at the lifeline thrown by Washington and Tel Aviv, but at the price of serving as "Israel's enforcer" (Said) in the occupied Palestinian territories. Faced with the prospect of another economic meltdown, Arafat's successors will almost certainly hand over the deed to the house.

It's child's play to deduce the PA's current negotiating position: in *Wayne's World* style, simply negate whatever Abbas and Erekat emphatically avow in public. Abbas is not looking for the US to improve its core terms of a settlement—he knows it won't—but for some face-saving gesture (such as the release of Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti from Israeli prison) enabling him to sell the historic defeat to Palestinians. The US will probably sweeten the pot with a promise of a "new Marshall Plan" (its favorite cliché)—that is, a hefty bribe aimed at winning popular support, even if grudging, for a second Palestinian Versailles, and it's not beyond possibility that the tactic will succeed. An international rogue's gallery has already been assembled, led by Tony Blair and Madeleine Albright, to tempt Palestinians with the prospect of "hundreds of thousands of new jobs" if they embrace the Kerry plan. Back in the day, the Oslo agreement was marketed by the mirage of a Gaza transformed into the "new Singapore of the Middle East." Twenty years later, it's more like the Black Hole of Calcutta.

Notwithstanding this stark political landscape, leaders of the movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) suggest that the Palestine struggle is on the cusp of victory. It is asserted that BDS has arrived at a "South Africa moment," and made a "qualitative leap" forward. Is this true?

The international anti-apartheid sanctions movement unfolded in rhythm with the internal mass struggle in South Africa. It reached successive peaks after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, the Soweto massacre in 1976, and the state of emergency imposed in 1985. How can the BDS movement be reaching a zenith when internal Palestinian resistance to the occupation has reached a nadir and, concomitantly, the focus of international public opinion has shifted elsewhere?

It's one thing for a thousand BDS internet activists to successfully hound and shame Scarlett Johansson. It's quite another to break the will of German chancellor Angela Merkel. If Germany now threatens Israel with punitive sanctions, it's not because of BDS. Rather, it's because the US, EU and even Israelis are using the threat of boycotts, and the like, to isolate right-wing Israeli opposition to the Kerry plan. When the EU simultaneously threatens economic sanctions against the PA if it doesn't get on the Kerry bandwagon, should this also be reckoned a BDS victory? BDS has inadvertently encouraged a disconnect from political reality. It is hard to conceive a more bizarre spectacle than the Palestine solidarity movement celebrating as victories those developments that, in reality, augur Palestine's historic defeat.

If the goal of resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict is, as it should be, justice and reconciliation, then the Kerry process is a sham. It amounts to unilateral Palestinian submission to Israeli diktat.

In a 2004 advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice denoted the whole of the West Bank (and Gaza) "occupied Palestinian territory," but under the Kerry plan Israel will annex 10 percent of it. The Court designated the whole of East Jerusalem "occupied Palestinian territory," but under the Kerry plan Israel will annex the vast bulk of it. The Court declared that all of Israel's settlements in the West Bank are illegal, but under the Kerry plan Israel will keep 80 percent of the settlers in place and annex the major settlement blocs, fragmenting what remains of the West Bank and stripping it of its vital resources. The most respected human rights organizations—Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch—have found that Palestinians who were expelled from their homes in 1948 and 1967, and succeeding generations that have maintained "genuine links with the land," have a right of return, but under the Kerry plan this right will be comprehensively negated, and Palestinians denied even recognition of the tragedy that befell them.

In short, on all the "permanent-status" issues—borders, East Jerusalem, settlements, refugees—Palestinians lose, Israel wins. Kerry's defenders will deride this as "zero-sum" reckoning, but what else is one to conclude if Palestinians get zero and Israel gets the sum? It is hard to see how such terms of settlement will achieve historic reconciliation and not just pour salt in Palestinian wounds.

The fact that the Kerry plan is a sham, however, doesn't mean that it can be safely ignored. If Palestinians sign on the bottom line, they will forfeit their essential rights under international law, especially because the UN Security Council and General Assembly will in short order ratify the result. The Wall will no longer be illegal; it will become Israel's internationally recognized *border.* The Kerry plan will render the most formidable of Palestinian weapons, international legitimacy and international law, null and void.

Can the Kerry juggernaut be stopped? It's hard to be optimistic. The PA fantasizes that it can liberate Palestine via international diplomacy, while BDS fantasizes that it can liberate Palestine via international sanctions. But the only ones who can liberate Palestine are the Palestinian people themselves, principally those living under occupation. Only mass nonviolent

civil resistance can catapult Palestine back on the international stage. If a popular revolt, like the first intifada, erupts under the simple slogan, *Enforce the Law*, and if the international solidarity movement does its part, it might be possible to mobilize public opinion—including sectors of liberal American Jewish opinion—and exert sufficient pressure on the international community such that Israel will be compelled to meet its legal obligations.

Although inevitably secondary, the solidarity movement nonetheless has a critical role to play right now. Once Kerry officially unveils his framework for peace, unbearable pressures will be exerted on Palestinians to capitulate. "If Palestinians have qualms about the [Kerry] plan but sense there is strong international support for it," Dennis Ross recently observed, "then it makes it more difficult for President Abbas to not go along with it."The Obama administration and the EU, liberal Israeli and American Jews, media pundits and think-tank experts, PA toadies and freelance Arab hacks, will implore Palestinians to sign on. Of naysayers, it will be said (quoting Abba Eban's tired phrase), "Arabs never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity for peace." Playing his role to the hilt, Netanyahu will anguish over how Israel has agreed to withdraw from fully 90 percent of Judea and Samaria in a "painful concession for peace."

It's our job to patiently explain the reality of Kerry's so-called two-state solution: that it breaches international law, as it shafts the Palestinians. As Palestinians stand poised on the precipice of a historic defeat, shouldn't exposing Kerry's perfidy rank at least as high a priority as chronicling the comings and goings of Scarlett Johansson? The good news is, for all my criticism of it, BDS has, to its credit, managed to plant in the public consciousness the idea of imposing sanctions on Israel if it flouts its legal obligations. If Palestinians in the occupied territories enter into revolt, the foundation will already have been laid for a global campaign compelling Israel to comply with the law.

I said it's hard to be optimistic, but I still sincerely believe that victory—a just and lasting peace—is within reach if we are guided by truth, on the path to justice, and make one last push, before it's too late.

[*] On a personal note, in the past month I gave talks in Turkey and Iran. Although the Israel-Palestine conflict is my area of expertise, no one inquired about it. I was also recently invited to appear on an Al Jazeera program. I begged the producer to let me speak on Palestine, but, although finally agreeing, he devoted the hour-long interview to Egypt. This article is based on a talk given at several British universities in mid-March 2014.

Norman G. Finkelstein's latest book is Old Wine, Broken Bottle: Ari Shavit's Promised Land (https://www.orbooks.com/catalog/old-wine-broken-bottle/).

One State or Two States: Prospects, Possibilities, and Politics

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The issue of one state or two states has been very divisive among leftist supporters of justice for Palestinians. It will of course be up to Palestinians themselves to decide the terms on which they will settle their long-standing conflict with Israel.[1] But outsiders can offer their assessments and analysis, particularly as the debate has important implications for their Palestine solidarity work, and may be of benefit as well to Palestinians. I will begin by explaining a general approach to political questions of this sort. I will then turn to the Israel-Palestine conflict and consider how we might apply this general approach to that conflict. I will then try to answer two questions: whether a two-state settlement moves us forward on the path of justice and whether its prospects for realization are significantly greater than the one-state alternative. Next I will address the question of whether there are moral arguments that require us to reject any two-state settlement. And finally, I will discuss the political implications of this debate.

Assessing Political Campaigns

Let me begin with an analogy that I hope will illuminate a way to approach these kinds of political questions. Consider the example of the living wage campaigns that are being pursued around the country, demanding that low-paid workers receive enough to provide for their basic needs. Typically these campaigns, supported by leftists, call for local ordinances or policies that set some minimum compensation level, well above the existing minimum wage, for all employees. Now imagine if a labor solidarity activist opposed the living wage campaign, arguing that “The problem is with capitalism and the whole wage system, not the low wages paid by some employers.”

I assume we would reply, “Yes, the problem is capitalism, but we’re not going to be able to solve that overnight. People who are hungry today can’t afford to wait until we have brought capitalism down. Unlike total system transformation, a living wage can be won in the near term — not that we *will* win, but we *can* win in the near term; ending capitalism, on the other hand, we have no chance of winning for many years. A victory in a living wage campaign would do two things: first, it would provide an immediate improvement in the lives of people who are suffering; and, second, it would show people that change is possible and that there is an alternative to hopeless resignation.” Yes, there are limits to what can be accomplished under capitalism, contrary to the claims of liberal critics of the status quo — and we should always make these limits clear while we participate in struggles to achieve reforms. But it would be

thoroughly wrongheaded to refuse to support a living wage campaign in the United States today because it's not perfectly just or to denounce those who support it as engaged in morally unacceptable behavior. And it would be especially inappropriate for those of us who are not low-paid workers to tell low-paid workers not to accept $15 an hour because they ought to hold out for the end of capitalism.

The same logic holds even if one doesn't support socialism. That is, imagine another hypothetical critic of living wage campaigns who says $15 an hour is a morally repugnant wage and nothing less than $25 per hour ought to be accepted. I assume we would reply, "Yes, merely guaranteeing everyone a living wage is unjust, as indeed any improvement in anyone's life situation that falls short of our ideal of justice, whatever that happens to be, will be unjust. But our refraining from achieving reforms while we wish for a perfectly just outcome doesn't bring that outcome any closer. On the other hand, a living wage campaign both improves people's lives, which is important, and can give the workers and their supporters the sort of victory that helps build a movement that can push for further improvements." The same logic holds as well for all sorts of political campaigns. On the environment, on women's rights, and on a whole host of other issues we will often support efforts to achieve some reform that is less than our ideal. We do this because we realize that we can't yet win our maximum demands, but we want to improve things in the meantime, while building movements that can achieve more.

This doesn't mean that it's always right to go for limited reforms. One needs to make a serious judgment about what's possible under the particular circumstances prevailing at each time and place. So in 1968, for example, it was right to criticize the Communist-led unions in France for being bought off by some moderate improvements when the whole capitalist system might have been successfully challenged. Sometimes transformative change is possible. But when your considered judgment tells you that the best you can do is win $15 an hour, then one needs to support that campaign and not refrain from doing so because it falls short of one's ideal. Does thinking about what seems achievable or realistic make one a counterrevolutionary naysayer? Shouldn't leftists have faith in people's potential to change the world? Gramsci's advice is relevant here: we want to have optimism of the will, but pessimism of the intellect. We believe in people's abilities to rise above their circumstances and fight to create a better world. But we'd be crazy to lay siege to the White House tomorrow because we think it's possible that 100 million Americans will rise up and support us. We welcome and hope for unexpected inspirational moments; we don't count on them.

Framing the Palestine-Israel Conflict

Let me turn now to the Palestine-Israel conflict. There are countless controversies involved in this conflict that I cannot take up here, so I will simply state the following as assumptions that underlie my arguments below:

- Israel committed a great crime against the Palestinian people in 1948;
- The Palestinian refugees have a right of return, as recognized by international human rights organizations[2];

- Israel is a highly discriminatory society, not just towards those it holds under occupation, but towards its Palestinian minority.

It is therefore true that any settlement that ends the Occupation but that doesn't address the crimes of 1948 or the systemic discrimination within Israel's pre-1967 borders will be unjust. But there are many other injustices — among them: religious intolerance, the oppression of women, and the horrendous discrimination against Palestinians in Lebanon. And it will therefore also be true that any settlement that "only" ends the Occupation, ends discrimination against Palestinians in Israel, and implements the right of return will also be unjust. Moreover, any settlement that takes as a given the borders imposed by the colonial powers following World War I will also be unjust, in particular any settlement that is based on the borders of Palestine that existed only from 1923 to 1948. And, as any leftist will surely agree, any settlement that retains capitalism will also be unjust. So the question isn't whether a two-state settlement is unjust in this pure sense. Of course it is. The question is whether a two-state settlement can be an intermediate step along the path to justice. A second question is whether a two-state settlement is significantly more attainable than some other settlement that is more just. If step two is just a little bit more difficult to achieve than step one, then we can easily skip the first step. But if the gap between step one and two is large — if the time frames for their realization are substantially different given the prevailing balance of forces — then the first step will be a sensible way station to the top of the staircase. Before turning to these questions, however, let me clarify that I am considering here a real two-state settlement, not a settlement that is called "two state" but is actually some variation of Bantustans. In a real two-state settlement, the borders are essentially the 1967 borders, East Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian state, the settlers are gone, there is no Israeli military force controlling the Jordanian border or the Gaza coast or Palestinian airspace. There are other two-state settlements — those put forward by many Israeli and U.S. politicians — that bear no relation to the idea of two sovereign, viable states in Palestine. But the fact that Netanyahu, for example, supports a totally insincere and repugnant arrangement that he calls a two-state settlement no more discredits a real two-state settlement than the existence of some repugnant one-state arrangements advocated by several Israeli rightwing politicians and settler leaders[3] or by Islamic fundamentalists discredits all one-state settlements. If one wants to challenge a two-state settlement on principle, then one has to direct one's criticisms at a real two-state, not a bogus two-state settlement.[4]

A Step on the Path to Justice?

So does such a two-state settlement further the cause of justice? Does it improve people's lives in such a way that it is a step on the path to justice? The most obvious consequence of a two-state settlement is that it would end the Occupation. This would be an immense human benefit to the people of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. There would no longer be the horrendous suffering in Gaza, the world's largest open air prison camp, where travel, most imports, and almost all exports are blocked, and where access to the coast is restricted.

Palestinians in the West Bank would no longer have to navigate countless roadblocks, checkpoints, and Israeli-only roads. Their houses would no longer be demolished nor their lands seized. Their aquifers would not be raided so that Jewish settlers could fill their pools, while Palestinians receive only two thirds of their minimum needs. And Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza would have self-determination and the right to vote for their own sovereign government.

A two-state settlement certainly does not resolve the refugee problem. But even if a two-state settlement resulted in not a single Palestinian being allowed to exercise his or her right of return to Israel, an independent Palestinian state would offer a destination for some of the most downtrodden of the Palestinians, those living in the refugee camps of Lebanon.[5] To be sure, someone driven from their home in Lydda (inside the Green Line) has not received justice by being allowed to move to, say, Tulkarm in the West Bank. Nevertheless, there may well be many refugees, especially those living under severe discrimination in Lebanon, who would choose to move to this Palestinian state, and who would be better off for so doing.[6] This doesn't achieve justice for the refugees, or fulfill their right of return, but it might improve the lives of those worst off.[7] A two-state settlement would not do much directly to better the situation of the Palestinians of Israel. However, the political struggle for equality within Israel would likely benefit from the reduction in tensions to which a two-state settlement would presumably lead.[8] In general, repression of Israel's Palestinian minority has tended to be greatest when national security tensions have been highest. For example, the largest killing of unarmed Palestinian Israelis in many years took place in October 2000 as the second intifada was getting under way in the territories[9]; the rights of elected Palestinian Israeli legislator Haneen Zoabi were challenged because of her support for efforts to break the siege of Gaza.[10]

Undeniably, discrimination against Israeli Palestinians is deeply entrenched and not simply a function of the Occupation. But as in many countries, it is easier to squash internal dissent during times of national danger. Israeli Jewish dissidents too are likely to fare better when they can't be smeared as allied to foreign enemies. A two-state settlement would further the cause of justice in one other way. I assume that a real two-state settlement can only come about as a result of a mass popular non-violent mobilization of Palestinians, with a secondary role played by sympathetic boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) actions outside. But if these actions resulted in a two-state settlement, it would be a tremendous victory for grassroots struggle that would strengthen justice movements going forward, leading to further gains, improving the situation of refugees and Palestinians in Israel.

Likelihood of Success: The Correlation of Forces

But even if a two-state settlement would be a step on the road to justice, a second question needs to be addressed: whether there is some more just settlement that is not much more difficult to achieve than the two-state settlement. I think any careful assessment of the matter will conclude that as difficult as it will be to achieve a decent two-state settlement, a one-state settlement would be exponentially more difficult. One way to judge this is to look at what is

sometimes called the correlation of forces: who supports a position and who doesn't.

- A two-state settlement represents an international consensus. Some say this international consensus is a myth,[11] that no one cares two figs about two states. Maybe it's true that the overwhelming endorsement that two states gets in UN votes is a cover for a distinct lack of enthusiasm, but if so it's still got far more international backing than any one-state arrangement. Annual UN General Assembly votes in favor of a two-state settlement have been overwhelming; the few dissenters have voted no not because they favor a single democratic state in Palestine, but because they want to maintain Israeli hegemony over the whole of Palestine.

- A two-state settlement has the support of international law, as reflected in the 2004 Wall decision of the International Court of Justice and in numerous UN resolutions. There is nothing about Israel's existence within its pre-1967 borders that runs afoul of international law. It is of course true that Israel stands in violation of international law in many respects, but its pre-1967 border (apart from Jerusalem) is not one of those violations.[12] I don't think law is sacrosanct — it often reflects the interests of the rich and powerful — but for better or worse it's easier to win a demand backed by international law than one that is not.

- No significant Palestinian political party has adopted the goal of one democratic state. Not Fatah, not Hamas, the only two parties with a mass following.[13] To be sure, these are both corrupt parties and many Palestinians are fed up with them both. Nevertheless, their opposition to one state makes that option less achievable. Perhaps the single most popular politician in Palestine is the imprisoned Marwan Barghouti. Polls show that he would win any presidential election in the occupied territories.[14] He supports a two-state settlement.[15] A small group that included some former senior Fatah officials recently issued a declaration favoring one state,[16] but their numbers are quite limited.

- Most Israelis and most Palestinians do not support a one-state settlement. One might be inclined to ignore Israeli opinion on the matter, given Israel's colonial and oppressor role, but in terms of what can be achieved in the near term, the fact that while Israeli Jews oppose both one state and two states, they oppose the former far more strongly than the latter — while not *morally* relevant — is politically relevant. Consider again the living wage analogy. What makes a living wage campaign a more winnable and hence practical political demand than, say, a $25 minimum wage campaign is not the opinion of low-paid workers. Of course they would be thrilled to have $25 an hour. But a realistic assessment of the odds of success tells us that the opposition of employers to paying $25 an hour will be much greater than to paying $15, so much so that the $25 demand has virtually no chance of realization in the near term. Does this mean that we attach moral value to the views of employers? No. In a good world, the exploitation of labor wouldn't exist at all. But we're not in a good world, and in the world we do live in the extent of capitalist opposition constrains what we can achieve.

What about Palestinian opinion? Here, we need first to clarify which Palestinians we are talking about. There are Palestinians in the occupied territories, Palestinians who are citizens of Israel, Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan (some of the latter with Jordanian citizenship), and other Palestinians dispersed throughout the world. Which of these are entitled to a voice in settling the Israel-Palestine conflict? On the question of the rights of refugees, all the Palestinians dispossessed by the conflict are entitled to a say. As a matter of basic democratic principles, the subset of Palestinians living under occupation cannot make a deal at the expense of the refugee rights of other Palestinians. On the other hand, those who do live under occupation are entitled to make whatever arrangement they choose to end that Occupation, without needing the concurrence of those who are not living under the Occupation. Thus, in theory a settlement could come in separate parts: an end to the Occupation might be signed by those under occupation, with a resolution of the refugee question awaiting terms acceptable to all who have been dispossessed.[17] Israel, however, would likely refuse to accept any settlement that didn't "end" the conflict. But perhaps it would be possible to separate the issues — ending the Occupation and keeping the other issues open by means of a *hudna*, the long-term truce advocated by Hamas. In 2011, Mahmud Abbas, head of the Palestinian Authority, stated that in the event of a peace agreement "we will have a referendum involving all Palestinians on all final status issues, but if one of the countries hosting refugees refuses, the referendum cannot be held."[18]

More recently he has spoken of a referendum, but it is unclear whether he means to be including the Palestinians not under occupation.[19] Potential differences of opinion between various groups of Palestinians may, however, not matter much in practice. Many polls have confirmed that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza reject a one-state settlement.[20] But in addition, as best we can tell from the polling data, no group of Palestinians — those in the occupied territories, those who are Israel citizens, or those in Lebanon or Jordan — favors a one-state settlement.[21] When asked whether they support the pre-1967 border "being used to define the boundaries between Israel and a future Palestinian state," three quarters of Israeli Arabs answer in the affirmative as do a plurality of Palestinians in the occupied territories and refugees in Jordan. Lebanon refugees say they reject this option, but when asked whether it is important to them that there be a Palestinian state located in "all of the West Bank and Gaza," with a capital in Jerusalem, 77 percent of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon answer yes.[22] Thus, as difficult as a two-state settlement will be to achieve, it has more support than a one-state settlement does from all groups of Palestinians, from Israelis, from Palestinian parties, from international law, and from world governments.

Now obviously opinions can change, and part of what influences opinions are grassroots solidarity movements. Some suggest that the same way that grassroots boycott, divestment, and sanctions pressure brought down apartheid in South Africa, so too can it force the creation of a single state in Palestine. But it is important to realize the very different international standing of South African apartheid and Israel's crimes of 1948. In Britain, South Africa's main foreign backer, a boycott of South Africa was endorsed by the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress in 1959 — 35 five years before apartheid fell.[23] A British poll shortly after the Sharpville massacre in 1960 showed 80 percent opposed apartheid.[24] The United Nations

condemned apartheid as early as 1950[25] and in 1977 the UN Security Council unanimously enacted a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa.[26] In 1986, the U.S. Congress overrode Reagan's veto to pass a comprehensive set of sanctions against South Africa.[27] Public opinion in the United States was so strongly hostile to apartheid that even Reagan was compelled to declare: "America—and that means all of us—opposes apartheid, a malevolent and archaic system totally alien to our ideals."[28] Eight years later, the first democratic elections were held in South Africa. Contrast that with the international response to Israeli policy. There *is* widespread condemnation of the Israeli Occupation. But it is hardly the case that "all of us" — in the United States or even in Europe or most of the Third World — oppose the Zionist actions of 1948. If asked, most people would have no idea what we were talking about. There have been some important successes of the BDS movement, but almost all of these that involved significant organizations have focused on the Occupation and not on the 1948 issues.[29] If the Palestinians in the occupied territories were able to mobilize a mass-based popular movement that gained broad international sympathy, external support in the form of BDS could put significant pressure on Israel to give up its occupation. But for BDS to have an appreciable impact on the 1948 issues in the foreseeable future seems implausible.

The Likelihood of Success: Political and Economic Realities

Several other arguments have been advanced as to why a two-state settlement is difficult if not impossible to achieve. Each one of these arguments, however, seems to apply with greater force to the possibility of realizing a one-state settlement.

- Zionism, it is argued, is a racist ideology driving a program of expansion and oppression, and unless this ideology is defeated, expansion and oppression will continue. Certainly Zionism as understood by most Israelis today is racist. But a one-state settlement requires as a precondition the defeat of Zionism, which means we will have no improvement in the lives of Palestinians until Zionism is smashed. A two-state settlement, on the other hand, would over time and under conditions of peace allow ties of inter-ethnic solidarity to be established, undermining the hold of racist ideology, without needing to postpone all improvements until that happy day when Zionism is defeated.[30]

- It is said that the Zionist Israeli state will resist being confined to 78 percent of Palestine. This is true, but it will resist even more being confined to 0 percent. In general, it's harder to get oppressors to give up more than to give up less. In neither case do they do this out of the kindness of their hearts. They do it because we've applied pressure; we've raised the costs of their continuing to oppress. It will take more pressure, more raising of costs (and surely more bearing of costs by those on the side of justice) to get them to concede more than to concede less.

- Many of the leading Israeli corporations — whether located within the Green Line or not — benefit economically from their domination of the territories. True enough.[31] But these corporations benefit even more from their domination of

Israel within the pre-1967 borders. They will hate to give up the former, but they will hate giving up the latter even more.

- The Zionist project benefits from exploiting the water and other resources of the West Bank. But again, it will surely be easier to get them to concede some of the resources of greater Israel than to concede Israel entirely.[32]
- The IDF gets all kinds of strategic benefits from controlling the West Bank and will be loath to give that up. But a one state will not just mean giving up these benefits, but will risk turning over the entire IDF (and its nuclear weapons) to a Palestinian majority.
- It is often noted that the settlers are a powerful voting bloc, with influential cabinet ministers among their number. Again, this is true, but the Israelis who support a Jewish state are an even more powerful voting bloc (approaching 100% of the Jewish population), and these Israelis count every cabinet minister among their number.

Another argument against the possibility of a two-state settlement is that a Palestinian state restricted to 22 percent of the area of mandate Palestine, divided into two parts to boot, is simply not viable economically. An independent Palestine would indeed be small, though larger than 31 other UN member states. Its population density would be among the highest in the world, surpassed only by Monaco, Singapore, Bahrain, Malta, Bermuda, the Maldives, and, Bangladesh, and that's without factoring in any refugees who might "return." Palestine would have a number of valuable economic assets — some offshore gas, important tourist sites, a potential port in Gaza, and considerable human capital. But it is evident that in the short run Palestine would need substantial capital from outside.[33] Some of this would come from the compensation paid to refugees and some from international donors.[34] There is no doubt that the economy of a Palestinian state would be greatly aided by integrating with neighboring states, and certainly this is something one would hope would be pursued once there are conditions of peace. The difficult economic situation that would be faced by an independent Palestinian state, however, has troubling implications for a one-state settlement as well. If Palestinians can't thrive in their own state, how are they going to avoid domination in a single state? Consider the example of South Africa. "One person-one vote" was achieved in a country with a large black majority.

Nevertheless, the small white minority had been able to use its economic clout to maintain its position of privilege in one of the most unequal societies in the world. We don't know what percentage of the population of a single state in Palestine would be Jewish, but even with a large refugee influx, the Jewish proportion of the population would be far greater than the white proportion in South Africa. And the existing economic and educational disparities between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs would grow as impoverished refugees from Lebanon returned. Universal suffrage has not generally been able to prevent rich minorities from dominating their societies and there is no reason to expect a single state in Palestine to be an exception.[35] The most commonly-heard argument against the possibility of two states is that the settlements, the settler-only roads, and all sorts of infrastructure that crosses the

pre-1967 border have basically already created a single state. The two sides of the Green Line have increasingly become interdependent. One state, it is said, is a fait accompli and all that can be done now is to fight to convert that oppressive Zionist one state into a just one state. What the Zionists call creating facts on the ground has certainly been the intent of Israeli policy in the occupied territories. The settlements and roads have been located precisely so as to turn the West Bank into a series of disconnected Bantustans, with population centers cut off from each other, with villagers cut off from their agricultural fields, and with a majority of Palestinians cut off from Jerusalem. But these facts on the ground are not as irreversible as claimed. There are two kinds of facts on the ground: infrastructural and human. The infrastructural are the easiest to deal with. The housing units of the settlements are not an obstacle to two states at all: emptied of the settlers, these units could provide some of the necessary housing for those who have languished in refugee camps. The Wall, of course, would be torn down, as it would be under a one-state settlement and as the Berlin Wall was torn down. The Israeli-only roads would become roads for all the people of the Palestinian state, and where the roads divide villages from their lands, intersecting roads can be built. The human facts — the settlers themselves who moved to the occupied territories in violation of international law — can move back behind the Green Line.[36]

For those settlers who live very close to the border, Palestinian negotiators can decide whether they want to trade small bits of land for comparable land elsewhere. In addition, the Palestinians could allow Israelis to live as foreign residents in Palestine (under the laws of the Palestinian state, but of course without the IDF) or even to apply for Palestinian citizenship. But they are certainly not *entitled* to their ill-gotten settlements. Oddly, in their effort to show that a two-state arrangement is no longer viable, some one-state advocates are prepared to allow the settlers to remain in their illegally-acquired settlements.[37] This strikes me as a morally problematic position,[38] and one unlikely to receive much support from Palestinians under occupation. It is the logical consequence, however, of the claim that the settlements make a two-state outcome impossible: for if it's the supposed inability to move the settlers that makes a two-state outcome impossible, then how can they be moved under the one-state alternative?

Should the two-state settlement be rejected as immoral?

I want to turn now from the objections to the two-state settlement that claim it is unachievable to those that claim that it is morally and politically unacceptable. The first of these arguments is that a two-state settlement betrays the Palestinian right of return. Note first, however, that from a logical point of view the two questions (one state or two states and the right of return) are quite distinct. One can have a right of return whether there are two states or one state in Palestine. After all, UN General Assembly resolution 194, which first enshrined the Palestinian right of return in December 1948, called for the refugees to be permitted to return to Israel in its pre-1967 borders: that is, to the territory of what would be Israel under a two-state settlement.[39] Now, in fact, I think the likelihood of the right of return being fully implemented in the foreseeable future in either a one-state or a two-state version is very close to zero. This low probability doesn't make the right of return unjust. But it does make it

extremely ill-advised for outsiders to encourage Palestinians to refuse any settlement because if they simply hold out a little longer, they will achieve all they deserve. This would be like urging U.S. workers on strike under present conditions to refuse to settle until the boss agrees to make them co-owners.

Among these two near zero probabilities, I would argue that paradoxically a full right of return is easier to implement in a two-state than a one-state settlement. Why? Because in a two-state settlement with the right of return Jews would remain a majority (since the Palestinians originally from the areas that became the Palestinian state and their descendants would not be part of Israel), while in a one-state settlement with the right of return Jews would more likely be a minority. Therefore, Israeli resistance to the former is likely to be much more intense than to the latter.[40] Let me be clear: I believe that Israeli Jews are entitled to national rights,[41] but this doesn't mean they have a right to a separate state; national rights can be realized in some sort of binational state.[42] So if there were a binational state, there would in principle be no moral reason why there needed to be a Jewish majority. What matters in practice, however, is that an overwhelming majority of Israelis is unalterably opposed to both a full implementation of the right of return *and* to losing its Jewish majority. Winning two near impossibilities is even more unlikely than winning one.[43] A more general moral objection to the two-state settlement is that we ought to be opposed on principle to ethnocentric states. A two-state settlement means a Jewish state and Palestinian state — two ethnocentric states — and this should be unacceptable to leftists. On one level this argument is indisputable: leftists reject ethnocentrism.[44] But they reject as well capitalism and patriarchy and many other evils, and we don't accuse those who call for a democratic secular state of thereby supporting capitalism and patriarchy because a democratic secular state is less than a democratic, secular, anti-capitalist, non-patriarchal state. One state supporters would correctly reply to such a charge that the establishment of one state does not mean the end of political contestation; the struggle against capitalism and patriarchy would continue and would likely not lead to victory until long after the attainment of the single state; but it would be foolish to delay solving the problem of national suffering in Palestine until our ideal society was achieved. And the same logic applies to the two-state settlement. To accept a two-state settlement because of the benefits it would bring to long-suffering people does not mean that one endorses the evils that this limited reform would not address.

On the contrary, it will be essential that vigorous struggle against the ethnocentric character of Israel continue after any two-state settlement. It should be noted that the left has many times called for solving some national conflict with the establishment of separate states. The East Timorese were offered a one-state option by the Indonesians (autonomy within the Indonesian state) and they rejected it in a referendum, without incurring leftist criticism. If Puerto Ricans demanded independence, what leftist would demur? If Kashmiris called for a separate state (rather than being part of either India or Pakistan) would they be accused of supporting ethnocentrism? Obviously, each one of these cases has its own particular circumstances, but the point is that it is not a fundamental left principle that separate states are always reactionary. In 1947, the partition of Palestine *was* unjust. The rights of the Jews in Palestine could have been accommodated by a binational state,[45] while the partition plan, which

granted 55 percent of the territory to a third of the population that owned less than 10% of the land, was unfair to the Palestinian majority, particularly to the large Palestinian minority that would find itself within the boundaries of the Jewish state[46] — even apart from the ethnic cleansing that followed. But 65 years of war have now passed and both communities want their own separate state. Partition in 1947 was imposed against the wishes of the majority community in Palestine; a single state today is widely opposed by both communities. A binational state would, in my view, be morally preferable to two states, but it requires a degree of popular support and mutual goodwill that are many years off.

The One-State/Two-State Debate and the Palestine Solidarity Movement

Palestinians will have to make their own decision on what they are willing to accept. If they decide that they are unwilling to accept anything less than the full right of return to a single state stretching from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, that is their choice. Personally, I think this would be a mistake, given what I think are the negligible prospects for achieving this goal in the foreseeable future, but it is their call. The converse is also true. If, given the prevailing circumstances, Palestinians opt to accept, however reluctantly, something less than this goal, it is inappropriate for solidarity activists to denounce them as collaborators or sell-outs. What members of the solidarity movement owe Palestinians, first and foremost, is to offer their honest assessment of what they think activists can achieve by their advocacy work in their home countries. To the extent that a Palestinian decision on what to accept in any settlement is based on an understanding of the amount of pressure that can be mobilized on their behalf in the West, Palestinians need to have accurate information on the political dynamics of the United States or other Western societies, information that they can't readily get in the occupied territories or the Lebanese refugee camps.

We do the Palestinian cause no good if we exaggerate their chances of achieving their maximalist goal. We do them no good if we try to stifle pessimistic prognoses by accusing those who offer them of being insufficiently radical or of not really being in solidarity with the Palestinian cause.[47] I think it's possible to build significant support in Europe for sanctions against Israel for its occupation policies — and succeed in getting such sanctions implemented. I don't think, however, that it will be possible for a very long time to build significant support in Europe for sanctions against Israel for its failure to redress its crimes of 1948 — let alone get them implemented. In the United States, where Israel's political clout is stronger, I believe we can build a movement challenging Washington's ability to give a blank check to the Occupation. But I don't think we have the slightest chance in the foreseeable future of getting Washington to press Israel to accept a one-state settlement. It took three and a half decades from the first boycotts of South Africa to apartheid's collapse, even though the apartheid regime faced a movement capable of imposing much heavier costs — because of South Africa's dependence on black labor — than Palestinians can impose on Israel. Do one-state advocates think it will take less time to get Israelis to surrender?[48] If so, they need to explain what justifies their optimism?[49] If not, they need to honestly address what happens in the meantime. Negotiators for the Palestinian Authority have sometimes used the one-state "threat" as a tactic for getting the Israelis to be less resistant to a two-state settlement.[50] This tactic,

however, carries the risk of creating a counter-productive backlash among Israelis. While it might push them to accept a decent two-state settlement, it might also lead them to back more rightwing forces.[51]

It is indeed the case that some want to focus on a two-state settlement precisely because they don't want to have to address the Nakba or the discriminatory nature of Israeli society. Against these folks it is important to speak the truth. But others reject one-state advocacy within the solidarity movement not only because Palestinians will have to make their own decision, but also because they believe that a two-state settlement is the best that can be achieved at this point in time. They do not try to hide the crimes of 1948 or the systemic oppression of Israel's Arab population; indeed, many of them have long been involved in exposing and fighting against these injustices. Nevertheless, their honest assessment of the political realities is that while a two-state settlement is marginally possible in the near term, neither a one-state settlement nor a full realization of the right of return is achievable for many years to come. These "two-staters" share much common ground with "one-staters" and there should be many opportunities for cooperation. In particular, both groups appreciate the suffering of the Palestinian people, denounce the horrendous (and worsening status quo), and want to maximize outside pressure on Israel to force it to reverse that status quo. Both reject the various Bantustan-like and non-viable states that are being promoted by many Israeli and U.S. politicians. Both groups oppose an outcome that gives the Palestinians — in Yitzhak Rabin's words — "an entity which is less than a state."[52] Some things are harmful to both the one-state and two-state causes. Occasionally, a one-state advocate will cheer the defeat of some step toward a two-state settlement (e.g., "I am just so pleased that Netanyahu has placed impossible conditions in front of the 'two-state solution.' Go Bibi!"[53]).

This may be facetious, but almost anything that makes a two-state settlement less likely means a strengthening of rightwing forces that will make a one-state outcome less likely as well.[54] Sometimes a "two-stater" will criticize a "one-stater" for speaking the truth about past crimes that cannot be immediately redressed. But just as radicals should never refrain from expressing the limits of liberal reforms, even while welcoming them, so too members of Palestine support groups should not be discouraged from indicating the limits of ending the Occupation. This will help us avoid problematic tactics such as the one suggested by Peter Beinart.[55] Beinart proposes that peace advocates should pursue a two-pronged approach: boycott settlement products while affirmatively purchasing products from within the Green Line to show our support for Israel within its pre-1967 borders. I agree with Beinart that boycotts focused on the Occupation make strategic sense, but to affirmatively buy Israeli products teaches the wrong lessons: it covers up the crimes of the pre-1967 Israeli state, it obscures the ongoing discriminatory treatment of Israel's Palestinian citizens, and it even occludes the fact that the Occupation is controlled not from the settlements, but from within the Green Line.

In the same way, we wouldn't have considered urging people to buy Indonesian products while it held East Timor, even if those products were produced in Jakarta. Other things being equal, a single state that accommodated the national rights of both Palestinians and Israeli Jews would

be morally much preferable to a two-state arrangement. But if the prospects for a single state in the near term are remote and if the two-state settlement can bring some improvement to people who have been suffering for so long, then the two-state settlement ought not to be disparaged. Its achievement surely wouldn't be the end of the story. Under conditions of peace, struggles can grow to democratize the highly discriminatory Israeli state and the Palestinian state, and cross-border alliances can be built aiming toward much more just outcomes, maybe going through the bi-national one-state option,[56] maybe one day involving a socialist federation in the Middle East, and maybe well in the future the abolition of national boundaries altogether.

Notes

[1] This article is an expanded version of a presentation made at the Left Forum, June 9, 2013. I would like to thank Bashir Abu-Manneh, Barry Finger, Glen Pine, Adaner Usmani, and the editor of the Israeli Occupation Archive, https://www.israeli-occupation.org/, for their helpful comments. None of them is responsible for my conclusions or errors.

[2] Amnesty International, "Israel and the Occupied Territories/Palestinian Authority: The right to return: The case of the Palestinians," https://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/013/2001/en/364a3000-db6e-11dd-af3c-1fd4bb8cf58e/mde150132001en.html (accessed 7/19/2013); Human Rights Watch, "Israel, Palestinian Leaders Should Guarantee Right of Return as Part of Comprehensive Refugee Solution," Dec. 22, 2000, https://www.hrw.org/news/2000/12/21/israel-palestinian-leaders-should-guarantee-right-return-part-comprehensive-refugee-. See also the internal HRW documents posted by Norman Finkelstein, at https://normanfinkelstein.com/2013/there-is-in-history-no-right-of-return/.

[3] E.g., Moshe Arens, "Is there another option?" *Haaretz*, June 2, 2010, https://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/is-there-another-option-1.293670.

[4] As Michael Neumann puts it, "calling something a two-state solution doesn't make it one. It's only a two-state solution if it results in two states, in the normal sense of two sovereign entities." "The One State Illusion: Reply to My Critics," Counterpunch, March 14, 2008, https://www.counterpunch.org/2008/03/14/the-one-state-illusion-reply-to-my-critics/.

[5] On the condition of Palestinians in Lebanon, see Dalal Yassine, "Unwelcome Guests: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," Al-Shabaka Policy Brief, July 2010, https://al-shabaka.org/policy-brief/refugee-issues/unwelcome-guests-palestinian-refugees-lebanon.

[6] So, for example, while 88 percent of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon said it was important that they be allowed to return to their original home, town, or village, 68 percent said that if this was not possible, then it was important that they be able to live in a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. (This latter figure represented a sharp increase from 2005, when it was 35 percent.) For Lebanese refugees, 77 percent say they believe a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza is important, and 68 percent are hopeful that they might live in that state. For refugees in Jordan, 97 percent want to be able to return to their original home, town, or village, and 96 percent want to live in a West Bank-Gaza Palestinian state. And for Palestinians living in the territories, the figures were 92 percent and 83 percent respectively. See James Zogby, *Is Peace Possible?: A report on a comprehensive survey of attitudes among Israeli Jews, Israeli*

Arabs, Palestinians in the Occupied Lands, Refugees in Lebanon, Refugees in Jordan, and Jewish Americans, Zogby Research Services, October 2012, https://www.aaiusa.org/page/-/Polls/IsPeacePossible.pdf, pp. 24, 26.

[7] Moreover, the existence of a Palestinian state would benefit those Lebanon refugees who choose to remain in Lebanon. This is because in Lebanon "Palestinian refugees are subject to the legal regulations governing foreign workers, including the principle of reciprocity and the requirement to obtain a work permit. As there is no state of Palestine with official diplomatic relations and reciprocity agreements with Lebanon, this immediately creates an obstacle that prevents Palestinian refugees from obtaining work permits, especially within professional associations." (Dalal Yassine, "Unwelcome Guests: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," Al-Shabaka Policy Brief, 5 July 2010 [note removed], https://al-shabaka.org/policy-brief/refugee-issues/unwelcome-guests-palestinian-refugees-lebanon.) Palestinians refugees from Syria now suffer from statelessness as well. See Rosemary Sayigh, "The Price of Statelessness: Palestinian Refugees from Syria," Al-Shabaka Commentary, May 2013, https://al-shabaka.org/sites/default/files/Sayigh_Commentary_En_May_2013.pdf.

[8] In 2009 and 2010 in response to the question "If peace prevails between Israel and Palestinians through an establishment of Palestinian state at peace with Israel, which is more likely about the status of Arab citizens of Israel," a plurality of Israeli Palestinians chose the option "rights will improve." Shibley Telhami, "Israeli Arab/Palestinian Public Opinion Survey," Saban Center for Middle East Policy, 2010, https://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2010/12/09%20israel%20public%20opinion%20telhami/israeli_arab_powerpoint.pdf, slide 35.

[9] See the Official Summation of the Or Commission Report, Sept. 2, 2003, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/OrCommissionReport.html.

[10] Harriet Sherwood, "Israeli-Arab politician who was on Gaza protest flotilla can stand for re-election," *The Guardian*, Dec. 30, 2012, https://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/dec/30/israeli-arab-flotilla-election.

[11] Kathleen Christison, "The Myth of International Consensus," Counterpunch, January 24, 2008, https://www.counterpunch.org/2008/01/24/the-myth-of-international-consensus/.

[12] On Jerusalem, see UN General Assembly Resolution 303, 9 Dec. 1949. This doesn't mean that the expansion of Israel's borders beyond those of the UN partition plan was just, only that no UN resolution or ruling by the International Court of Justice has ordered Israel to return to the partition plan borders.

[13] Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research, Poll No. 48, 13-15 June 2013, https://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2013/p48e.pdf, p. 10 (question 20), p. 19, question 58.

[14] Ibid., p. 10 (questions 17 and 18).

[15] Adnan Abu Amer, "Time for Bold US Mideast Move – Marwan Barghouti," *Al-Monitor Palestine Pulse*, May 28, 2013, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/marwan-barghouti-fatah-palestine.html.

[16] Amira Hass, "Senior Fatah officials call for single democratic state, not two-state solution," *Haaretz*, May 17, 2013, https://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/senior-fatah-officials-call-for-single-democratic-state-not-two-state-solution.premium-1.524443.

[17] This is the conclusion that Noam Chomsky and Gilbert Achcar came to after debating the question of which Palestinians get to decide on a settlement. See Chomsky and Achcar, *Perilous Power: The Middle East and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Stephen R. Shalom (Boulder: Paradigm, expanded edition, 2009), pp. 156-57.
[18] "President Abbas: worldwide Palestinian referendum to approve agreement (where permitted)," Feb. 3, 2011, https://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=50950.
[19] Harriet Sherwood, "Palestinian leadership matches Israeli PM's peace deal referendum pledge," *Guardian*, 22 July 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/22/palestinian-israeli-referendum-peace-deal/print.
[20] The proposition that Palestinians should "Abandon the two state solution and demand the establishment of one state for Palestinians and Israelis" has been consistently rejected by a two-to-one majority. The attitude toward the two-state settlement is complicated. There seems to be modest support for a two-state settlement (a plurality of Palestinians, from both the West Bank and Gaza, rank as the foremost national priority: "Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital"; small majorities have consistently said they support a two-state settlement generally and the two-state Saudi-backed Arab Peace Plan specifically), yet a majority also say the two state is no longer viable. See the polls of the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research, https://www.pcpsr.org/. Ali Abunimah writes: "While polls show that a majority of Palestinians support a two-state solution, their view shifts when they are given a choice only between the cantonization now being imposed and a single state shared with Israeli Jews." (*One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2007, Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 176-178). This forced choice doesn't tell us very much.
[21] Respondents were asked whether they supported, opposed, or were neutral towards the following statement: "A fairer and more viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be the creation of a single state in which all citizens have equal rights."

	Support	**Neutral**	**Oppose**
Israeli Arabs	39	20	41
Pal. WB/Gaza	34	20	47
Refugees in Lebanon	20	17	63
Refugees in Jordan	15	38	46

Zogby, *Is Peace Possible?* p. 29.

[22] Ibid., pp. 29, 26. Virginia Tilley offers various caveats about using Palestinian poll data. "This is not to say," she writes, "that the poll data is wrong" but that we ought to be more cautious in concluding "that Jewish or Palestinian rejection of a one-state solution should be taken as an unyielding edifice." (Tilley, *The One-State* Solution [Ann Arbor: University of

Michigan Press, 2005], pp. 241-42; Tilley, "The Secular Solution," *New Left Review* 38, March-April 2006, https://newleftreview.org/II/38/virginia-tilley-the-secular-solution-debating-israel-palestine [quote].) I agree with her that the polls do not show invariant opinions, but this does not contradict my claim that the two-state option currently has the advantage of majority support among Palestinians (and Jews).

[23] See "The British Anti-Apartheid Movement," South African History Online, https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/british-anti-apartheid-movement?page=2.

[24] Tom Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 237.

[25] "UN and Apartheid from 1946 to Mandela Day," https://www.unric.org/en/nelson-mandela-day/26991-un-and-apartheid-from-1946-to-mandela-day-.

[26] UN Security Council Resolution 418, Nov. 4, 1977. South Africa was able to evade this resolution through various loopholes and by means of a secret agreement with Israel. See Sasha Polakow-Suransky, *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Pantheon, 2010).

[27] P.L. 99-440, Oct. 2, 1986, https://uscodebeta.house.gov/statutes/1986/1986-099-0440.pdf.

[28] Reagan, "Statement on the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986," Oct. 2, 1986, https://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1986/100286d.htm.

[29] See the listing of BDS successes at Palestinian BDS National Committee, "The BDS movement at 7: Stronger, more widespread and more effective than ever," *Mondoweiss*, July 10, 2012, https://mondoweiss.net/2012/07/the-bds-movement-at-7-stronger-more-widespread-and-more-effective-than-ever.html. The most recent significant victory is EU sanctions against the occupied territories. See Palestinian BDS National Committee, "The era of sanctions against Israel has started': Official BDS movement statement on new EU regulations against settlements," ***Mondoweiss,*** July 18, 2013, https://mondoweiss.net/2013/07/the-era-of-sanctions-against-israel-has-started-official-bds-movement-statement-on-new-eu-regulations-against-settlements.html; "Guidelines on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards," *Official Journal of the European Union*, vol. 56, 19 July 2013 (2013/C 205/05), pp. 9-11, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:205:FULL:EN:PDF.

[30] Of course Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews can live together. But binational states or any state with two substantial diverse population groups are not easy and require a level of trust and goodwill that cannot be created overnight. Current polls show high levels of racism among Israeli Jews. For example, fewer than half of them are willing to accept Arabs as neighbors and just over half accept integrated schools; more than a quarter would deny Arabs the right to vote in Knesset elections, and almost two thirds would choose the Jewish character of the state if it clashes with its democratic character. See Sammy Smooha, "Still Playing by the Rules: Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel 2012, Findings and Conclusions," University of Haifa and Israel Democracy Institute, 2013, https://en.idi.org.il/media/2522696/Arab-Jewish-Index-2012-ENG.pdf.

[31] See the reports of “Who Profits from the Occupation?” a research project of the Coalition of Women for Peace, https://whoprofits.org/reports.
[32] Tilley (“The Secular Solution”) argues that to think that Zionists would worry that Palestinians would “gain sovereignty over the entire country” is to falsely assume that “identities like ‘Palestinian’ would be permanent features of a one-state solution,” while in fact class and other interests might come to “erode the boundaries of established Jewish and Palestinian ethno-nationalist blocs” and “new social unities” might emerge. I quite agree that new social unities might well emerge, but *over time*. For a one-state settlement to occur, Zionists would have to agree to give up their sovereignty at the beginning of the process, not years later when new identities have taken hold. I also believe that in a society with economic democracy former bosses will participate in workers’ councils (and their lives will be the better for it), but very few of them will come to this realization while they still hold their power and privilege.
[33] See, for example, RAND Palestinian State Study Team, *Building a Successful Palestinian State*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007. https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG146-1.
[34] Some Palestine support activists insist that compensation to refugees has to be paid by Israel and Israel alone, that Israel’s moral obligation cannot be met by contributions from others. This seems an ill-advised position. If someone has been the victim of gross employment discrimination by a supervisor, the financial resources of the supervisor available for punitive damages are far less than that of the corporation, which is why, even if we think that the supervisor bears the main moral onus, we want the corporation to pay damages as well. The United States government isn’t strictly analogous to the corporation (though nor is the analogy totally inappropriate, given Washington’s role in enabling Israel’s many crimes), but it would certainly benefit Palestinians to have governments with deeper pockets than Israel contributing to the refugees’ compensation. That said, it is crucial to any final settlement that Israel acknowledge its responsibility for the Nakba.
[35] Tilley writes in her case for a one-state solution (*One-State Solution*, p. 224): “it is almost certain that, as Jews have for so long overwhelmingly dominated the state’s politics and businesses, Jewish ethnic dominance will endure for decades, just as white advantages have persisted in South Africa.” Many Palestinians might find this a not very appealing outcome.
[36] Financial incentives were used to encourage the establishment of the settlements. Financial incentives could be used to encourage their evacuation. Once some leave, diminishing economies of scale increase the economic burden on those remaining, which would lead to further voluntary movement behind the Green Line. Even many nationalist fanatics might feel an obligation to obey an order to leave from the Israeli government. (See the comment of a settler from Samaria, head of Likud’s student organ: “Many people are wrong in assuming settlers prioritize land over nation. In fact, … the great majority of settlers will obey the decision of the majority.” [Quoted in Gabrielle Rifkind, *Pariahs to Pioneers: Could the settler movement be part of the solution and not part of the problem in the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?* Oxford Research Group, May 2010, p. 15, https://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/sites/default/files/ORG_SettlerReport_0.pdf.]) It’s hard to believe that those settlers who still refused to leave couldn’t be handled by one of the most proficient military forces in the world.

[37] Abunimah, *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse*, Kindle locations 1621-1623 ("A major obstacle to the establishment of a Palestinian state, most settlements could simply remain where they are in a unified country. Palestinians whose land was confiscated for the use of settlements would need to receive full compensation, and the relationship of the settlements to other communities would have to change completely."); Tilley, *One-State Solution*, p. 223 ("In a state incorporating such [equal rights] formulas, the Jewish settlements could remain in place."); Yehouda Shenhav, *Beyond the Two-State Solution* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012), Kindle location 767 ("in the case of a just agreement, most settlements could remain, although the expansion of these settlements should be halted momentarily.").

[38] Some advocates for the Palestinian right of return argue that "The Israeli living in the home of a Palestinian — a home from which the rightful owner fled or was forcibly evicted and to which he is not permitted to return — is a usurper, not an innocent third party. His transfer to another place in Palestine to permit the rightful owner to return, may be an inconvenience but it is not an injustice. Palestinians demand their own return, and not the departure from the country of the alien Jews who have immigrated into the country." (BADIL, "Rights of return and self determination asserted in all international law," BADIL Occasional Bulletin No. 23, Dec. 2004, p. 5, https://www.badil.org/en/documents/category/51-bulletins-briefs?download=584%3Abulletin-23-rights-of-return-and-self-determination-asserted-in-all-international-law.) If this is true for 65-year-old usurpations, where "international law remains ambiguous about how refugees' and secondary occupants' rights should be balanced" (Michael Kagan, "Do Israeli Rights Conflict with the Right of Return? Identifying the Possible Arguments," in Rights in Principle – Rights in Practice: Revisiting the Role of International Law in Crafting Durable Solutions for Palestinian Refugees, ed. Terry Rempel [Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, Dec. 2009), p. 384, https://www.badil.org/ar/documents/category/35-publications?download=815:rights-in-principles-rights-in-practice), how much stronger must be the case against allowing usurpations that have occurred in the last 36 years under circumstances where the international law regarding the balancing of rights is much less ambiguous? Shenhav is of course correct that many of the settlers were poor Mizrahim, Russian immigrants, and the ultra-Orthodox, escaping discrimination from dominant elites, but surely they acted under less duress than the survivors of the Holocaust whose immigration to alternative destinations was blocked by Western nations (and sometimes by the Zionist movement: see Yosef Grodzinsky, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust* [Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004], chap. 4). In any event, the settlers are "happier, healthier and wealthier than other Israelis" according to a 2008 survey. (See Jonathan Cook, "Settlers live better than average Israelis," *The National*, 25 Dec. 2008, https://www.jonathan-cook.net/2008-12-25/settlers-live-better-than-average-israelis/.) Still, in any solution the Israeli state and not individual settlers should bear the brunt of the costs.

[39] "In short, there is no legal contradiction between the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the right of refugees to return." BADIL, Rights of return and self determination asserted in all international law," p. 1. The National Democratic Assembly, the nationalist party of Palestinians in Israel (Balad in Hebrew), calls for the right of return, making Israel a state of its citizens, including minority rights for Palestinians, *and* two

independent states (https://en.idi.org.il/tools-and-data/israeli-elections-and-parties/political-parties/balad/). Even though the secretary general of the party personally supports a one-state settlement (see Jonathan Cook, "'It's time for Palestinians in Israel to stand firm against the Bantustan plan of Oslo': An interview with Awad Abdel Fattah," Mondoweiss, 12 Nov. 2012, https://mondoweiss.net/2012/11/its-time-for-palestinians-in-israel-to-stand-firm-against-the-bantustan-plan-of-oslo-an-interview-with-awad-abdel-fattah.html), the fact that the platform includes both right of return and two states confirms that there is no necessary contradiction between these.

[40] Obviously, the number of Palestinians who would return under either scheme is just a guess and there are many problems with the data in any case. But at a minimum we note that about a third of the residents of the Gaza Strip and three quarters of the residents of the West Bank are *not* refugees (UNRWA, *West Bank and Gaza Strip Population Census of 2007*, Briefing Report, 2010, https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2010091595334.pdf). So these 2.2 million Palestinians would be part of a one state settlement, but not part of Israel under a two-state settlement with right of return.

[41] See the argument advanced by Moshe Machover, "Zionist myths: Hebrew versus Jewish identity," *Weekly Worker*, No. 962, May 16 2013, https://www.cpgb.org.uk/home/weekly-worker/962/zionist-myths-hebrew-versus-jewish-identity.

[42] The nature of a just binational state is an extremely complex matter, but it must be more than a state that treats each individual equally. It must recognize the collective, national rights of its component national groups, while imposing no penalty on those who aren't interested in these national identities. Unfortunately, many one-state proposals do not acknowledge the national rights of Israeli Jews. These proposals, in my view, are morally questionable, and needless to say would face even more determined opposition from Israeli Jews than would a single binational state. For some one-state advocates who do explicitly recognize the national rights of Israeli Jews, see Leila Farsakh, "Israel-Palestine: Time for a bi-national state," The Electronic Intifada, 20 March 2007, https://electronicintifada.net/content/israel-palestine-time-bi-national-state/6821; Abunimah, *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse*; and Jeff Halper and Itay Epshtain, "In the Name of Justice: Key Issues Around a Single State," The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Sept. 13, 2012, https://www.icahd.org/node/423. Tilley argues that "a completely ethnic-blind system would not suffice" (*One-State Solution*, p. 220), while worrying that inscribing national identities into law would reify the rival identities ("The Secular Solution"). For some group one-state statements that omit any reference to national rights or binationalism, see "The One State Declaration," Madrid and London, 2007, posted on Electronic Intifada, 29 Nov. 2007, https://electronicintifada.net/content/one-state-declaration/793; and "Declaration of The Movement for One Democratic State in Palestine," Dallas, Texas, 2010, https://www.onedemocraticstate.org/Declaration-Full-Text.aspx. So long as a single state is a future aspiration, its precise details don't need to be worked out at this time, but the lack of clarity on fundamental aspects of a just one-state solution makes current advocacy on its behalf that much more difficult.

[43] Note also that a Palestinian state with many refugees living in it would provide a good

base for peacefully pursuing the right of return, something that is very difficult for the refugees to do while living in camps in Lebanon.
[44] A "Jewish" state is clearly more objectionable than a Palestinian state, given that Jews are an ethnicity *and* a religion.
[45] There were various binational proposals at the time, differing most significantly on the immigration question and how to handle national communities of different sizes. See on Ichud (Ihud), Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, ed., *A Land of Two People's: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), esp. pp. 148-49; on the Arab League proposal, Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, vol. 2, *Arab-Zionist Negotiations and the End of the Mandate* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), esp. pp. 272-74; and on the minority report of the UN Special Committee on Palestine, see United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), *Report to the General Assembly*, Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly, Supplement No. 11, Volume 1, A/364, Lake Success, New York, 3 September 1947, https://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/07175DE9FA2DE563852568D3006E10F3; UN, Department of Public Information, *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1947-48*, 1949.I.13 (New York: 31 Dec. 1948), chap. 9: The Question of Palestine, https://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/62c13fb98d54fe24052567270058138 3/5ce900d2de34aadf852562bd007002d2.Ichud opposed any limitations on Jewish immigration ("Ichud Party Issues Declaration on Immigration and Zionist Discipline," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Oct. 11, 1942, https://www.jta.org/1942/10/11/archive/ichud-party-issues-declaration-on-immigration-and-zionist-discipline#ixzz2bDzPlSji), while the binational proposal of the Arab states insisted that Jews never exceed one third of the population, and that Jewish displaced persons then in Europe be absorbed by member states "in proportion to their area, economic resources, per capita income, population and other relevant factors." UNSCOP's minority plan called for a federal arrangement, but with immigration to be controlled by the center.
[46] As Pakistan's U.N. delegate put it, "If it is unfair that 33 percent of the population of Palestine [the Jews in the proposed unitary state] should be subject to 67 percent of the population, is it less unfair that 46 percent of the population [the Arabs in the proposed Jewish state] should be subject to 54 percent?" Quoted in Walid Khalidi, "Revisiting the UNGA Partition Resolution," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1 (Autumn, 1997), p. 11.
[47] For example, a recent statement by Jews for Palestinian Right of Return (Jan. 1, 2013, https://jfpror.wordpress.com/) approvingly quotes Palestinian journalist-activist Maath Musleh as saying: "If you think that [return] is not possible, then you are really not in solidarity with the Palestinian cause."
[48] Note that the apartheid regime had no two-state option. Once apartheid became untenable, they had no choice but to accept majority rule. In Israel's case, Zionism has several options before surrendering to the one-state arrangement. Israel could for example annex the West Bank and give voting rights to the Palestinians there. Because Gaza would not be part of the state, Jews would remain a majority and could use their majority status to block any Palestinian return. Most remaining international pressure on Israel would likely be lifted.
[49] Some "one-staters" argue that, yes, a one-state settlement has only a one-in-a-million chance of realization, but a two-state settlement has only a two-in-a-million chance, so since both are so unlikely we might as well push for our preferred choice. I have two problems with this approach, apart from believing the relative odds to be rather different. First, if we're going

to be expressing preferences detached from any realistic chance of success, then why stop at a one state; we might as well go for broke and talk of a socialist federation in the whole Middle East, or whatever our ideal happens to be. Second, as activists there are many causes we support in the abstract, but we don't have the time, energy, or resources to pursue them all. We make choices based on our personal inclinations, but also on where we judge that our efforts will get the most return. If I believed there was only a one-in-a-million chance of success from pursuing a particular cause, I probably would take up some other cause.

[50] E.g., David Poort, "The threat of a one-state solution," *Al Jazeera*, 26 Jan. 2011, https://www.aljazeera.com/palestinepapers/2011/01/201112612953672648.html.

[51] See the discussion in Hussein Ibish, "What's Wrong with the One-State Agenda? Why Ending the Occupation and Peace with Israel is Still the Palestinian National Goal," American Taskforce on Palestine, 2009, https://www.americantaskforce.org/what's_wrong_onestate_agenda_html, pp. 43-45.

[52] Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin: Ratification of the Israel-Palestinian Interim Agreement, The Knesset, Oct. 5, 1995, https://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfa-archive/1995/pages/pm%20rabin%20in%20knesset-%20ratification%20of%20interim%20agree.aspx.

[53] Ibish, "What's Wrong with the One-State Agenda," p. 12, citing an April 17, 2009, twitter feed from Ali Abunimah.

[54] See the comments of Toufic Haddad, a one-state advocate, in "The 'End of the Two-State Solution' Spells Apartheid and Ethnic Cleansing, not Binationalism and Peace," *Jadaliyya*, Nov. 17, 2012, https://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/8460/the-%E2%80%9Cend-of-the-two-state-solution%E2%80%9D-spells-aparthe.

[55] Peter Beinart, "To Save Israel, Boycott the Settlements," *New York Times*, March 19, 2012 (online March 18, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/19/opinion/to-save-israel-boycott-the-settlements.html).

[56] Some have suggested a "gradual binationalism" that begins with two independent states, but moves as conditions improve to a binational arrangement. Various schemes currently being considered for Jerusalem might form the basis for such an approach. See Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), chap. 12, https://www.geog.bgu.ac.il/members/yiftachel/books/chp_12_print.pdf; Michael Dumper, "'Two State Plus': Jerusalem and the Binationalism Debate," *Jerusalem Quarterly,* Autumn 2009, 39, https://www.jerusalemquarterly.org/ViewArticle.aspx?id=313.

The Dialectic of the Spatial Determination of Capital: Rosa Luxemburg's Accumulation of Capital Reconsidered

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Rosa Luxemburg is renowned for being the first post-Marx Marxist to argue that the accumulation of capital hinges not only on the internal *temporal* dynamics of particular capitalist societies but most of all on capitalism's *spatial* penetration and destruction of the non-capitalist world. Her emphasis on capital's inherent drive to consume and destroy indigenous communal formations was part of an effort to demonstrate the integrality of imperialism and capitalism—even if this is somewhat muted by Agnes Schwarzschild's English translation of the *Accumulation of Capital*, which neglected to include its subtitle—"A Contribution to an Explanation of Imperialism." Now that a new English translation of the *Accumulation of Capital* is being prepared as part of the issuance of her *Complete Works* in English, this is a fitting moment to re-examine how her theory of capitalist accumulation speaks to today's urgent need to reverse capital's global drive to undermine the ecological as well as economic and social viability of human existence itself.

As is well known, Luxemburg's theory of accumulation brought her into direct conflict with Marx—especially over this formulae of expanded reproduction at the end of Volume Two of *Capital*. Marx's exclusion of foreign trade in his abstract model of how surplus value is realized in an *ideal* isolated capitalist society was seen by Luxemburg as failing to account for the *reality* of capitalist accumulation, which depends from its inception on absorbing and destroying non-capitalist strata. Now that we are experiencing capital's complete domination of the globe, we may be able to finally determine whether Luxemburg's *spatial* emphasis on capital accumulation takes us beyond Marx—or whether Marx's *temporal* emphasis on the internal dynamics of capitalist reproduction takes us beyond Luxemburg.

I

Ato Sekyi-Otu has persuasively argued that for Marx, "time, rather than space, is the existential category that functions as the principle of index of domination, alienation, and injustice."[1] Marx's critique of alienated labor, social inequality, and value production centers on the domination of a particular kind of time—*abstract universal law time*. Although Marx is often credited with developing a labor theory of value, it is more accurate, as Raya Dunayevskaya argued, that Marx developed a value theory of labor.[2] This is because the core of the Marxian theory of value is that value is not determined by the actual amount of time

employed in creating a commodity, but rather by the *average* amount of *necessary* labor time. If a worker in Detroit assembles an automobile in 24 hours while one in China assembles a similar model in 16, the extra eight hours of labor performed by the Detroit worker creates no value. As Marx put it, "What determines value is not the time taken to produce a thing, but the *minimum* time it could possibly be produced in."[3]

Herein, for Marx, lies the inner core of the overpowering domination of capital. As competition reveals the minimum amount of labor time necessary, on average, to create a given commodity, workers are forced to produce it within that time unit, irrespective of their human needs or bodily capacities. We become alienated, not just from the product of labor but rather from the very activity of producing it through the tyranny of abstract universal labor time. As Marx famously puts it, "Time is everything, man is nothing; he is, at most, time's carcass. Quality no longer matters. Quantity decides everything; hour for hour, day by day."[4]

Value production therefore subsumes heterogeneous productive activities under crystallized abstract labor time. That, and not the existence of private property or the market, is the essence of the capitalist mode of production. We become robbed of our creativity by being subjected to a reified form of time that is indifferent to our actual abilities. This in turn grounds the drive to augment surplus value. Since value is determined by a social average of labor time that operates behind the backs of the producers, workers are compelled to produce more value in a given unit of time than they receive in means of subsistence. Inequality, private property, and "market anarchy" are therefore not the cause but the consequence of social relations governed by abstract universal labor time.

As I show in this latest book, *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism*, the issue of time is likewise of critical importance in Marx's conception of the abolition of capitalism.[5] In socialism or communism actual labor-time is no longer subsumed by socially necessary labor time. The exertion of concrete acts of producing use values, performed by freely associated individuals, becomes the one and only measure of social existence. No longer does a force operate behind the backs of the producers—socially necessary labor time—that renders their activity useless or unproductive if it fails to meet an abstract standard. The dictatorship of time is shattered through the formation of *freely* associated production relations, in which "time becomes the space for human development." Value production comes to an end, since its substance, abstract labor, drops out of existence.

There is no question, therefore, that Marx's critique of capital centers on *time*. So is it the case, as Foucault claimed, that Marxists are so consumed with time that "If one started to talk in terms of space, that meant one was hostile to them"?[6] This is a dubious claim, since Marx did not ignore spatial determination—as seen in his theory of primitive accumulation and emphasis on the role of colonialism in the formation of capitalism.[7] I would argue that Marx's emphasis on time is precisely what led him to focus on capital's spatial determination, especially in his writings on the non-Western world in the last two decades of his life.[8] As capital strives to wring ever-more unpaid labor time from the worker, it spurs the creation of new labor saving devices, thereby augmenting the organic composition of capital at the expense of living labor.

This leads, as Marx argued in Volume Three of *Capital*, to the tendency of the rate of profit to decline. Faced with an internal barrier to increased profitability, capital goes in search of new markets and arenas of exploitation overseas. Imperialism is the spatial correlate to capital's cooptation of time.

II

When it came to his theory of expanded reproduction, however, Luxemburg held that Marx neglected capital's spatial determination. His assumption of a closed capitalist society without foreign trade, she held, contradicts the reality of capitalist accumulation. In contrast, she sought to show that capital's inner core consists of the drive to consume what is external to it—non-capitalist strata.

Luxemburg's dispute with Marx's revolves around the following two, opposed questions: 1) Does the commodity need to "shed" its use-form and became transformed into "pure value," money, in order to then purchase additional means of production and thereby realize the surplus value needed to accumulate capital on an ever-expanding scale? 2) Or can this realization of surplus value occur *directly*, without a portion of the surplus product being converted into money, by constant capital productively consuming a portion of the use-form of the surplus product?

If the second is correct, there is no case for effective demand being a central component of capitalist accumulation. The capitalist simply converts a portion of the surplus value into constant capital by directly absorbing it into the means of production without having to first *sell* it to a *buyer*. The consumer market is bypassed, and there is no problem of a lack of effective demand by consumers.[9] If the second is correct—that is, if the connection between Department I (means of production) and Department II (means of consumption) is established through the exchange nexus—then each department has to *sell* all its output to realize the surplus value *before* capital accumulation is possible. If the realization of surplus value depends upon the *sale* of the product, there must be buyers for it. But if there is no demand for the product on the part of buyers, realization becomes impossible.

Marx takes the second approach, whereas Luxemburg takes the first. She criticizes his theory of expanded reproduction for treating money as "a subsidiary phenomenon—a merely external and superficial expression of the various stages within the circulation of commodities."[10] She even accuses him of acting as if "money in itself is not an element of actual reproduction."[11] She well knows, as does Marx, that to augment constant capital a portion of the surplus value must be "set aside" from personal consumption—that is, consumed neither by workers nor capitalists. But she differs from Marx over the role of use-value in realizing surplus value. To Marx, use-value is of decisive importance in predetermining the *direction* in which surplus value is invested—for example, the use-form of corn goes to the Department II, the use-form of iron ore goes to Department I. Luxemburg, in contrast, downplays the role of use value in predetermining the product's destination in social reproduction. She contends, "The new capital as well as the surplus value which it has created must cast off their commodity-form, re-

assume the form of pure value, and thus revert to the capitalist as money.... It is absolutely essential to the accumulation of capital that a sufficient quantity of commodities created by the new capital should win a place for itself on the market and be realized."[12]

Since surplus value cannot be realized by the consumption of workers or capitalists, and since "somebody must buy it," who can that be"?[13] Since, "we cannot discover within capitalist society any buyers whatsoever for the commodities in which the accumulated part of the surplus value is embodied, only one thing is left"—to presume that the demand is found in the non-capitalist world.[14] This is the basis of her theory that imperialist expansion is driven by capitalism's inability to resolve the limits to effective demand established by its own national confines.

III

Luxemburg's approach provided not only an *explanation* for why capitalism takes over, consumes, and destroys communal social formations in the non-capitalist world, it also led her to fiercely *condemn* the process in its entirety. At a time when many of her colleagues in the Second International made apologies for imperialism, or denied that it was inseparable from the law of motion of capitalism, she painstakingly exposed how virtually every once of capital was accumulated on the basis of the sweat and blood of tens of millions of Africans, Asians, and Native Americans.[15] Her critical analysis of the historical conditions of accumulation in Part 3 of the *Accumulation of Capital* is perhaps the most powerful exposé ever written of the violent and destructive nature of the self-expansion of capital. It remains of huge importance today, when capital is invading every nook and cranny of the globe, violently undermining the very basis of human and natural existence in doing so.

However, there is a major problem in Luxemburg's analysis. It concerns *who are the human subjects that can rise up and put an end to this violent process of destruction*? She insists that "Accumulation is more than an internal relationship between branches of capitalist economy; it is primarily a relationship between capital and a non-capitalist environment."[16] It follows that what ultimately puts an end to the accumulation of capital is the exhaustion of non-capitalist strata. However, Luxemburg insists that "this can never actually happen"[17]—a point that is often overlooked by her admirers. Why can it "never happen"? She doesn't say. All she says is that "long before" that day comes the proletariat in the *developed* world will rise up and put an end to all of this. There is no question that Luxemburg was a magnificent theorist of revolution who was convinced of the ability of the working class to uproot capitalism. *Yet that perspective, integral to so much of her other work, simply does not flow logically from her theory of expanded reproduction*.

Her entire theory of expanded reproduction centers on the *external* opposition between capitalism and non-capitalism—not on the *internal* opposition between constant capital, dead labor, lording over variable capital, living labor. Since the central contradiction of capital is located not in production but rather in the market, in the lack of effective demand, the barriers encountered in the market, and not the resistance of the worker at the point of production,

establishes the limits to capital accumulation. In a word, her market-driven approach does not provide for the negation of expanded reproduction to arise from within the bosom of the capital-labor relation. It is not *people* or their *resistance* that defines the ultimate limits to capital, but rather a *thing*—the exhaustion of non-capitalist *strata*.

This is further underlined by the fact that she did not view the victims of imperialist expansion as revolutionary subjects in their own right, as seen in her fierce objection to all calls for national self-determination as being "reactionary."

I am not at all suggesting that Luxemburg did not feel profound compassion for the victims of colonialism and imperialism. On the contrary, she felt their pain and theorized the reason for it, in a way few Marxists did so in her time or afterwards. Lenin, for instance, wrote the following in his critical notes on the *Accumulation of Capital*: "The description of the torture of Negroes in South America is noisy, colorful, and meaningless. Above all it is 'non-Marxist.'"[18] Rosa Luxemburg would never think it "non-Marxist" to detail the pain and suffering of those exposed to the brutalities of capitalist globalization. She was too much of a humanist for that!

Nevertheless, her spatial counterpoising of capitalism and non-capitalist strata provides for no immanent, subjective force that can transcend the realities of capital accumulation from within. Instead, "the revolution is dragged in by her indomitable revolutionary will."[19] This is in direct contrast to Marx, for whom subjective revolt is integral to the very delineation of the objective categories of capital. As Dunayevskaya put it, for Marx "The organic composition of capital produces, on the one hand, the decline in the rate of profit, and, on the other hand, the reserve army of labor. The inability of capitalism to reproduce its only value-creating substance sounds the death knell of capitalism."[20] This approach, which was available to Luxemburg, was foreclosed by her theory of accumulation.

IV

What importance does this have for today? Clearly, we are now reaching the point where the entire globe is being consumed by the self-expansion of capital—at the same time, ironically, that any viable alternative to capitalism appears very nearly out of sight. There is no indication that capitalism will simply collapse once the full exhaustion of non-capitalist strata occurs. It will only come to an end when an array of subjective forces, inside as well as outside the developed capitalist world, including but not restricted to the working class, makes their voices heard in the context of a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism in all its forms, whether "free market" or statist.[21] Now that the capital-relation is universally imposing itself upon every nook and cranny of the world, we urgently need a theoretical framework that can elicit and develop the "new passions and new forces" (to use Marx's phrase) that can uproot capital accumulation from *within*.

It is worth nothing that a number of commentators have recently argued that Luxemburg's theory of accumulation can be salvaged for the contemporary world by relating it to the drive to consume non-capitalist or not-yet commodified strata within the existing, *developed*

capitalist world. But this strikes me as a rather questionable application of her ideas. Luxemburg herself placed great stress that, in her view, "there should be buyers outside capitalist society. Buyers, it should be noted, not consumers, since the material form of the surplus value is quite irrelevant to its realization. The decisive fact is that the surplus value cannot be realized by sale either to workers or to capitalists, but only if it is sold to such social organization or strata whose own mode of production is not capitalistic."[22] Clearly, for her, the key is not simply being a *consumer* of non-capitalist strata. *You must be a buyer who is neither a capitalist nor a worker*. Otherwise, the surplus value that is capitalized has to come out of the consumption within the *capitalist* home market—which is precisely what her entire theory of accumulation argues is not possible. Such efforts to "apply" Luxemburg's theory to a context other than the one discussed by her hardly seems to do justice to her seriousness as a theoretician.

In sum, to effectively challenge globalized capital today we need, on the one hand, a deep appreciation of Luxemburg's insistence on the necessity of imperialism for capital accumulation, and a much broader and deeper elicitation of revolutionary forces and ideas than provided by the contours of her theory of accumulation, on the other hand. That is especially the case when it comes to struggles within the developing world. Perhaps what is needed most of all is for Luxemburg's fierce critique of colonialism and imperialism to be brought into dialogue with Frantz Fanon's understanding of the revolutionary potential of struggles against racism and national oppression. It is a dialogue that will prove most fruitful, I believe, when mediated by a firm grasp of Marx's critique of the *temporal* dimensions of capital.

Notes

[1] Ato Sekyi-Oto, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 72.

[2] See Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 Until Today* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Books, 2000 [orig. 1958]), p. 138.

[3] Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *in Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 6 (New York: International Publishers, 1976), p. 136.

[4] *The Poverty of Philosophy*, p. 127.

[5] See Peter Hudis, *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[6] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 70.

[7] Luxemburg, it should be noted, tended to downplay the significance of Marx's theory of the "so-called primitive accumulation of capital" on the grounds that it applied only to the origin of capitalism—whereas she was interested in how capitalism in its *full maturity* depends on non-capitalist strata. She also held that Marx's primitive accumulation deals with the destruction of pre-capitalist relations *within* a developing capitalist economy, whereas she was interested in the destruction of pre-capitalist relations *outside* a developed capitalist society.

[8] For more on this, see *Marx at the Margins*, by Kevin Anderson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2010.

[9] Marx had worked out the conceptual basis of this position in his *Theories of Surplus Value*—written in 1863, a full 15 years prior to drafting the formulae on expanded reproduction at the end of Volume Two of *Capital*. The claim that these formulae are merely fragmentary and do not do justice to Marx's overall theory of accumulation is therefore highly questionable. Whatever shortcomings there may be in his *exposition* of the issue of expanded reproduction in the formulae, Marx had worked out the *concepts* that governed them long beforehand. He wrote in *Theories of Surplus Value*, "Can the capitalist transform a part of the surplus-value into capital by employing it *directly* as capital instead of selling the surplus-value, or rather the surplus-product in which it is expressed?"[9] He answers the question in the affirmative, as follows: First, in the agricultural sector, a section of the surplus product "instead of being sold, can at once serve again as means of production, as seed or draught animals"; Second, the same is true of certain commercial goods (whether raw materials or value-added ones); Third, in addition to machines that produce commodities there are "machines which produce machines, the constant capital of the machine industry."[9] This part of the surplus product "need not be sold, but can re-enter the new production in kind, as constant capital…into new production (accumulation), without having gone through the process of first being transformed into variable capital." He concludes, "Where a part of the product, and therefore also of the surplus-product (i.e., the use-value in which the surplus-value is expressed) can re-enter as a means of production—as instrument of labor or material of labor—into the sphere of production from which it came, directly, without an intermediary phase, accumulation within this sphere of production can and must take place in such a way that a part of the surplus-product, instead of being sold, is as a means of production re-incorporated into the reproduction process directly…so that accumulation and reproduction on a larger scale coincide here directly. They must coincide everywhere, but not in this direct manner." See *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part 2 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), pp. 486-88.

[10] Luxemburg Rosa. *The Accumulation of Capital*, translated by Agnes Schwarzschild (New York: Modern Reader, 1968), 105.

[11] Luzemberg, Rosa. *The Accumulation of Capital*, 103.

[12] *Ibid*, 44.

[13] *Ibid*, 164.

[14] *Ibid*, 136.

[15] It should be noted that it was not only her reformist opponents who suffered from such Eurocentric defects. One will find hardly a single mention of sub-Sahara Africa in the innumerable writings of the revolutionary Marxists of the period, Lenin and Trotsky included; it would seem that European radicals of the time presumed that Africa stopped at the southern borders of Egypt—despite the massive amount of material wealth being expropriated at the time by the British, French, Germans and Belgians from sub-Sahara Africa. Luxemburg was a notable exception, as especially seen in her detailed discussions of pre-capitalist communal forms in Africa in both the *Introduction to Political Economy* and *The Accumulation of Capital*.

[16] Luxemburg Rosa. *The Accumulation of Capital*, translated by Agnes Schwarzschild (New York: Modern Reader, 1968), 417.

[17] *The Accumulation of Capital*, 417.

[18] Quoted in J.P. Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg*, Vol. II, p. 533. I would like to thank Paul Le Blanc for drawing my attention to this passage.

[19] Dunayevskaya, Raya. *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (New Jersey: Humanities Books, 1981), 45.

[20] Luxemburg, Rosa. *Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, 45.

[21] The perspective that governs this analysis is that the putatively "socialist" or "communist" regimes of the twentieth century failed to transcend capitalism and were instead *state-capitalist* formations. As I argue in Marx's *Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism*, the horizon of capitalism cannot be left behind so long as the law of value and surplus value continues to govern social reproduction.

[22] Luxemburg Rosa. *The Accumulation of Capital*, translated by Agnes Schwarzschild (New York: Modern Reader, 1968), 351-52.

“I was, I am, and I will be:” Reconsidering Rosa Luxemburg for the 21st Century

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Rosa Luxemburg was murdered almost 100 years ago. Yet, she seems more alive to our age and its concerns than many contemporary public intellectuals and social theorists. Her immensely multi-layered and highly creative mind, combined with an unyielding rejection of oppression and domination in its myriad shapes and disguises, echoes from her time to ours. We would do well to attune ourselves to her arguably still-vibrant voice, illuminating our current predicaments and dilemmas in often-unexpected ways. In so doing one must, of course, beware not only of the pitfalls of hagiography but also of the dangers of merely gutting Luxemburg’s thoughts for sound bites.

Illustration by Laura Fair-Schulz

Just as Karl Marx (in Volume 1 of his Magnum opus *Das Kapital)*, famously rejected any attempts to pass on ready-made philosophical recipes “for the cook shops of the future,” so we ought not treat Luxemburg as an infallible religious icon: she was neither a prophetess nor fortuneteller. Truly engaging with Luxemburg today means to enter into her intellectual and personal responses to the world: as a work in progress and thoughts in motion, perennially searching for further insight. Seriously reading Luxemburg’s today, either for the first time or even years after one’s first encounter, is an exceedingly enriching experience.

In the November 2013 issue of *The Progressive*, film director Margarethe von Trotta was interviewed by Ed Rampell in order to discuss her newest movie, on the political philosopher and public intellectual Hannah Arendt. Naturally, the conversation turned at some point to a previous work by von Trotta, namely her Rosa Luxemburg film from 1987. Curiously, von Trotta chose the actress Barbara Sukowa to play both Rosa Luxemburg and Hannah Arendt. Thus, the conversation between von Trotta and Rampell turned naturally toward comparing Luxemburg and Arendt. Interestingly, while von Trotta praised Luxemburg’s emotional intelligence, and expressed considerable admiration for her, she did not acknowledge Luxemburg as a deeply serious intellectual — on par with Hannah Arendt.

There is, unfortunately, something of an errantly emergent tradition to emphasize the romantic and passionate components of Luxemburg. Acknowledging these components as a creative and energizing force in Luxemburg’s thinking is, to be sure, more than legitimate, and, among

other scholars, Michael Löwy has made this case eloquently and effectively. But this line of thought becomes problematic, however, when it implies that Luxemburg's theoretical and intellectual contributions were secondary to her overall personality — as a profoundly compassionate and emotionally aware socialist. Rosa Luxemburg was most certainly not Hannah Arendt's junior in the realm of intellectual inquiry, and this fact, however, still awaits real discovery and re-discovery on part of the mainstream scholarly and intellectual community.

Fortunately, there has been a renewal of interest in Luxemburg. To mention but a few examples, her writings have been made accessible in new editions, such as Paul Le Blanc and Helen C. Scott's anthology: *Luxemburg: Socialism or Barbarism*, as well as the latter's *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg*. Very important currently is also *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, edited by Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson. Older volumes, such as Paul Frölich's classic *Rosa Luxemburg: Ideas in Action* have also been republished recently, and in addition, David Fernbach's *In the Steps of Rosa Luxemburg: Selected Writings of Paul Levi* should also be included in this list of publications adding to this revival.

Most importantly however, the *Collected Works of Rosa Luxemburg* is in the process of being published by Verso. Under the capable overall editorship of Peter Hudis, her complete works are to come out in 14 volumes for the first time in English. Composed of many texts, previously accessible only in German or Polish, or altogether lost, this project is an outstanding resource, not only for scholars and intellectuals but also for activists in the 21st century. Already a preliminary volume, *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg,* was published in 2011 by Verso to international acclaim. In 2013 the first volume of Luxemburg's theoretical writings, entitled *The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg, Volume I, Economic Writings 1* (edited by Peter Hudis), has also come out. A second volume on Luxemburg's economic analyses is in preparation, edited by Paul Blanc, and more volumes are to follow.

This compelling objective of making available, for the first time in English, all of Luxemburg's intellectual work needs as much support as possible. While being partially funded by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, this ambitious and very necessary publishing undertaking is, not unlike many other academic projects, forced to function on a shoestring budget, and many people are volunteering their efforts and expertise. Especially the translation work requires additional funds, in order to make accessible just-recently discovered manuscripts by Luxemburg on the history of ancient Greek, Roman, Medieval, and Early Modern societies. Anyone who would like to contribute to easing the translation expenses may contact https://www.toledotranslationfund.org and download the proper forms. In our age, when more and more even mainstream economists and scholars see the structural inadequacies of neo-liberal capitalism, Luxemburg work deserves and needs a greater presence.

Rosa Luxemburg's biographical trajectory is as multi-faceted as her intellectual ventures. In her relatively short life, of only 48 years, she saw, delved, experienced, felt, and roused more than most people with much longer life spans. Born in the Polish part of the Russian empire in 1871, she grew up in a cultured, assimilated, and solidly middle-class Jewish family. Being

irrepressibly curious, precocious, and unusually intelligent, young Rosa decided to move to Switzerland, in order to pursue the university education that was, at that time, impossible in Tsarist Russia. After several years of studying history, political science, philosophy, economics, and mathematics at the University of Zurich, Luxemburg defended her doctoral dissertation on the industrial development of Poland, which was published later on in the German city of Leipzig as her first substantive book.

Afterward, Luxemburg returned to Russian Poland and threw herself into journalism and political activism. One of her main objectives during that time period was to help found a broadly based Socialist party that would include ethnic Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, and even Austrians. This underscored her internationalist outlook and pushed her into debates and confrontations with more narrowly nationalist socialist movements, such as the Polish Socialist Party. Luxemburg and her intimate friend and comrade Leo Jogiches became the co-founders of the Social Democratic Party of Poland and Lithuania. Forced to leave Poland on the grounds of her political activities, Luxemburg moved to Germany, where she developed into one of the most intellectually resourceful and industrious Marxist journalists, theoreticians, and organizers. As Marxism, after the death of Marx and Engels, increasingly fractured to three main camps (namely the Centrism of Karl Kautsky, the Revisionism of Eduard Bernstein, and the Revolutionary Marxists), Luxemburg became the most potent voice of the latter.

In Imperial Germany, Luxemburg fought tirelessly against the limitations of parliamentary reformism. She did so in both thought and deed. Chief among her theoretical works are, in addition to her dissertation, *Reform or Revolution* (1900), *Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy*, (1904) *The Mass Strike* (1906), *The National Question* (1909), *Theory and Practice"* (1910), *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913 — her most serious theoretical contribution to Marxist economic analysis), as well as *The Russian Revolution*. In addition, Luxemburg published a myriad of brochures, including her famous *The Junius Pamphlet* of 1915.

In addition to trying to understand the inner workings, as well as the constant evolution, of capitalism and capitalism's need to penetrate, dominate, and control all geographic and also all mental spheres of life, Luxemburg stressed the necessity to conceptualize socialism as an expansion of civil liberties, rather than their curtailment. Her thoughts on these matters were very much shaped by her comradely debates with Lenin, whom she greatly admired and also criticized for being at times too authoritarian. Luxemburg fully shared Lenin's ideals of revolutionary Socialism while also understanding that Bolshevik theory and practice evolved out of specifically Russian circumstances and thus could not be a blueprint, to be followed elsewhere.

She also became increasingly alarmed by the nationalist tendencies of many mainstream Social Democratic leaders in Germany, which culminated in their support of the German war effort in 1914. Luxemburg never betrayed her anti-war views and paid a high price for her principled opposition to World War I. She was arrested for sedition and later on put under so-called protective custody, until the end of the war and the collapse of Imperial Germany. Launching

herself into political life as soon as she was released from prison, she came to support the spontaneous revolutionary uprisings in Berlin and elsewhere – in spite of her personal views and better judgment that they were premature and ill prepared. In January 1919, right-wing militia men, with the explicit approval of key members of German Social Democratic leadership, viciously murdered Rosa Luxemburg and her comrade-in-arms Karl Liebknecht. Yet, while successfully putting an end to her, they failed to permanently silence her thought.

Being a thinker, by her definition, also meant being a political activist. Instead of compartmentalizing her intellectual, emotional, and physical circumstances, like so many are prone to, coping with the disturbing complexities and inequities of reality, she sought to integrate those oft-fragmented aspects of human being into the fore of her overall personality. This endowed her with remarkable sensitivity and consistency. Rosa Luxemburg's multiple and hybrid identities seem at home in our globalizing and highly interactive world. She was at once a Russian Pole, Jew, German, woman, and most of all Marxist intellectual. None of these labels were all defining, binding, or exclusive, and she qualified them in both thought and action.

As she was deeply invested in the process of human emancipation, self-determination, and liberation, this naturally included the emancipation, self-determination, and liberation of women. One of Luxemburg's closest friends was, after all, the *Grande Dame* of Marxist Feminism Clara Zetkin. Scholarly and agile interpreters of the Marxist tradition, such as Raya Dunayevskaya as well as Frigga Haug have noted Luxemburg's deeply rooted commitment to women's liberation. Yet, at the same time, Luxemburg refused to be pigeonholed as a Marxist Feminist, and she regarded, for example, Social Democratic leader August Bebel's efforts to confine her to women's issues with considerable ire.

Looking at humanity in a more holistic fashion, she could not abide being reduced to any particular sub-group, be they women or Jews. For instance, while never being ashamed of her Jewish origins, Luxemburg poignantly stated in 1917:

> [w]hat do you want with this theme of the 'special suffering of the Jews?' I am just as much concerned with the poor victims on the rubber plantations of Putumayo, the Blacks in Africa with whose corpses the Europeans play catch. You know the words that were written about the great work of the General Staff, about Gen. Trotha's campaign in the Kalahari desert: 'And the death rattles of the dying, the demented cries of those driven mad by thirst faded away in the sublime stillness of eternity.' Oh that 'sublime stillness of eternity,' in which so many cries of anguish have faded away unheard, they resound within me so strongly that I have no special place in my heart for the [Jewish] ghetto. I feel at home in the entire world, wherever there are clouds and birds and human tears.

Such ecumenical views have prompted several critics to pin some form of anti-Semitic "Jewish self-hatred" on her. Robert Wistrich, among others, has repeatedly pushed this point: [l]ike not a few Jewish Marxists, she exhibited a curious mental block when it came to speaking about real (as opposed to 'literary') pogroms." And that,

> it is nonetheless revealing that she made so few allusions in her voluminous German writings or in her private correspondence to the widespread anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany. The contrast with Engels, Bebel, Bernstein or Kautsky is striking in this respect.

Contrary to simple right-wing polemicists, however, Wistrich states his case with some nuance and historical context, most recently in his essay "Rosa Luxemburg: The Polish-German-Jewish Identities of a Revolutionary Internationalist":

> Rosa Luxemburg, like Karl Marx and Leon Trotsky, consistently failed to understand the driving power of modern nationalism. The First World War had demonstrated the falsity of Marx's slogan in the Communist Manifesto that the workers have no fatherland. Luxemburg's dream of a revolutionary proletarian fatherland in the abstract, was also conclusively buried in the carnage of the trenches. None of the subsequent twentieth- century revolutions, which brought Communists to power, whether in Russia, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Cuba, China, Vietnam and other Third World countries, could have happened without harnessing nationalism to the proletarian cause. The establishment of Israel in 1948 was yet another nail in the coffin of the Luxemburgist negation of the right to national self-determination.

Yet, as Kevin B. Anderson and Peter Hudis note in their recent draft "Rosa Luxemburg: Between Universalism and Particularism," she clearly framed her Jewishness as part and parcel of her overall humanity, already stating in 1899: [a]s concerns the Dreyfus Affair in particular, the intervention of the proletariat in the case need not be justified either from on general point of view, on the subject of bourgeois conflicts, nor from the point of view of humanity. For in the Dreyfus case four social factors make themselves felt which give it the stamp of a question directly related to the class struggle. They are: militarism, chauvinism-nationalism, anti-Semitism, and clericalism. In our written and spoken agitation we always combat these direct enemies of the socialist proletariat by virtue of our general tendencies. It would thus be totally incomprehensible to not enter into a struggle with these enemies exactly when it is a question of unmasking them, not as abstract clichés, but through the use of living current events.

Luxemburg's nuanced and discerning take on religion in general and Christian theology more specifically might serve as a useful guide to navigating the complexities of our contemporary religious landscape. As Gilbert Achcar recently pointed out in his intriguing book, *Marxism, Orientalism, Cosmopolitanism*, the sentiments of many Marxist Leftists who came of age in the 1960s and 1970e were that religion would soon disappear: "[a]t that time, I was fully convinced that the progress of science and education would wipe out religion in the twenty-first century." As Achcar proceeds to focus on the rise of Christian Liberation theology in Latin America as well as Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab world during the last few decades, Luxemburg would have understood these phenomena, inasmuch as she anticipated the survival and even the vibrancy of religion — for some time to come. Roland Boer's perceptive chapter on "The Christian Communism of Rosa Luxemburg," in Volume 2 of his masterful *Criticism of Religion:*

On Marxism and Theology examines how and why Luxemburg opposed misguided efforts at anti-religious propaganda in the socialist movement. In fact, she was one of the first Marxists to underscore that dogmatic Atheism cannot be the core of either Marxism or the Labor movement. While being naturally highly critical of ecclesiastic hierarchies and power structures, she nevertheless identified with the yearnings and hopes for a better world — also present in religious sensibilities. She understood the immense social and cultural energies unleashed by religion and sought out ways to rather harness and make them fruitful to the cause of human emancipation.

Overall, Luxemburg's political project focuses on the defense and expansion of the realm of human freedoms across gender, religious, ethnic, and class lines. In doing so, she rejected not only the authoritarianism of the Right but also all on the Left who thought they could build any kind of socialist alternative without the utmost respect for civil liberties and democracy, — always a timely concern and blisteringly so in the latter half of the 20th century, the aftershocks of which are still with us. In addition, Luxemburg understood only too well that the representative democracies of the Western capitalist societies were perpetually undermined by obscene socio-economic and cultural inequalities. Her alternative, to the obvious structural limitations of the theory and practice of bourgeois liberalism, was never the elimination of democracy but instead its radical enlargement and expansion. To her, genuine socialism could never be built on the foundations of one-party dictatorships, no matter how well meaning the leaders might be. Authentic socialism required the augmentation of political democracy with economic democracy, — for the mutual enrichment of both. Thus any socialism worthy of its name needs to be based on the transformation of electoral and representative democracy into participatory democracy. Socialism thus could never be imposed from above. Only a grass-roots socialism — from below — could defang both the destructive and self-destructive elements of humanity, on the one hand, and unleash human creativity, and its potential for justice, peace, and self-fulfillment, on the other.

Rosa Luxemburg's approach addresses what Slavoj Žižek alludes to when he urges the Left to move beyond the limitations of the 20th century. Not only was Luxemburg aware of the utter bankruptcy of the conservative and hierarchical strains of thought and action, but she also understood how the reformist Liberal and Social Democratic movements would ultimately run into dead ends and exhaust themselves. And, of course, she was an early and very prescient Leftist critic of the peculiar bureaucratic collectivism and state capitalism that would eventually evolve into the Stalinist and post-Stalinist Soviet Union and its satellite states. In fact, her trenchant critique of the evolving one-party dictatorship in Russia made her arguably the most vehement advocate of civil liberties and personal freedom on the Left. In this, Luxemburg anticipates and illuminates our current dilemmas: how the endemic structural and moral imbalances of capitalism have not only ***not*** resolved themselves but are increasingly an existential threat to the very survival of our species. Today, while problems and crises mount, the current "Left" seems to have lost faith in its own solutions and remedies.

For several decades now, postmodernists of various shades and leanings have proclaimed, and even celebrated, the so-called "Death of the Grand Narrative." Not only have the traditional

Socialist and Communist alternatives to the *status quo* become deeply circumspect toa majority of those who identify broadly with the contemporary Left, but also the entire legacy of emancipatory thought, since the Enlightenment, seems to be written off. This emancipatory legacy of the Enlightenment project has been called into question not just by reactionary rightists, but by leftists, following in the pathways of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* These developments have coalesced into a deeply entrenched crisis of confidence. While Francis Fukuyama's now infamous assertion, regarding the triumph ofAmerican-style neo-liberal capitalism (argued in his 1989 essay "The End of History" and more elaborate 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*), usually meets with a dismissive snicker by self-described progressives, many of them nevertheless have internalized Fukuyama's thesis, often without beingfully conscious of its far-reaching implications. Fukuyama proclaimed:

> [w]hat we maybe witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War or the passing of a particular period ofpost-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point ofmankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.

The unfortunate, alarming, and successful siren call, expressed in Margaret Thatcher's notorious acronym "TINA," is that "there is no alternative" to neo-liberal capitalism, and so internalized is TINA that, in the words of Slavoj Žižek, it is now far easier for us to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism! In contrast, Rosa Luxemburg's commitment to human freedom and social justice, illustrates how dispiriting and unnecessary this proverbial self-castration of the mainstream Left, during the last three decades, truly is. Conversely her refreshing confidence that humanity ultimately possesses the capacity to live freely and self-directed lives serves as a powerful antidote to an age of greatly diminished expectations. In many ways, Luxemburg echoes Antonio Gramsci's famous sentiment that "[t]he point of modernity is to live a life without illusions while not becoming disillusioned." Had Luxemburg lived longer, she could very well have identified with Gramsci's equally stirring declaration of being a pessimist by virtue of intelligence while at the same time actively cultivating the indefatigable optimism that leads to sustained political activism.

Rosa Luxemburg understood that the private appropriation of collectively produced wealth creates unsustainable power differentials (the inner logic of capitalism remaining fundamentally at odds with any assertion of human equality and fairness). Helen C. Scott and Paul Le Blanc point out, in their highly readable introduction to *Socialism or Barbarism: The Selected Writings of Rosa Luxemburg* that she did not lose sight of how "destructive, irrational, and corrosive" Capitalism is to the unfolding of human dignity. While never viewing reform and revolution as polar opposites but instead as dialectically connected and mutually re-enforcing, Rosa Luxemburg emphasized that capitalism's pathologies are endemic to its overall inner logic and thus cannot be contained, at least not in the long run, by piecemeal tinkering and gradual reform.

Rosa Luxemburg's entrenched skepticism about the ability of capitalist societies to find the

humane balance between economic productivity, labor rights, and democracy comes into renewed focus when one consults the newest data from the Global Rights Index, published by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The overall picture is abysmal, not just for India and China, but also in most supposedly democratic Western societies. This investigation finds, among many other disturbing things, that employee rights are “systemically violated” in the United States. Of course, thoughtful readers of the recent and now rather famous Princeton University study, which examined on a broad empirical foundation US policy initiatives between 1981 and 2002, would not be surprised. This very mainstream Princeton study illustrates how and why the U.S. is not a democracy but an oligarchy in everything but name. Rosa Luxemburg would have spotted that the ITUC and the Princeton Study affirm her diagnosis — that genuine and sustainable democracy require us to move beyond capitalism, as any concessions extracted from the ruling classes are always in danger of being degraded and reversed.

In addition, and contrary to the sentiments of many Leftists today, Luxemburg’s writings tirelessly remind us that ultimately only the working class has the potential to overcome capitalism and replace it with genuine democracy. However this axiom is not based on an intellectually servile and dogmatic repetition of Marx and Engels’ thoughts on the working class, as the most potent revolutionary subject in capitalist societies. Luxemburg was, after all, persuaded by argument rather than spurious authoritarian claims. She also eschewed teleological schemes of historical inevitability, most famously by remarking that the eventual victory of freedom and justice over exploitation and domination was by no means a forgone conclusion. She made it clear that the socialist future was a possibility that stills needs to be actualized by concrete human beings made from flesh and blood, not by some magical laws of history. At a certain point in the development of human society and at certain levels of technology and productivity, cultures would theoretically afford all of their members, not just the privileged upper class, a life free from material and cultural poverty. But, of course, this humane socialist future is by no means fixed and certain; civilization, Luxemburg pointed out, is at the junction where we must chose, between socialism and barbarism. As then, both are very real possibilities, and the choice is ours in our age. What made Luxemburg single out the working class as the main subject of revolutionary change was not some mystical historically destiny, but the simple fact that mainly blue- and white-collar workers have the capacity to bring the entire system of capitalist accumulation and power to a crashing halt. Neither radicalized college students nor professional activists have that potential power currently.

Scott and LeBlanc remind us that, in addition to her remarkably dynamic fusing of non-dogmatic and critical Marxism on the one hand with political practice and activism on the other, Luxemburg’s ardent ecological concerns and regard for the innate rights of other animals, serve as models of a more holistic Left. Both note Luxemburg’s awareness and advocacy of an underlying sensuous and passionate interconnection with reality — people and other creatures and all of nature [which made her develop] an approach that is deeply humanistic but also alive to the understanding that humanity is part of a vast and complex web of life and creation.

Finally, Scott and Le Blanc point out how Luxemburg freed herself from the still very Eurocentric views of her cultural and educational background. She came to identify and connect . . . "with the ethnically and culturally diverse peoples of our world — with sensibilities one finds among the best cultural anthropologists — which permeate her analysis and fierce hostility to Imperialism."

Luxemburg very well understood what the contemporary Left may need to learn afresh, namely that advocating anti-Capitalism is not enough if we are serious about overcoming the increasingly obvious limitations of the current economic and political order. Focusing only on what must be opposed cannot provide a sufficient vision to energize and sustain the Left in the long run. Luxemburg's unabashed push for a socialist conception of the future, underpinned by a non-dogmatic but serious and probing identification with the living-and-breathing Marxist tradition, stands as a compelling example of what can and must be done in order to reverse several decades of decline and intellectual as well as cultural defeatism on the Left. There are, to be sure, already some encouraging signs of a renewal, regarding serious socialist thought. Even in the United States, several recent books, such as John Nichols' 2011 *The S Word: A Short History of an American Tradition … Socialism*, and, more recently, the anthology *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA* (2014) serve as conveyer belts to put a spirited and explicitly socialist critique of capitalism's irreconcilable pathologies squarely into the public arena. The latter is especially noteworthy, because it is published by a mainstream publishing house not conventionally associated with alternative, Leftist, let alone Socialist works. In addition, there are new intellectual journals with broad appeal, proudly identifying with the socialist and even Marxist tradition. Chief among these are *Jacobin*, established in 2010 as a venue for young intellectuals discovering and rediscovering the socialist tradition, as well as the refurbished *International Socialist Review*.

Naturally the old runaway phobias about Socialism, induced by the propaganda that emanated out of the Red Scare of the 1920s and (of course) the Cold War of blessed memory, are still alive and well in the general public, — but they also even exist among the Left that dares not speak its name. A sad case in point is, among many other things, the April 2014 interview in *The Progressive,* with the candidly Marxist economist Richard Wolff. While the interview itself was rich in insights, the introductory blurb identified Wolff merely as "one of the most prominent progressive economists in America." Naturally this completely glosses over the intellectual roots of Wolff's critique of American capitalism. This omission is not a mere formality but a sleight of hand, inasmuch as it does not clarify that Wolff might not be yet another Left-Liberal Keynesian and, as such, potentially indistinguishable, by the uninformed reader, from other Keynesians, like the post-Clinton era Robert Reich and Joseph Stiglitz, or perhaps even a Paul Krugman or Thomas Piketty. Whether Wolff represents merely another variant of Keynesian assumptions or is an avowed Marxist matters greatly.

While Marxists like Wolff doubtlessly share moral outrage over the obscene inequalities and injustices, endemically produced by contemporary capitalism, with the Keynesians, Wolff goes much further in his suggested remedies, because his critique is based elsewhere. He is highly skeptical about any realistic chance to return to the old Keynesian welfare states, as advocated,

for example, by Robert Reich in his recent documentary *Inequality For All*. Reich, pointing to the New Deal-inspired policies, that shaped much of US capitalism between the 1950s and the 1970s, instructed his viewers with the sentiment "we did it once, we can do it again." Granted that the moral impetus and goodwill of this sentiment is undeniable, one may yet ask, alongside Richard Wolff and Rosa Luxemburg, whether capitalism can really be lastingly tamed and civilized by reformist measures.

Reading and re-reading Luxemburg reminds us how much would be mislaid were we to dissolve the Marxist tradition into a catchall progressive undertaking. Surely, Marxists — especially those in a similar trajectory — understand the necessity to enlarge their own perspective in critical dialogue with other ways of seeing and analyzing the world. This mutual exchange and probing encounter with different approaches should not, however, lead to a grinding away of what is most compelling about a Marxist and socialist take on reality. Marxist analysis, while being far from infallible, offers what might arguably be the most analytically rigorous, focused, and intellectually coherent critique of capitalism. Luxemburg understood that and thus defended Marxism as a living tradition against those who, like Eduard Bernstein and later also Karl Kautsky, consciously as well as unconsciously tried to dilute it.

Thus Luxemburg can teach us much today about the indispensability of connecting Leftist, and especially Marxist, thought with political action. If Perry Anderson is to be believed, in his influential *Considerations on Western Marxism*: "the first and most fundamental of Western Marxism's characteristics has been structural divorce of this Marxism from political practice." His diagnosis rings profoundly and disturbing true: denoting missed opportunities, precisely because Western Marxism's main strength has been in theoretically opposing the hollow rigidity and the dogmatism of Soviet-style "Marxism-Leninism." Rosa Luxemburg is often positioned within the Western Marxist tradition as a trailblazer, reconstructing the dialectic unity between theory and practice: between analytical and descriptive efforts on the one hand, and political action on the other. Without empty sloganeering, she reminds us that a genuine Marxism can neither remain confined to the academy nor to small and eternally feuding political and ideological sects without otherwise succumbing to intellectual sterility and practical irrelevance.

On January 15th 1919 Rosa Luxemburg was murdered by right-wing thugs, with the tacit approval of the mainstream Social Democratic leadership. Not only did it cut short her own promising work, but this terrible deed came to poison the relationship between the developing Communist Party of Germany and Social Democrats, making it much easier, down the road, for the sinister alliance of Conservative and Nazi leaders to prepare for the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. The murder of Luxemburg derailed any hope for a genuinely democratic socialism in Germany, and it thus made the Stalinist take-over of the German Communist Party all but inevitable. The late Christopher Hitchens noted within this context in his *Atlantic Monthly* review, of the 2011 edition of Rosa Luxemburg's letters translated into English: "[o]ne cannot read the writings of Rosa Luxemburg, even at this distance, without an acute yet mournful awareness of what Perry Anderson once termed 'the history of possibility.'"

These lost possibilities were fleshed out in more detail by Pierre Broué in the latter's towering history of the German Revolution of 1918. There, Broué conjectures about what could very well have unfolded had Luxemburg's life had not been cut short; among other things, that German's democratic socialist revolution might have triumphed and served as a signal to other radicals, on the Left — to defend and expand the necessary symbiosis between socialism and civil liberties. Neither Stalin nor Hitler would have been able to come to power under such circumstances and the entire history of this immensely bloody 20th century could have been very different.

Counterfactual histories of what may have been are, of course, highly speculative. But they nevertheless remind us of unfulfilled potentials and roads not taken, — as unsated hopes, dreams, and visions of a just and free society will live on to reassert themselves in the future. The heart of Rosa Luxemburg's thinking, as well as her entire personhood, was not static but immensely dynamic and vigorously applied. Speaking to her contemporaries, spotlighting the revolutionary upheavals in Germany at the end of World War I that were successfully and violently crashed by the ruling classes, she also incisively addresses the status quo of ongoing oppression today, capturing a message of perennial determination in the struggle:

> '[o]rder rules in Berlin![?]' You stupid lackeys! Your 'order' is built on sand. Tomorrow the revolution will rear its head once more and announce to your horror amid the brass of trumpets:
>
> > ''I was, I am, I shall be!'

Fixing Representative Democracy

By | 2014: vol. 13, nos. 1-2

The writers of our Constitution did not mean for this country to be a representative democracy, but it has been transformed into one over the last two centuries. However, the transformation remains a work in progress – and one, which is currently experiencing another wave of backsliding.

Who, including those long ago writers would have thought that one day a single justice of the Supreme Court could vote to elect a new president or let assorted multimillionaires and billionaires significantly change the funding of election campaigns. And would they have imagined a minority party that had lost the last three elections nonetheless being able to paralyze the Congress, shut down the government, and nearly crash the world economy.

Clearly, the government and politics needs a good deal of fixing, both to restore what is being lost and to move toward the creation of a truly representative democracy.

Some of that fixing needs to be done soon, for today's America has become an economically unequal, politically polarized and a socially fragile society. Moreover, some of its most powerful citizens want to turn America into a corporate dominated republic.

Over the years, many people have suggested democratizing fixes and this essay discusses a number of them. Some of the fixes are familiar, some not, but only a few are currently feasible. Others will probably not be possible until the country is forced to modernize its now virtually unamendable constitution.

Right now, fixing representative democracy should become a topic of public discussion, both to introduce the idea to the nation and to nurture it until the times become politically favorable.

A Possible Start

However, it is also possible for the fixing process to start in a more foreseeable future. A political party able to attract more of the non voting moderate and low income population might be able to create a larger, more diverse and thus more representative electorate. If so, it might also, help a political party that sees some benefits in representative democracy obtain voting control of all three branches of the federal government and a significant majority of state governments.

That party could be the so-called Democratic wing of the current Democratic party, although its politics, image and language would need to be more populist than it is now. A populist social

movement to spur it along would be helpful too.

Depending on both economic and political conditions at the time, such a democratization of the party could take years. But if middle class unemployment and underemployment rise to dangerous levels and Washington gridlock paralyzes government sufficiently often, it could happen more quickly, as it did after the 1932 election.

At that point, the party leadership would have to move as quickly as possible to neutralize its opposition, inside and outside the government. Corporate and other conservative elite opposition will be unceasing, but if the party has enough control of the government to move on economic and other issues that will obtain sufficient popular support, it could then begin to make some of the most necessary political changes.

The Fixes

The fixes that follow emphasize changes in the electoral system and particularly the three branches of government, but also in government agencies and the economy. They are discussed in a logical order but some day they can perhaps be rearranged in political order in which those that can be implemented are set in motion.

Electoral Fixes:

Expanding the Electorate: A good way to introduce the turn toward a more representative democracy, and thereby also help fight the current trend in voter suppression, would be to press for expansion of the electorate with current nonvoters. That process could begin in states favorable to enlarging the electorate.

Many of the current nonvoters come from a now excluded and self-excluded population and even the Democrats have not made much effort to get them to the polling place. Although neither their political interest nor their impact should be overestimated, they are likely to elect more politically liberal representatives as well as attract new politicians who can speak to and for them.

A more populist platform might lure some current non voters; simplifying both registration and voting so that it is as easy and inviting an experience as possible.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court must be persuaded to give its blessing to a one person one vote principle, at least until the Constitution includes an amendment along these lines.

If schemes to add new voters to the electorate are met with new forms of voter restriction, at least elections for federal offices will have to be federalized. And if the proportion voting does not increase dramatically, the country will some day have to consider compulsory voting.

Once the electorate is expanded, the voters could give this process a further push by being enabled to insert themselves into the political process between elections. The most direct

solution is to give them the power to recall, provided the recalling electorate is large and varied enough to represent the country and if well organized interests cannot use their political skills to “pack the house.”

A more moderate, and perhaps therefore a possibly more feasible solution, is to enable voters to cast a limited number of votes of no confidence in all electoral and appointed officials. Who gets the power to decide when such a vote is to be held is crucial; perhaps a non or multi partisan group could choose in concert with what polling organizations report about public support for such a vote.

Election Finance Reform: Turning elections into publicly funded activities is an old dream. It not only democratizes the process but relieves candidate and elected officials from endless fundraising and the resulting political obligations to their donors.

Public funding has shortcomings, most of which are soluble, and if citizens really want to support their candidates financially, they should be able to do so as long as contributions are capped at a modest per capita level and bundling is forbidden. Perhaps even organized economic interests could donate funds, not to parties or candidates but to make the electoral process more attractive and thus capable of persuading additional voters to cast ballots.

These expansions of public funding might be combined with making elections more frugal: same day voter registration, open primaries or better still, none at all. All of these will probably anger Republicans and a significant number of Democrats, and it may take a temporary third party dedicated to only this fix to create sufficient public support for it.

The public might also be supportive if public financing were accompanied by a shortening of the actual election campaign period. Relegating the permanent campaign to the Internet and the so-called legacy media would help too. True, media firms would no longer obtain the current level of profit from campaign advertising, but then, the news media could play a more central role in dispensing electoral information and commentary. Putting an end to media advertising might also reduce hype, lying, fear mongering and the like in campaign advertising, and enable candidates to do more talking about themselves and their platforms.

Needless to say, electoral finance reform could only begin to reduce the political power of the economically powerful. However, it could limit their ability to lobby for corporate welfare programs to sabotage tax and regulatory reform, and to prevent job creation and income support programs that benefit the middle class and the poor. Under ideal conditions, the corporations that play leading roles in the consumer economy might even support policies to increase consumer demand – and their profits. In the meantime employee, consumer and citizen lobbies must be organized to make sure that elected officials represent them more effectively.

A related reform that might help to replace some corporate and influence is to restore the earmarks privilege to incumbent and challenger candidates in all branches of government. The earmarks would be available only before elections and the amount given would be capped by

the size of the eligible voting population. The appropriate government agency should be given regulatory power to prevent illegalities as well as bridges to nowhere and other unjustifiable proposals. Electoral challengers should be guaranteed the same amount as incumbents, to be delivered if and when they are the electoral victors.

Governmental Fixes

If the electorate can be enlarged and campaign funding can be obtained from the citizenry, a party ready to further expand representative democracy could move ahead with other fixes, individually or en masse as determined by political conditions.

Reforming the Government: One place to begin is with each of the branches of the federal government. In fact, it has already begun; to elect the president by the national popular vote and to do away with the Electoral College in the process.

I. The Senate: An equally urgent but more difficult fix is to democratize the Senate by equalizing the voting power of Senators by state population size. Right now, Senators from the four smallest states, with less than one percent of the country's total population, cast as many votes as the senators from the four largest states, with 33 percent of the country's population.

Although the Senate has the power to determine its rules of procedure, the understandable unwillingness of small states to surrender any of their present power means that it is impossible, say to award every Senator a numerical vote equivalent to the population of his or her state. One possible fix, which is bi partisan could perhaps be forced through: Senators from the largest states should dominate the most important committees and subcommittees.

II. The House: The Speaker's ability to withhold legislation from the House should be subject to at least voting approval from the House. However, at least two thirds of the House should be required to veto appropriations for legislation already passed and signed by the President.

An even now feasible fix would enhance the representatives' ability to function as representatives. With campaign finance reform, they would no longer have to spend their time fundraising. Even so, their districts are large enough to prevent them from doing much representing.

Consequently, they need additional staff charged entirely with providing representational and other services to constituents, including helping services for which the latter are eligible. Poor and other minimally politically weak constituents especially need such representation.

However, at the same time, constituents should be helped to exert their voter power with and over their elected representative. For one thing, they need to know whom that representative sees and does not see, favors and disfavors, especially in their own part of the congressional district but also in the district as a whole.

Since it would not always be in the representative's interest to distribute such information, it

has to be supplied by a source outside the Congress, possibly journalists already working for news media in the congressional district. Another outside source is needed to assist constituents, particularly those lacking “organizational capital” to reach and lobby their elected representative or a member of the representational staff.

III. The Executive: The executive branch is so large and saddled with so many political, operational and bureaucratic duties that making it more representative may be impossible. Since it often has monopoly power over various activities, some checks and balances may be needed where none currently exist.

For example, the White House now has a de facto monopoly over the war mobilization and war making power, as well as over the espionage and other information gathering functions connected to this power. Congress has a set of de jure responsibilities, which are often preempted de facto.

Since this preemption can turn into a matter of life and death for the people who actually do the fighting, and since it violates the Constitution, the Supreme Court should be supplying corrective decisions.

The federal agencies may need democratizing more than those governed by elected officials. The underlying problem is that they all hold monopoly power, although private or semi public agencies that provide the same goods and services as inexpensively and responsibly as government ones could be encouraged to compete with government.

In addition, regulatory agencies that are dominated by the firms they regulate and their lobbyists must be reorganized. Although the firms’ roles in making the economy function and in creating jobs must be protected, the demands and needs of their employees and customers deserve the same attention. Perhaps elected citizen and worker boards could supplement – and inform – the relevant Congressional committees that now supervise federal agencies.

IV. The Supreme Court: Although the Supreme Court is one of the three branches of government, it is currently a virtually independent body with very little accountability. Its actions are rarely affected by the immediate checks and balances by which presidential vetoes and Congressional votes can overturn the decisions of the other two branches. Moreover, the justices have lifelong freedom to impose their interpretations of the Constitution and their political ideologies on the country, sometimes changing it more drastically than the other two branches.

Court’s judicial freedom can have both positive and negative consequences, but in a representative democracy, it needs to be subject to at least some of the same checks and balances as the rest of the government.

One change, already widely discussed among legal theorists would impose term limits on the justices of all the federal courts. If the system were staggered, every new president would be able to appoint justices that share his or her judicial philosophy.

A more significant fix would require that all but the most routine Supreme Court decisions require super majorities, of six or even seven justices. A more drastic alternative would establish a separate body empowered to review Supreme Court decisions and send them back to a lower court. If necessary, this body could even veto a Court decision, suggest that it be replaced by executive orders or instant Congressional legislation.

Such a body should minimally include the president and vice president, the Senate's and the House's majority and minority leaders, and the Speaker of the House. Someday in the future, a permanent solution can be worked out as a constitutional amendment. Eventually, the Supreme Court will find a way to live with the new checks and balances principle, and the judicial branch may even begin to follow the election returns somewhat more frequently.

Actually, term limits should be set for all branches of government. Losing the experiential and other wisdom of long term incumbents could be counteracted by offering them consultancies in the relevant offices in which they could be useful. This applies especially to members of Congress, who could advise the committees on which they served. Such a move might also discourage some from becoming "K Street" lobbyists.

Non-Governmental Fixes

Economic Democracy:

As long as economic power leads to political influence, the economy must be subject to at least some of the values and rules of representative democracy. To be sure, many voters base their votes on the state of the economy, and they might do so even more if recall or no confidence votes were available to them. However, even these limit voter input into the economy.

One long discussed fix is a more sharply progressive tax system on income and wealth. However; a fuller employment economy with decent and well paying jobs would be even better for bringing lower income people into the electorate.

However, a literal democratization of the economy is required as well. Multi-class unions, which represent employees, are more representative than traditional working class unions. Employee lobbies are needed especially where unions cannot be established. Other citizen lobbies must also be organized, if only because reducing corporate funding of election campaigns will surely result in more corporate lobbying. Still, economic and even political democratization may ultimately be impossible without an employee's party.

Employee and union owned firms, coops and other workplace forms that empower workers ought to be encouraged too. However, in a global economy, these are unlikely to ever constitute more than a minority of firms. All other but the smallest firms need direct employee representation in all firm decision making bodies, so structured that employees have enough power to influence decisions affecting them. Where relevant, customers need representation as well, even if it may not need to be as pervasive as employee representation.

Yet perhaps the most important step in advancing economic democracy would be the development of what is sometimes called a new social contract between government and private enterprise. One of these days the country may be unable to afford the economic and political costs of the current adversarial relationship, and the major decision makers in both will have to figure out a division of labor in which each performs the economic functions it does best.

If such a division of labor were possible, the public's trust in both might increase.

All this is easier said than done, and perhaps it cannot happen until private enterprise faces a crisis or other problematic situation in which it needs government but cannot apply its traditional economic or political muscle to get what it needs.

Political and Economic Education:

In a democracy, citizens need to understand how their polity and economy actually work, but even though many Americans have now graduated from or attended college, they still know little more about both than earlier generations. This state of affairs could be corrected in part by their taking courses in political science and the political economy, or better yet, in the economy itself.

Although free adult courses could be offered now, all high schools and colleges should require such courses beginning with the student's first year. Decades hence, most Americans should be expert enough in how their society works to be informed citizens, although this will not necessarily turn them into more involved or active ones. Perhaps the news media existing at that time can, however, continue and update their audiences' political and economic education.

The federal government should incentivize this course work, with teacher training, model courses, and other funds required to initiate this program. Undoubtedly, many local school boards will reject such overtures, and a large number may offer courses that fail to instruct students in how the polity and economy actually work. Community discussions about and political conflicts over what should be taught will themselves be educationally valuable, but ultimately the federal government will have to step in both with funds and regulation to realize the program's intent.

The program must also understand that despite America's long-standing belief in the power of education to change minds as well as economic and political institutions, its actual impact is limited. Perhaps it can help teach citizens how to intervene politically, but they are unlikely to do so until they know, almost in a Biblical sense, how dependent they are on these institutions for their well being and their very survival.

Another Political Scenario

Although I have assumed that the suggested fixes would follow if a democratically minded political party were in long-term control of the government, a very different scenario can also

be imagined. If the current level of political polarization increases and ultra conservatives continue to gridlock the government, its resulting inability to make crucial decisions will badly damage the ability of both economy and polity to function.

When the damage reaches crisis level, drastic fixes to put the government back in working order may have to be made, by executive order or emergency Congressional decisions as well as through the electoral process. Enough such crises may eventually require the modernization of the Constitution.

Unfortunately, political crises often result in negative effects, further embittering political blocs and economic interests competing for the same resources and increasing the conflict between them. Then a more representative democracy might be hard to achieve, and some will press for a less than democratic republic instead.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, other ways of fixing the current polity could and should be imagined. So should different conceptions of representative democracy, and different ways of achieving them. Admittedly, such imaginings are easier if political feasibility is not required, but they may be useful as thought experiments and ideas for policies that might now be feasible. Consequently, they can be a productive exercise for future oriented policy analysts, think tanks, scholars and of course politicians and citizens.

The Althusserian Cul-de-Sac

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The French philosopher Louis Althusser's structuralist Marxism remains a point of reference for many contemporary schools of radical thought, even for some of those that have moved away from Marxism completely. Moreover, as radical thought has experienced a partial return to Marx after several decades of Nietzschean post-structuralism, the legacy of Althusser lies in wait, offering version of Marxism that offers an all-too-comfortable transition from the more recent forms of philosophical radicalism. This is because one can embrace Althusser while still rejecting subjectivity, humanism, and even the dialectic.

The possibility of subjectivity in the sense of critique, resistance, or revolt on the part of the subjugated, is closed off almost completely in the work of Althusser. This stance mars his well-known essay on "ideological superstructures," which was indeed a serious attempt to go beyond reductionist arguments concerning ideology's relationship to its material base, and to theorize its place in late twentieth century capitalist society in terms of institutions outside value production like religion and education.

In Althusser's 1969 essay on "Ideology and Ideological Superstructures," almost any notion of subjectivity is illusory, or suspect. As Althusser sees it, that illusion props up the dominant political form developed under modern capitalism, liberal democracy. In short, if one validates the possibility of human creativity and self-movement within — or even in struggle against — existing society, one is at best an idealist dupe, and at worst a propagandist for the capitalist system, part of what Althusser terms the "ideological state apparatuses." These apparatuses, which include, among others, religious and educational institutions, create and maintain the ideologies through which the system maintains itself in power.

The fact that these apparatuses interact with individual members of society by engaging in "the interpellation[1] of these 'individuals' as subjects" is simply part of these individuals' "subjection to the Subject" with a capital "S," i.e. the capitalist system. This interpellation is part of the system's "rituals" of domination[1]: "They must be obedient to God, to their conscience, to the priest, to de Gaulle, to the boss, to the engineer, that 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' etc.".[2] Playing on the ambiguity in the term "subject," wherein it can refer to either a "free subject" or a "subjected being," Althusser forces these two into a single totality, wherein: "The individual is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e., in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection"[3]

Althusser confines his discussion largely to individual rather than collective subjectivities, ignoring the varying forms of collective self-consciousness and resultant collective action for self-liberation that emerges again and again on the part of oppressed classes, genders, nations,

ethno-racial groups, and sexual minorities. This is a most problematic omission indeed for a Marxist. But even if one remains on Althusser's ground, that of the individual subject who is a mere subject of domination, isn't he creating a false totality here? Where is the possibility of contradictions between these individual subjects and their subjugation? Althusser acknowledges that such a situation may occur, but passes this off as a "bad" subject who is then dealt with by the openly "repressive" state apparatus, i.e., police, prisons, etc.[4][2]

But what about a rebellious individual subject whose rebellion touches off wide support within an entire subjected group? Consider Rosa Parks getting herself arrested for violating the racial segregation laws on that bus in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955, for example. Parks's actions, taken in connection with a large support network, which grew rapidly in the days following her arrest, touched off a decade of radical change today termed the Civil Rights Movement. When such an occurrence comes at the right moment, when historical circumstances are aligned toward liberation, and when the organization of both emancipatory ideas and the means to implement them are present, we have what Dunayevskaya called a "subjectivity which has absorbed objectivity, that is to say through its struggle for freedom it gets to know and cope with the objectively real".[5]

Another problem with Althusser's ideological superstructures is that they seem to float above the economic structures of society. Here, his surprising, albeit muted, affinity to Maoism is important to note, something that is often missed because Althusser remained a member of the pro-Moscow French Communist Party.[3] Such a focus on culture and ideology as opposed to economic base was also a hallmark of Mao's theory of contradiction, as well as the underpinning for his "Cultural Revolution" of the late 1960s. That "revolution" was in reality more of a top-down affair in which Mao used Red Guards recruited from among the student youth – supported by one bureaucracy he did not shake up at this time, the military – in order to dislodge some of his fellow leaders, whom he deemed too close to Russia, among other sins. The Maoist Red Guard attacks on forms of "Western culture," like classical European music or books, supposedly constituted a challenge to global imperialism,[4] this at the very time when Mao was refusing to give much in the way of material aid to Vietnam in its struggle against U.S. imperialism. The whole process ended, not as Mao's international followers had hoped, in the establishment of a new International to the left of the pro-Moscow Communist parties, but instead with a rapprochement with the United States under Richard Nixon, the butcher of Vietnam.

Another problematic feature of Althusser's superstructures like religion, and to an extent, education, is that they are not new or unique to capitalism. Despite this, Althusser does not analyze their specifically capitalist character very much. In this sense, his ideological superstructures lack historical development or grounding. More problematically still, his focus on the cultural and superstructural realm obviates any real discussion of the working class, the human subject that is both subjected to and at the same time, in the form of a revolutionary subject, able to resist or even revolt against capital. Althusser implies that real changes have to begin at the level of superstructure, of ideology. This ignores the fact that real changes in consciousness often result when changes in the economic structure of society wrench people

out of their customary modes of existence, plunging them into new forms of production and property relations.

Althusser also famously attacked both Hegelianism and humanism as bourgeois, if not reactionary. This was a departure even from orthodox, Engelsian Marxism. Although Engels had conceptualized idealism and materialism as a general dividing line between progressive and reactionary forms of philosophy, he made an exception for Hegel's idealism, which he regarded as definitely revolutionary. Thus, Engels had always acknowledged Hegel as an important antecedent of Marx's thought.[5] Nor had Engels explicitly repudiated humanism, although he did not make a core category out of it either.

For his part, Althussser, reacting against both Marxist and existentialist humanism, went on the attack, writing of the "phantom" or "shade of Hegel." He called upon Marxists, as if exorcising a vampire, "to drive this phantom back into the night"[6]. Althusser was to continue this theme unabated throughout his intellectual career, rallying more orthodox Marxists against the threats posed by Hegelian and humanist versions of Marxism. He carried the debate into Lenin's work as well, attempting to separate Lenin from Hegel, despite clear evidence to the contrary in Lenin's 1914-15 Hegel notebooks.[6]

Althusser also attracted not a few younger intellectuals to an anti-humanist Marxism that, at least on the surface, did not mark a return to the earlier scientistic and quasi-positivist philosophical orientation of many earlier Marxists. This earlier scientistic orientation, attractive in an age when "progressive" science fought against religion, had been severely undermined during the post-World War II period, when various forms of radical humanism assailed the ravages that had taken place through the use of modern science, most notably the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. But by the time Althusser came onto the scene, in the 1960s, some at least were ripe for an antihumanist counterattack, a sentiment that only grew larger in the wake of the defeats of the revolutionary movements of the 1960s. This was especially the case in France, where the near revolution of 1968 had first raised and then dashed hopes for a profoundly radical revolution inside an industrially developed capitalist society.

Beginning in the early 1960s, Althusser famously dismissed the writings of the early Marx as pre-Marxist, imbued with what he saw as liberal and Hegelian notions of alienation and humanism. These writings were simply not Marxist, he held, because they were humanist. Althusser "knew" what was true Marxism, even when confronted with writings by Marx that did not cooperate with his form of knowing, and any attempt to widen the circle was simply a deviation: "Since the 1930s Marx's Early Works have been a war-horse for petty bourgeois intellectuals in their struggle against Marxism.… Marx, Engels, and Lenin, to refer only to them, ceaselessly struggled against ideological interpretations of an idealist, humanist type that threatened Marxist theory"[7].

Althusser goes further, however, placing antihumanism at the core of Marx's thought despite the lack of textual evidence on this point: "One can and must speak openly of Marx's

theoretical anti-humanism"[8] The term "speak openly" may have been intended to imply that "real" Marxists "knew" this, but had de-emphasized it in order to gain broader appeal.

The French Hegel scholar Jacques d'Hondt, who, unlike Althusser, was to resign from the French Communist Party in 1968 to protest the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia, noted at the time that for generations, Marxists had been at great pains to answer attacks from liberal humanists, who had claimed that Marxism reduced the human being, in dehumanized fashion, to a set of economic categories and forces. Therefore, wrote d'Hondt, the Althusserian attack on humanism amounted to "a type of provocation" that served to delink Marxism from the democratic and anti-fascist traditions to which it had often been allied. As against Althusser's rejection of the term "man" or "human being" as a liberal illusion, d'Hondt noted that Marx had used this term when he wrote that the human being "makes history".[9] Moreover, d'Hondt wrote, "One runs the risk of undermining Marxist methodology if its human basis is ignored." From a Marxist standpoint, he added, "the point is [human] liberation".[10]

Althusser's key Marxological notion, pursued more virulently than others who had only hinted at such a thesis, was that Marx made an "epistemological break" in 1845 with his earlier writings, especially the *1844 Manuscripts* .[11] Thus, the *German Ideology* of 1846, co-authored with Engels, was Marxist, but Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* was not.

Initially, Althusser dismissed attempts to tie *Capital* to Marx's early writings via the psychoanalytic concept of projection: "The whole, fashionable theory of 'reification'[7] depends upon a projection of the theory of alienation found in the early texts, particularly the *1844 Manuscripts*, onto the theory of 'fetishism' in *Capital*".[12]

He also distorts what are often held to be the most important pages in *Capital*. Ignoring Marx's own language in the fetishism section to the effect that under capitalism, the "social relation" between human beings takes on "the fantastic form of a relation between things"[13], Althusser declares peremptorily: "In *Capital* the only social relation that is presented in the form of a thing (this piece of metal) is money"[14].

A few years later, in his preface to a widely circulated paperback edition of *Capital*, published in French in 1969, Althusser complains that the entire first part of *Capital* is marked by "a method of presentation" imbued with "Hegelian prejudice"[15]. For these and other reasons, Althusser advises the reader to "leave Part I (Commodities and Money) deliberately on one side in a first reading"[16].[8]

By now, Althusser had modified his earlier notion of an 1845 "epistemological break" with Hegel on Marx's part. Here in 1969, he laments "survivals in Marx's language and even in his thought of the influence of Hegel's thought" in *Capital* itself.[17] Marx, it seems, did not become fully "Marxist" until nearly a decade after he first published *Capital*, with "*Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) as well as the *Marginal Notes on Wagner*" of 1881, texts that were finally free of the supposed taint of Hegel and humanism.[18] In other words, Marx was not really a Marxist until eight years before his death!

At this juncture, Althusser's argument flirted with an open anti-Marxism, and in no small way anticipated the poststructuralist rejection by Michel Foucault and others of Marx *tout court,* as an Hegelian humanist whose thought was supposedly marked by the concept of a fixed human essence.

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Additional Links

[1] Both the French word *interpellation*, spelled the same as its English equivalent, and that equivalent carry the meaning of posing a question to a government minister in a parliamentary system in such a way as to provoke a vote of no confidence in that minister. However, the French term (and not the English one) also refers – here in a more sinister and repressive sense – to the common practice of the French police to *interpeller* [interpellate] a suspect for a number of days without a formal arrest, this in a legal system that lacks the notion of *habeas corpus*.

[2] He also mentions class struggle briefly in a postscript, but without much concretization.

[3] Many of Althusser's students did become Maoists, however. And it should also be noted, with regard to Althusser's virulent rejection of the young Marx's humanist writings (to be discussed below), that here too, Maoism was more in sync with Althusser than the Soviet Marxism of the early 1960s, which had begun to use the term "humanism" on occasion, to its

own advantage. Similarly to Althusser, however, the man who was then the leading philosopher in Maoist China, Zhou [Chou] Yang, wrote in 1963 that the young "Marx and Engels were, indeed, somewhat influenced by Humanist ideas," but once they had "formulated the materialist concept of history and discovered the class struggle is the motive force of social development, they got rid of this bourgeois influence" (cited in Dunayevskaya [1973] 1989, p. 182). Subsequently, Zhou was purged and abused during the Cultural Revolution and by the 1980s was himself writing in a Marxist humanist vein.

[4] We find foreshadowed here a whole series of events that also attacked "Western" culture in the name of anti-imperialism, and over time, cultural "purity." These ranged from Ayatollah Khomeini's draconian restrictions on women in the first months after the Iranian revolution of 1979, to the Taliban's dynamiting of Buddhist statues in Afghanistan in early 2001.

[5] Jacques d'Hondt (1972) emphasizes this point in his critique of Althusser.

[6] On this point, see my earlier book (Anderson 1995).

[7] Here Althusser ignored the fact that the concept of reification in Marx was brought to the fore by Georg Lukács in 1923 in *History and Class Consciousness*, a text that mentioned neither alienation nor humanism. Lukács's book appeared several years before Marx's *1844 Manuscripts*, including the essay on "Alienated Labor," had been unearthed from the archives and then first published in Russian (1927) and German (1932).

[8] This injunction seems incongruous today, given the increased recognition of the importance of commodity fetishism and value theory.

Citations

[1] Ben Brewster, trans.*Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. (New York: Monthly Review Press:1971) 181.

[2] *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* 181.

[3] *Ibid, 182.*

[4] *Ibid,* 181

[5]Dunayevskaya, Raya. *Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 Until Today. (*Amherst, NY: Humanity Books[1958] 2000) 327.

[6] Ben Brewster, trans. Louis, Althusser. *For Marx*. (New York: Vintage [1965] 1969.) 116.

[7] *For Marx*. 10-11.

[8] *Ibid,* 229.

[9] Hondt, Jacques d'. *De Hegel à Marx*. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1972) 225.

[10] *De Hegel à Marx*, 228.

[11] Ben Brewster, trans. Louis Althusser. *For Marx*. (New York: Vintage [1965] 1969) 33.

[12] For Marx, 230.

[13] Ben Fowkes, trans. Karl Marx. *Capital.* [1867-75] *Capital.* Vol. I. (New York: Vintage 1976) 165.

[14] Ben Brewster, trans. Louis Althusser. *For Marx*. (New York: Vintage [1965] 1969) 230.

[15] Ben Brewster, trans.*Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. (New York: Monthly Review Press:1971) 90.

[16] *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, 88.*

[17] *Ibid*, 93.

[18] *Ibid*, 93-94.

Reflections on Arendt

By | 2014: vol. 13, nos. 1-2

In the late winter of 1957-58, while I had just begun courses at NYU Law School, a manuscript landed on the desk of my mother, Frances Green, who at that time was General Manager of *Commentary*, as she had been since the magazine's founding in 1946. As General Manager, she was in charge of the business end, such as circulation and promotion, dealing with suppliers, hiring and firing (what's nowadays called "human resources," and which led to the disaster of Norman Podhoretz). The editor-in-chief was Elliot Cohen (*not* in any way a progenitor of the later neo-con politico of the same name), who had been drafted by the American Jewish Committee from the *Menorah Journal* to create a quite different kind of Jewish-American magazine, one that would have both feet firmly planted in the middle of New York intellectual life. That task he was perfectly equipped for; but my mother, the General Manager, had a secret job as well—though it wasn't secret from him. The Board of the AJC (known in the Jewish community as "Committee," to distinguish it from the more conservative and traditionally Jewish American Jewish Congress, or "Congress"), which had founded, sponsored, and funded *Commentary*, had appointed my mother to be the Committee's representative at the magazine. Primarily this meant making sure that nothing be printed in it that might call into question the AJC's commitment to liberal assimilation: i.e., no heavy-handed Jewish nationalism, no morally (i.e., sexually) embarrassing forays that might offend conservative Jews (look up Isaac Rosenfeld's "Adam and Eve on Delancey Street," which she did pass after a little rewriting); and above all nothing, nothing, that might damage the fragile but (in the view of both parties) absolutely essential Black/Jewish civil rights alliance of that era, the maintenance of which was the Board's number one social commitment. No one at the AJC, from Editor Cohen on down, had the Pod's "Negro problem," no way.

The manuscript that my mother brought home from the office one day, in the fulfillment of this primary duty, was called "Reflections on Little Rock;" Cohen had had to take only one brief look at before passing it on to her. It was by Hannah Arendt, with whom my parents, who had been heavily involved in Jewish resettlement during and after the War, had once been friendly, but had not seen in many years. At this time, therefore, I knew her primarily as author of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which I had just finished reading and received as a masterpiece of historical analysis, above all in her original and compelling argument that racism and anti-Semitism were crucial elements of the Counter-Enlightenment and the deformations of the Twentieth Century; we Greens all thought of her as the most important Jewish thinker of the time. On the other hand, I had found her attempt in the second part of the book to force Communism into the same mode as Naziism to be pondereous and unconvincing; her brilliance had become strained.

In "Reflections," originality and brilliance were now swamped by perversity. In it Arendt argued—unbelievably to her first three readers, namely the Green family—that the coercive

enforcement of school integration unacceptably made children the object of public policy, and that that was not the way to bring about peaceful change in race relations: that could only be brought about by intermarriage, and therefore the way to achieve the desired end was by the abolition of miscegenation laws. (She later argued in a printed exchange with Sidney Hook that these laws were also much more clearly unconstitutional than school segregation was.) Questioning liberal pieties, she called it, and it certainly did.

The fate of the essay at *Commentary*, astonishingly enough, would be decided by a majority vote of the Greens—we would argue about it, vote, and my mother would follow that vote in her decision (though how she would have acted had the vote gone against her no one will ever know). And that is what took place. She herself had no difficulty: in general, opposition to racism, as demonstrated by the commitment to school integration, was not only central to her worldview as a liberal and a Jew—a worldview that Podhoretz would repudiate a few years later– but it was also the very essence of the task for which she'd been hired: maintaining and if possible strengthening the civil rights alliance. Leaving that aspect of the matter aside, my view about race and race relations was similar. However, I was also an absolutist civil libertarian, veteran of many unhappy and no doubt Oedipal shouting matches with my rigidly anti-Communist father, and censorship was anathema to me, as it was to him–if no "Commies" involved. (I am constained to admit that, fresh out of a mid-life career crisis and Temple University Law School, he had drafted the Mundt-Nixon Communist Control Act in the Wall Street law offices of the very conservative Louis Waldman, "to take the issue away from the reactionaries," as he apologetically put it to me.)

I wish I could recall the argument, I would love to be able to listen to a tape recording of it, which of course never existed. In any event this baby could not be made whole, not even by Solomon himself—early Jewish political theorist—but I know that in the end my father and I split our votes, I siding with my mother and thus carrying the day. This was for me the line of principle that couldn't be crossed, for even if one can rarely know exactly where that line is, it is usually the case, as the theologian Walter Stein once wrote, that we can know "what is well to the North or South of it." In this case I knew that we were in serious danger of being well on the wrong side of it. The Negro teenagers we called The Little Rock Nine—Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, and the rest—may have been children when they entered their gauntlet of hatred, but by the time they had passed through a century's worth of screams and spittle, of the eternal spirit of slavery, and reached the front door of Little Rock High Central High School, escorted by members of the 101st Airborne Division, they were children no more, nor merely victims, nor "the objects of public policy." They were heroes, and the ground they'd traversed was sacred ground: like Cemetery Ridge, or Omaha Beach, or the streets and alleyways of Stalingrad. The Battle of Little Rock.

Arendt was excised from *Commentary*, never, I believe, to appear there again; nor would she have wanted to once Podhoretz (though he later borrowed Arendt's argument about inter-marriage) made his blood thirsty turn. Nor did we ever see her again, but that was adventitious; we'd never been that close. Two years later she published the article in *Dissent*, accompanied by an editorial disclaimer and an explanation of events by her, along with a

defense of the piece. It caused some kerfuffle, but meanwhile “Eichmann in Jerusalem” had begun to appear in *The New Yorker*, and monopolized the attention of Arendt-haters everywhere in the Jewish community. Again, the power of her fundamental and original conception—the ”banality of evil”—was overshadowed by a strained argument about Eichmann, in this case due to her strange inability, given that she was one of the most important analysts of anti-Semitism, to plumb the depths of his mind. Perhaps her emphasis on not just the intellectual but even more the ethical centrality of thinking made it impossible for her to acknowledge that “thinking” about “the Jewish Question” was precisely what Eichmann was doing.

As for “Reflections,” I still cannot say whether my mother and I did the right thing except that it was indeed an ignorant article; that by her own admission Arendt did not understand the American South or American racism at all; and that just the same her opposition to school integration was as genuinely devoid of racism as her criticisms of the Jewish Councils, and above all the Zionist treatment of the Palestinians, were of anti-Semitism. Arendt, not only when she was right but also when she was wrong, stands for me as a model of how to think with difficulty but also with absolute integrity and fearlessness about issues that are difficult to think about clearly at all. Would that all of us who do political thinking could emulate her.

Inside Llewyn Davis: The Coens' Melancholy and Luminous Ballad

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Wavy Gravy (aka Hugh Mooney), the Hog Farm activist and musician, once said, "if you can remember the sixties, you weren't really there." Wavy may have been on a lengthy acid trip, but the **rest of us clearly remember the 60's as an era of assassinations, civil rights and anti-war demonstrations, the beginnings of the feminist and gay movements, rural and urban communes, and of course sex, drugs and rock n'roll. However, there was an interregnum, approximately from 1960-62, before much of this ever took place. It's this period and in Greenwich Village where the Coen Brothers have set their new film, Inside Llewyn Davis—a time when the great folk revival was in full bloom.**

Inside Llewyn Davis, however, has no particular interest in providing a depiction of that milieu's ethos or everyday life. It offers a couple of establishing shots of Village streets, and we get to see Washington Square Park, Café Reggio, and the Gaslight, the coffee house where folk singers performed. But the texture and dynamic of the Village world of folk singers and bohemians–faux and genuine—is generally left unexplored. Social or documentary realism has never been central to the Coens' aesthetic. They are satirists and fabulists, who also often like to construct or deconstruct very particular variations on traditional genres (e.g., Blood Simple, Miller's Crossing).

Inside Llewyn Davis focuses on a favorite protagonist of the Coens—the character who confronts a world of trouble. In this respect Llewyn Davis is not that different from the always mellow unemployed slacker, "the Dude" (Jeff Bridges), in the extremely funny, cult-attracting The Big Lebowski (1988), who has to contend with pedophiles, pornographers, anarchists, and assorted other villains, or the mathematics professor Larry Gopnick (Michael Stuhlbarg), in their very personal masterpiece A Serious Man (2009). Gopnick finds his life unraveling–among other troubles his marriage collapses, and he must confront an anonymous letter-writing campaign that may derail his chances for tenure. He seeks answers from rabbis who can offer only banalities for why all these Job-like sorrows have befallen him, and comes up with nothing, or is it nothingness? The Coens' film strikingly renders a dark, comic/pathetic view of the human condition–suburban Jewish middle class style. The sea of troubles portrayed in these Coen Brothers' films reminds one of Virginia Woolf's comment, that "I read The Book of Job last night, God does not come off well."

Llewyn Davis, a folk singer from working-class Queens (affectingly performed

by Oscar Isaac, who is in almost every scene), has his own share of troubles though the elements of black comedy and satire are more muted here than in A Serious Man. His singing partner has committed suicide, and he's a man without a home or phone, couch surfing from apartment to apartment, dependent on the charity of friends and acquaintances.

The one close but extremely difficult relationship Llewyn has is with Jean (Cary Mulligan), the attractive wife and singing partner of Llewyn's friend Jim, played by Justin Timberlake. Jean claims to be pregnant with Llewyn's child (though she has had sex with Jim and other men), and treats him to a furious outpouring of profane and contemptuous insults: "Asshole, you are a shit;" "King Midas's idiot brother;" and "Your life is going nowhere, you wreck everything you touch." Clearly, some passionate feeling and mutual concern exists between them, but it's a volatile and unequal mixture of love and hate, much of it brought on by their having very different perspectives on life. Her aim is to pursue a career singing pop folk music à la Peter, Paul and Mary and have a stable domestic life in the suburbs, while Llewyn views her as a sell-out to all the forces and values he despises.

In addition, he clashes with his conventional, hard working sister in Queens, who has little understanding of or sympathy for his travails as an artist, and alienates her by cursing and saying critical things about their father, a retired merchant seaman.

Obviously, nothing works out for Llewyn—a man who blunders about with little consciousness of other people. His record producer tries to avoid paying him the few dollars he makes from his album, the eponymously titled "Inside Llewyn Davis." He has acquaintances, but is essentially a sullen, harsh, and generally unlikable loner.

Llewyn throws a tantrum at an academic Columbia University dinner party (the Coens' humorously caricaturing the stiffness and pomposity of the guests) given by his caring hosts–the Gorfeins. But though he behaves insensitively, the Coens empathize with Lleywn's frustration at being turned into a performer and pet bohemian for the pleasure of academics, who live comfortable lives.

He peevishly attacks a very polite, pleasant fellow folk singer, Troy Nelson (modeled after Tom Paxton), who is also crashing at Jean and Jim's, for serving in the Army. He's equally and somewhat justifiably disdainful of his friend Jim's banal, novelty pop song "Please, Please, Mr. Kennedy," though it gives him a bit of a payday.

However, when Llewyn performs folk music one feels a purity and honesty that don't find expression in the rest of his life. The very first scene of the film consists of close-ups of Llewyn soulfully singing "Hang me, Oh hang me," shot with great fluidity as the camera captures the atmosphere of the Gaslight from various angles—overheads, point of view shots, etc. The song is closely associated with Dave

Van Ronk, whose autobiographical memoir of those early days of the folk revival, The Mayor of MacDougal Street, was the inspiration for the Coen brothers' script, and who can be heard singing "Green, Green Rocky Road" behind the final credits.

The gravelly-voiced Van Ronk was a more social and convivial (he drank heavily), politically committed, and successful performer than Llewyn. But like LLewyn he sang blues and old ballads, and was described as earnest to a fault, intelligent and guileless, and unwilling to compromise his integrity. A few of the details of his life are used in the film but they are very totally different people. Still, a quote from Van Ronk is applicable to Llewyn: "Here's to the heart that's wise enough to know where it's better off broken."

In a set piece Llewyn goes on a harrowing road trip to Chicago. His fellow riders in the car on the trip are an odious druggie jazz musician Roland Turner (an over the top performance by John Goodman—a Coen favorite) and his driver, Johnny Five (Garrett Hedlund)—an Orlofsky-reading, chain-smoking, monosyllabic figure–somewhat modeled after the Beats' famous muse Neal Cassady. Turner's monologues can become a bit tedious, but he is a distinctively bizarre character as he sneeringly conveys the jazz hipster's utter disdain for folk music.

Upon reaching a desolate Chicago, in the throes of a bitter winter, Llewyn gets to perform a rendition of "The Death of Queen Jane" for a dour Bud Grossman (F. Murray Abraham), the manager of the famous Gate of Horn. Grossman is modeled after the celebrated manager of Bob Dylan, Janice Joplin, and the Band, Al Grossman. Exuding quiet authority, he listens intently but unemotionally to Llewyn singing and then delivers the final crushing verdict: "I don't see any money in this." The song is part of Llewyn's repertoire, but it's in his hapless character to choose something so somber and non-commercial when trying to impress a man who can give him a career boost. It's a decisive moment in the film, feeling like a last chance for success that he has been unwilling to take.

Llewyn is a fine singer, and is on the side of the angels when it comes to maintaining his artistic vision. But he's self-defeating and incapable or unwilling to make life choices that promote his career or even sustain him from day to day. You can sense that the Coens sympathize with him. They truly respect him as an artist. But though they themselves are auteurs working out of a unique personal perspective, they are not averse to making films that can reach a mainstream audience.

The only solid attachments Llewyn has are to his guitar and to an elusive orange tabby cat Llewyn feels responsible for after it escaped the Gorfein's apartment. The cat is, on one level, the Coens' hook to charm the audience and make the film somewhat more commercially viable. It's also as hard for Llewyn to grasp hold of as everything else in his life. But also it serves as a vehicle to demonstrate that he has the capacity to be emotionally caring and responsible.

One feels that the Coens don't see making artistic concessions as the betrayal of one's self like LLewyn does. Of course, their primary aesthetic mode is wry detachment, so they don't fully risk themselves in their films, and Llewyn is a very different artist than they are. But though they depict him as an alienated, bitter, egocentric figure, he doesn't turn off film audiences, because they provide him with enough vulnerability and humanity (more than most Coen brothers' protagonists) to elicit some positive feeling. LLewyn emanates both pathos and failure in pursuit of his art, but there is an untainted and honest aspect to his quest that allows audiences to identify with him. And the Coens avoid portraying him as a buffoon, which they do at times to characters in other films.

The film concludes going full circle—the final scene turning out to be a repeat, with some additional material, of its opening scene (eternal recurrence?) —with Llewyn painfully going nowhere, lying in an alley after a beating by the irate husband of a folk singer he baited. In that scene, after Llewyn sings his set, we see Bob Dylan in silhouette singing at the Gaslight. Dylan is at the beginning of a career, launched that night by a laudatory review from the New York Times critic in attendance. Of course, he ultimately achieves all the success that Llewyn fails to realize. Dylan is an original and a genius, but he was always conscious of an audience and how to make it in the business. As he told Van Ronk: "Why don't you give up blues? You do that, and I'll produce an album on you; you can make a fortune."

What helps to make this almost plotless film so engaging is a mise-en-scene that captures city streets and clubs in muted color, and lighting that brings out the film's dominant gloomy mood. Llewyn Davis also had the collaboration of the impeccable musical taste of T. Bone Burnett, whose previous work for the country music sound track on the Coens' O Brother Where Art Thou became a best selling album, and is most likely to do the same for Inside Llewyn Davis. There are also constant comic touches—the cat, the inauthenticity of "authentic" folk singers, and a black comedy aspect to everything that goes wrong with LLewyn.

The Coens have made their most poignant, moving work, a film whose idiosyncratic quality never shouts at you, but quietly, subtly, and touchingly sneaks into your consciousness. It turns out to be a luminous and melancholy, but never tragic ballad of a gifted folk singer who is doomed to a life of failure.

Camus and Bourdieu on Algeria

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Books Reviewed in this Essay:

Albert Camus. *Algerian Chronicles*. Edited by Alice Kaplan. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Pierre Bourdieu. *Algerian Sketches*. Edited and Presented by Tassadit Yacine. Translated by David Fernbach. London: Polity Press, 2013.

The Algerian War is misleadingly emblematic of the history of French decolonization. France's colonial rule in North Africa began when they invaded Algiers in 1830. But within two decades Algeria was officially incorporated into France as three legislative *départements*. In broad outlines, Algeria was legally no different than the Haute-Loire, yet in practice Algeria was treated like many other colonial holdings. A European settler minority that would later be called the *pieds noirs* controlled the vast majority of land and capital and controlled political decisions. A majority indigenous population of Muslim Arabs, Berbers, and Kabyles were denied most of the trappings of the supposedly superior French nation.

Though born into poverty in Algeria in 1913, Albert Camus was a descendant of this settler population. Throughout his life he argued that all persons in Algeria were worthy of French citizenship will all of its trappings, and that economic prosperity should not be limited to an elite group of settlers. From the beginning of the Algerian War on November 1, 1954, through to its end in the Summer of 1962, like Camus many in France and most of the *pieds noirs* clung to the belief that Algeria was France, though they were less willing than Camus to treat it as such. For them, to abandon Algeria was tantamount to betraying the French nation itself. So even when thirteen French colonies in Africa gained their independence in 1960, guerrilla warfare, urban terrorism, mass detentions, assassination attempts, and torture continued in France and Algeria for two more years. By contrast, intellectuals farther to the left than Camus, like Jean-Paul Sartre, saw Algerian independence as necessary, for both the future of France and Algeria. For those in this extreme position, even the terrorist actions of Algerian militants could be condoned.

In a conflict defined by non-conventional warfare, statistics on loss of life remain highly contested, a fact that belies the vested interests of both the French and Algerian governments. The Algerian government has claimed the number of Algerians killed or disappeared alone is 500,000, with another 1 million wounded. Scholars since have shown that the number of Algerians killed is most likely somewhere between 250,000 and 300,000. But either set of numbers is a testament to the war's carnage. As Martin Evans recently noted, 300,000

Algerians is the same percentage of the Algerian population killed as the percentage of the French population killed in World War One. [1]

In high school and college classrooms, Albert Camus seems to have pride of place as one of the exemplary voices of this tale of decolonization. However, many also see Camus as more than a compelling example of the messiness of an historical event, he is an example of moral righteousness with relevance for today's political climate. This is perhaps due to the ease with which Camus' tragic moralism facilitates sidestepping hard questions. By contrast, the Algerian War made sociologist Pierre Bourdieu confront questions of colonialism when he would have perhaps chosen another path. A generation younger than Camus and from mainland France, Bourdieu had finished his first degree in philosophy in 1954 at the École normale supérieure when compulsory military service forced him to serve his country in the early military campaigns in Algeria. His experience in Algeria prompted him to scratch his plans to write a dissertation in philosophy, and focus his attention on an in-depth study of social structures in the mountainous regions in northern Algeria. Though Bourdieu was not in agreement with blatant apologists of Algerian Revolutionaries, he could not see Camus' position on the war as viable, either. Two new compilations present these two differing views on France's relationship with Algeria.

Algerian Chronicles presents a full translation of Camus' *Chroniques Algériennes, 1939-1958*, his political writings on Algeria, with additional essays and letters previously unpublished in French or English. It is in the presentation of this supplementary material that this volume shines. Arthur Goldhammer's translation of the text and occasional explanatory footnotes are a testament to his command of Camus' rhythm and cadence, which are often lost in English translations of Camus' work. Alice Kaplan's introductory essay gives a well-rounded account of Camus' ties to Algeria and the background behind his position on the Algerian War. As a *pied noir* from a poor European family he saw himself as an example of the gray area between the colonialist and anti-colonialist camps that saw things in stark black-and-white terms. His agitation for a more equal, more just French Algeria led to both his exile from Algeria in the 1940s and then to his marginalization once Algerian rebels started their war for independence in November 1954. Feeling his voice was drowned out by extreme right- and leftwing positions in the war, he lived the last years of his life publicly silent on the matter.

Much of the material in *Algerian Chronicles*, however, complicates this caricature of a silent and defeated Camus. Arthur Goldhammer has rightly corrected the apocryphal translation of Camus' response to an Algerian journalist's question upon receiving the Nobel Prize in literature. The media turned Camus' statement "I must also condemn the blind terrorism that can be seen in the streets of Algiers, for example, which someday might strike my mother or family. I believe in justice, but I will defend my mother before justice" into catchphrases like "Between justice and my mother, I choose my mother". [2] Though Camus may have tended towards public silence on the war towards the end of his life, he was not politically inactive and debated the war in various correspondences. Camus wrote letters to the French President on behalf of Algerian militants sentenced to death and even tried to correct press accounts of the Nobel debacle.

Newspaper reports from the 1930s that detail the poverty of the Kabyle people in the Algerian countryside—their low standard of living and the lack of developed infrastructure—comprise the first half of the volume. Camus attempted to make a case for the economic improvement of indigenous Algerians by portraying their daily plight as case studies in human hardship, frequently asking his readers to see themselves in the Kabyle situation: "Can anyone read this without feeling outrage? How many of you reading this article would be able to live on such a sum?"[3] Camus' indignance at the economic impoverishment of the people he saw as his fellow countrymen in these early articles highlights the fact that he felt France could and should do better for the non-*pieds noirs* of Algeria.

But the very fact that Camus could not connect the economic sufferings of Algerians to the basic premises of colonialism points to the entrenched mentalities of so many well-meaning people complicit in forms of imperial rule. Camus felt he was one of them—the oppressed of Algeria—since he was born into poverty. Impoverished like many oppressed he was therefore part of the shared story of human inequality. It was unthinkable for him that the French or even French-Algerian identity he so greatly valued was part of the colonial problem itself. He could not ask, Why did Algeria need France in the first place?

Beyond the gripping tragedy of Camus' biography, introductions from Arthur Goldhammer and Alice Kaplan make a case for Camus' contemporary relevance. Goldhammer informs us that "For us, half a century later, the facts still have not changed, and the future to which Camus hoped to contribute has expanded to include not just France but the entire world" (xi-xii). And Kaplan insists that "The book's critique of the dead end of terrorism—the word appears repeatedly, with respect to both sides of the conflict—its insistence on a multiplicity of cultures; its resistance to fundamentalisms, are as meaningful in contemporary Algeria as in London or New York". [4] Given the supplementary material in the collection that reshapes the standard, popular image of Camus, it is surprising that such an emphasis is placed on Camus' critiques of terrorism or his contemporary moral relevance at all.

It is surely right to, like Camus, criticize governmental and non-governmental terror as a matter of principle. But Camus' principles are hopefully not our own, least of all his best-of-intentions defense of French Algeria. And surely we didn't need Camus to teach us violent excess is undesirable. The nightly news should suffice there.

For many critics and commentators, Camus' politics in the Algerian War came to define his biography by virtue of the war comprising his life's final chapters. Since Camus died in a car crash in 1960, we can only speculate about what he would have thought and said about the end of the war. As Walter Benjamin aptly said: "The tragic hero has only one language that is completely proper to him: silence. It has been so from the very beginning… In his silence the hero burns the bridges connecting him to god and the world, elevates himself above the realm of personality, which in speech, defines itself against others and individualizes itself, and so enters the icy loneliness of the self." [5] Camus, Antigone, Hamlet: unjustly condemned for bucking the trend and following their moral instincts.

Like an empty signifier, Camus' tragic silence invites sympathizers to use his name as shorthand for a moral high ground in the place of political realism. Is it that Camus the moralist offers American readers a position that eschews the tough political choices of our time by escaping from them? Such a resource could be both the source of political creativity that rebels against the status quo—it could also be a source of political quietism. All options are invalid and immoral; therefore, like the protagonists in many of Camus' novels, there is no real escape from the absurd.

It is perhaps less well known that the Algerian War proved definitive for the intellectual life of Pierre Bourdieu. In contrast to Camus, those familiar with the writings of Bourdieu will most likely not automatically associate his name with Algeria or twentieth-century decolonization. Instead, they will think of his analyses of the various ways in which social networks and relations of power structure everything from aesthetics to academia. A new collection of many previously untranslated essays, interviews, and letters, however, displays the significance of Algeria throughout Bourdieu's adult life and serve as reminders that his first published studies were ethnographic accounts of Algeria.

Already part of a small batch of Parisian-educated leftists who found no home with the French socialists or the Stalinist Communist Party, the experience of decolonization only sharpened his political outlook. "I was appalled by the gap between the views of French intellectuals about this war and how it should be brought to an end, and my own experience," he explained in 1986. [6] If the French left, from Sartre to Camus, was wrong about Algeria then what was most important was to articulate exactly what Algeria was and who Algerians were.

Algerian Sketches presents a collection of essays, letters, and occasional pieces Bourdieu wrote beginning in the 1950s concerning his attempt to grapple with Algerian experiences of colonialism and anti-colonial revolution. David Fernbach has translated each entry and the essays' original notes are supplemented with helpful editorial annotations from the volume's editor, Tassadit Yacine, herself a specialist in Algerian sociology. An introductory essay also places the content of the collection in the context of both decolonizing France and the intellectual climate in which Bourdieu came of age.

Much of Bourdieu's analyses of Algeria are just that: technical writings on complex topics with many moving parts. The first three essays were written from 1959-1963 as efforts to influence French policy decisions more than they were impassioned pleas to sway public opinion. Already we see Bourdieu attempting to think through Algerian society from within. Whereas previous commentators saw the economic plight of Algeria as caused by its maladaption to western economies, Bourdieu highlighted the need to jettison the west as the automatic marker of economic normalcy. Colonialism tried to impose a western economy on Algeria but was never able to get Algerians to think like western economic agents. As a result, analysts had to think differently about Algeria, provide "what non-Euclidean geometries are to Euclidean geometry". [7]

The essays in the middle of the book treat the topic of the Algerian War more directly, seeing

not as just a war against colonial France, but also a revolutionary reorganization of society. Bourdieu saw more clearly than many that as a social reality for Algerian nationalists "Decolonization started with the beginning of the war" (98), and the 130 years of French colonial domination meant that decolonization was not going to be a simple process of subtraction. Rather, it was a total social transformation marked with as many solutions as new problems. While many caught up in third worldist politics saw decolonization as the key to brighter future for oppressed workers everywhere, Bourdieu was much more measured. The problems posed by unemployment, underemployment, and what shape an independent society should take were real and did not have immediate answers, despite "demagogues who promise radical and magical solutions" [8]

Despite the force of these early writings Bourdieu's later recollections of his experiences highlight how much fundamentally confused him about the complexities of Algeria: "I think that the ethnologist cannot escape naivety, however narrowly, unless he bears in mind that reality is infinitely more complicated, and unless, having this in mind, he is capable of obtaining and mastering the useful information" [9] The intellectual reflexivity that made Bourdieu's later work so productive and profound was first of all honed in Algeria.

Algerian Sketches might prove slightly misleading as a title. For even though the writings collected in the volume are short—none is longer than forty pages—they do not sit well with the artistic image the word "sketches" conjures. Bourdieu was meticulous throughout his whole career in both the methodology he employed and the way he presented his findings. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the use of photography was central to his documentation of Algeria. While Bourdieu admitted he just as often snapped shots of scenes and people he found beautiful, he also noted its utilitarian function—"it was a way of sharpening my gaze" [10] If there is artistry at work in these essays, it is the artistry of the photograph that aims at the exact. [11]

Yet if Bourdieu's writings on Algeria seem colder and more distant than Camus', they undoubtedly push beyond the impasses that made Camus' stance so untenable. French colonialism presented a total confrontation between two differing worldviews. The resulting breakdown in Algerian society and its impoverishment was not merely a symptom of not enough modernization, but a fundamental disjunction between two social worlds. Camus may have seen himself as a middle term, a site of translation between the two worlds and the possibility of "living together" (Camus' phrase), but for Bourdieu this idea was ill-conceived: "The European, in fact, brings his universe with him; he imposes his own order on the outside world, as we can see, to take only one example, in the colonial villages that reproduce those of metropolitan France" [12] As much as Camus may have thought of himself as a political outsider, he was always on the inside of the colonial system and that was the problem.

Historians of imperialism often speak of the grey zones that always appeared in situations where governments would have liked to simply see colonizer and colonized. From Camus' vantage point within the colonial system, the details were certainly messy, but in terms of political imperatives this is often largely beside the point. And as Bourdieu wrote early on,

there was no escape from this colonial dynamic: “Algeria did not contain any genuine isolated part living sealed off and completely removed from the colonial situation” [13]. Even if it was always more messy than French versus Algerian, these abstractions of colonial Algeria set in motion the causes of Algerian rebellion and the shape of the war that was fought.

Notes

[1] Evans, Martin. *Algeria: France’s Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 335-338.

[2] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Algerian Sketches*. Edited and Presented by Tassadit Yacine. Translated by David Fernbach. London: Polity Press, 2013, 215.

[3] Camus, Albert. *Algerian Chronicles*. Edited by Alice Kaplan. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013, 54.

[4] *Algerian Chronicles*, 9.

[5] Benjamin, Walter. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, translated by John Osborne (New York: Verso, 2009), 108.

[6] Axel Honneth, Hermann Kocyba, and Bernd Schwibs, “The Struggle for Symbolic Order: An interview with Pierre Bourdieu,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 3, no. 3 (November 1986), 38, also cited in *Algerian Sketches*, 17.

[7] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Algerian Sketches*. Edited and Presented by Tassadit Yacine. Translated by David Fernbach. London: Polity Press, 2013, 50.

[8] *Algerian Sketches*. 179.

[9] *Ibid*, 212.

[10] *Ibid*, 303.

[11] There are no photographs in *Algerian Sketches*, but a recently published collection of Bourdieu’s photographs taken while in Algeria offers a slightly warmer insight into Bourdieu’s Algerian connection. Pierre Bourdieu, *Picturing Algeria*, Edited by Franz Schultheis and Christine Frisinghelli, Foreword by Craig Calhoun (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

[12] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Algerian Sketches*. Edited and Presented by Tassadit Yacine. Translated by David Fernbach. London: Polity Press, 2013, 44.

[13] Camus, Albert. *Algerian Chronicles*. Edited by Alice Kaplan. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013, 42.

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Country Girl: A Memoir, by Edna O'Brien

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Irish novelist Edna O'Brien earlier wrote a biography of James Joyce so I was curious that in this memoir *Country Girl* she omitted *A Portrait of the Artist* in her long list of acknowledgements and influences. *Portrait* memorably starts its history with Baby Tuckoo and Edna also begins at the beginning – early childhood in rural County Clare. This is all very proper, necessary and useful but I did not find myself page turning with any energy till about page 60, her convent teenage years when her reading and writing began to develop. Perhaps I'm a slow starter.

In Part Two she has moved to Dublin, trains as a pharmacist, meets interesting men and starts to write for money. Her sister works for a railway company and Edna is commissioned to write a women's fashion page for their weekly magazine. Armed with this background she pesters newspaper offices with proposals for articles. She succeeds. She meets men. In the full flush of her young womanhood she garners the material that will, eventually, make her notorious in her own country. An actress friend, Nora Connolly, told me the other day that in her youth she was an avid reader of O'Brien in order to learn about sex. She was mystified by the description of feeling the man's buttocks with the flat soles of her feet. When it happened to her she couldn't have been better pleased with the literary insight.

The first few such encounters are predictably (reassuringly) cheesy. A crooner at the local dance hall, leaving her room unsuccessfully in bicycle clips. A married journalist did the business alfresco. Being invited to Sunday lunch with the family one might have done without. She calls him Peter Abelard, which is, of course, romantic but shows how up for everything she was. Reading Joyce and going to the theatre she auditions for Michael and Hilton (Mac Liammmoir and Edwards) at the Gate and trembles her way out of a different career.

She sketches out a portrait of postwar literary Dublin nimbly, lightly, avoiding prolixity. The backbiting jealousies of bohemian Dublin – nothing fails like success – is excellent copy. Her subjects are all desperate to get out and into the exotic wider world. This is familiar territory but a lifetime of writing, over 20 works of fiction plus the rest, has honed her skills for a job like this. She meets and, fairly quickly, marries novelist Ernie Gebler. Here I must declare an interest. My father, Desmond MacNamara, and later my mother knew Ernie well. My younger brother Oisin and I would go on family visits to the Gebler home in south London. I remember playing with her sons on the common over the road. There was a splendid stickleback stream. Over the years we would encounter Edna at various Irish cultural events in London, chat was always about family, not work.

My father kept in touch with Carlo, also a writer, by letter. Of greater relevance though was that I stayed with Ernie in Dalkey, south Dublin, on my first acting job at The Gate Theatre. The

picture of Ernie that she draws, their marriage and its breakdown, is so appalling that you doubt for his sanity: the obsessive, controlling cruelty of a monstrous ego. I was his guest in Dalkey and the son of one of his best friends but his reputation went before him and you would be dull indeed if you didn't guess at the madness that lay behind his hospitality. He had a brilliant mind but none of our family could understand how he managed to go on to marry a headmistress from the north of England who was charming, cultured, beautiful and utterly sane. It didn't last either.

All the details of her awful marriage are true but I had only a vague notion of what happened next. Her first few books were a huge success though the residual cheques were endorsed and handed over to her husband. When out of his clutches she was propelled into a dizzying world of glitterati befriending actors like Robert Mitchum and Sean Connery, writers like Robert Graves and Harold Pinter. By the time we get to evenings in with Jackie Onassis you might suspect that the namedropping was getting out of hand but I think that would be unfair. These were the people she knew, whom she simply describes. If someone pays you a sum of money for the film rights to your book sufficient to buy a large house outright then you buy the house.

Before the big house, though, was the smaller one where her boys could be shared with her husband who pursued her with legal evil. She made money, she met everyone, the list is dazzling. The boys loved it. For several years the great and the good came to her weekly soirees. In 1970, at his insistence, she dropped acid with R. D. Laing. It all goes horribly wrong as the demons in her psyche manifest themselves in one of the worst trips I have ever read of. Her interests in astrology, touchy-feely self improvements, fasts and cures seem to embrace the irrational, the intuitive. One can't be too surprised therefore to find that she runs out of money and has to sell the house. Her romantic attachments are dramatic though her choice of men doesn't include lifelong companionship. Being ruled by the heart has consequences. Her life is punctuated with invitations around the world to do readings or teach. Jobs, books, travels, house moves and interesting people make for a life that most would envy.

Her gift for nature description does not desert her. I like the way she drops in words like plenary (full) or describing a vixen's night cry as baneful (murderous). Her life has its low points of course though she can be proud of her boys. I don't know if she ever reconciles her relationship with her husband who tried so hard to blight her life. He died with dementia in Dublin some years ago.

Buying a house in Donegal which her younger son Sacha redesigns and has built is a wonderful folie de grandeur. It's initially perfect but you are stuck in the teeth of the Atlantic for 12 months of the year. She sells after just over a year. A comfortable place in London, in the familiar, wins out. She has lived all over, a great deal in the U.S., but she is just as tender for the back streets in London as the hedgerows of Co. Clare. Whether you like Edna O'Brien as a person or not will decide if you like this book. I have quite a lot of time for her.

Oengus MacNamara is an actor in London.

Why Public Higher Education Should be Free: How to Decrease Cost and Increase Quality At American Universities, by Robert Samuels

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Higher education is in a state of crisis. The mania affecting the academy is profit, slashing the price of labour, increasing class size, destroying the tenure system with full-time non-tenure track and adjunct-proletarian labour, and increasing the power and size of the administration-ruling class. Student tuition always increases even during prolonged economic stagnation. Student debt skyrockets as millions begin their occupational lives underwater in debt. Athletic programs drive the agenda with million-dollar babies as coaches and athletic directors while 34,000 with earned Ph.D.s are on food stamps to supplement subsistence wages.[1]

Online courses and for-profit universities, although non-profits are becoming indistinguishable from for-profits, waltz through accreditation reviews despite their e-everything approach to higher education. While student-centered patois dominate websites and slick institutional advancement images, the reality is different. Robert Samuels serves as president of the University Council–American Federation of Teachers within the University of California system. In *Why Public Education Should Be Free: How to Decrease Costs and Increase Quality at American Universities*, he attempts with some success to describe and provide policy recommendations to reestablish undergraduate-student learning as the primary objective of postsecondary education in the United States.

His thesis is that elite-research universities dump large numbers of vulnerable undergraduates into large-lecture classes that fail to educate. Students learn nothing. They take standardized multiple-choice exams, rarely interact with professors, and learn not to learn but merely to score well on inane tests that provide no feedback on writing or critical thinking. There is a lack of intellectual stimulation or engagement between instructor and student. The large-lecture classroom, however, is a cash cow generating huge profits for the corporate university with the majority of teachers serving conveniently as exploited labour who are either contingent non-tenure track or graduate students. As tuition rises, increase revenue goes to star-faculty trophies, stadiums for alumni to drink beer and cheer on non-salaried athletes, and the expanding bureaucracy of ineffectual administrators. Shared governance and academic freedom are eviscerated with 70% of all faculty appointments off the tenure stream. The goal is profit for the few with the majority from students to instructors in economic turmoil.

Samuels is appropriately concerned about undergraduate instruction although he focuses

almost exclusively on research universities within the ten-campus University of California (UC) system. His call for a transformation in teaching does resonate beyond the coast: replace oppressed graduate-student lecturers and part-time teachers with more tenure-track positions. Cease producing unemployable graduate students with terminal degrees whose job prospects are bleak because of corporate academe's replacement of tenured faculty upon resignation, retirement or termination with graduate and non-tenure track faculty. Yet several of Samuels's otherwise constructive recommendations reveal an authoritarian approach to higher ed that contravene his stated agenda of returning to a student-centered, faculty-centered university where quality education with academic freedom and shared governance is restored as the true mission of the university. It is a contradiction.

He recommends for example that the federal government mandate that full-time faculty teach most undergraduate courses. While certainly a desirable goal, the precedent of the federal government dictating to universities who should teach their classes is untenable in a democratic society. The very sovereignty of a university as a self-governing polis would be destroyed if a central government could exercise such unwarranted influence in staffing and assigning faculty courses in this manner.

Samuels avers that the Rate My Professor website is a good source in studying student criticism of the contemporary university. The website is frequently visited by students or even non-students who have not taken a class that is being rated and by professors who serially self-evaluate for purposes of promotion, reputation, and garnering adequate enrollments to keep their careers alive. Even the author concedes Rate My Professor attracts "disgruntled students." What is astonishing is that this inane instructor-rating website is considered viable for measuring the pulse of student discontent when one can examine non-compromised student evaluations produced over a period of time for an instructor or the professoriate within an institution.

In his book, Samuels advocates the videotaping of every university class because he claims student evaluations and occasional peer-review visitation are insufficient in the assessment of teaching. He cites a Harvard plan to videotape "many of its professors" to improve teaching but expands that idea with a call for comprehensive taping of all courses. While videotaping a class to improve teacher performance is unexceptionable, the author does not specify who would study the film of all these classes and determine an instructor's quality of teaching. He merely states that "experts [should] examine the quality of education."[2] Beware of the "expert" if there is such a thing in evaluating teaching quality and leave the peer-review, student-evaluation system alone. We don't need another class of "experts" examining all the classes taught in America! Teachers are not the problem but their lack of academic freedom, large-class sizes, job insecurity and deteriorating morale across academia are. One wonders what the impact of such universalized videotaping would have on the spontaneity and free-flow of ideas in the classroom. Privacy is sometimes indicated for professors who are concerned about the lack of academic freedom and an Orwellian desire to root out real teaching that challenges the status quo.

Samuels is accurate in describing many students as passive note takers who avoid engaging an instructor because of class-size, an emphasis on rote learning, and insipid instruction. Yet the author's fondness for autocratic solutions exacerbates the problem. He assigns an F grade to any student "caught" using a computer in class for purposes other than note taking: "[I]f they surfed the web during class, I would be sent a message, and they would fail the course."[3] Students are adults; they pay our salaries or most of us who teach at tuition-driven institutions. Their attention during class needs to be earned not coerced; if students wish to surf the web that is their business if not disruptive as a cell phone ringing or talking to another student. The objective is to improve teaching and the search for the truth, not threaten students with zero credit for a course who may respond to an emergency text message or even look up a word or concept to understand better a lecturer who rarely accepts questions from students during class.

The mania of achieving high rankings in national surveys is another example of higher education's drift from teaching to image polishing. Universities have become marketing engines with public-relations experts that must score well on *US News & World Report's* annual ratings of colleges and universities. Presidents, provosts, and heads of admissions are solicited for reputation scores but not faculty or students. Universities submit their own data that heavily impact rankings. Yet unsurprisingly these academic beauty contests do not measure student outcomes or the quality of teaching but application acceptance rates, average incoming ACT scores, faculty-student ratios and class size. Many research universities disingenuously low ball average class size by including within their faculty count researchers and tenured faculty who do not teach undergraduates in order to conceal the bloated size of their classes.

While instructors in an assessment-crazed standardized environment are increasingly teaching to the test, postsecondary institutions in order to achieve a high *US News & World Report* score, will game the system and deliberately encourage a surfeit of student applicants in order to reject as many as they can to achieve "elite" selectivity status. Yet the author posits another authoritarian solution that is frankly inane. Samuels's remedy to this scam that he correctly identifies is, however, *federal* investigatory oversight of university-submitted statistics in *US News & World Report* "books" (sic). Let the Feds determine the "accuracy and value" of the data![4] It is one thing for secondary-education teachers and administrators to cheat on test scores to preserve funding and job viability. It is quite another for universities to cook the books for marketing purposes. George Washington University was caught in the act and *US News & World Report* dropped them from the rankings for a year. Self-policing beyond the reach of governmental surveillance is the only acceptable alternative. To suggest government oversight of a magazine's data of ranking universities is beyond absurd: it is dangerous with significant freedom of the press and the separation between government and university sovereignty implications.

The book's sources are primarily studies, commissions, and reports within or about the UC system. Samuels's independent research is limited to informal discussions, conversations, and anecdotal comments from his students. Although the book is titled, *Why Public Education*

Should Be Free, this important and worthy policy recommendation does not even appear until the penultimate ninth chapter. Titles that suggest the sweep of a work are preferable to those that merely describe a small segment of a study. Nevertheless, Samuels's strongest and most original writing is his impressive recommendation that the United States emulate Finland's core "principal that every student should be given an equal opportunity to learn."[5]

In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels envisioned a transitional period between dying capitalism and emergent communism. This socialist or Dictatorship of the Proletariat stage is transitional. It establishes through robust centralized means a new order that ultimately transforms the mind of the society and renders governmental activity obsolete that withers away. One of the *Manifesto's* goals is, "Free education for all children in public schools…Combination of education with industrial production." This appeared 166 years ago within this illustrious masterpiece of liberation. Marx wrote the final draft and was well aware that an equalization of conditions was dependent in part upon open access to education. Chattel labour without education was perpetual wage slavery and a proletarian death sentence. While ostensibly limited to secondary education, the principle remains: the state should ensure continuous education for all its citizens in order to afford upward mobility and greater social equality. Finland, which is often cited as an exemplar in Samuels's work, guarantees free access to education from kindergarten through college.

Samuels argues that the current system favours the rich with tuition tax shelters and 529 college-savings plans. They should be eliminated along with tuition, financial aid grants and loans with its attendant legions of administrators, bankers, and other bureaucrats. He estimates $128 billion would cover free public education for students at community colleges and public universities. Using 2010 data, there were $35 billion in Pell Grants, $104 billion in student loans, and $86 billion of state funding of higher education. Remove these costs would more than compensate for direct federal funding of public higher education in the United States. Whether his data works as neatly as presented is beside the point. It is sensible and clearly within the affordable range given the $600 billion wasted on the Department of Defense with its monstrous wars: overt and secret across the globe! Of course the United States spends more in "defending" its sham democracy from the latest imagined enemy than it does in establishing real democracy at home. Similarly, universities spend vast sums of money on stadiums, far-flung campus satellites, and swarms of administrators who supervise other administrators with comparatively little left for the instructional needs of their students.

The often cited Jeffersonian advocacy for free public education appears in this work. Thomas Jefferson purportedly supported free public education because it would guarantee true democracy: "it is safer to have the whole people respectably enlightened than a few in a high state of science and the many in ignorance."[6] Yet is anyone including Robert Samuels struck by the fact that Jefferson held legally mandated, uneducated Africans in bondage throughout his adult life including his eight years as president (1801-1809)? Jefferson's wealth and power were derived from enslaved persons who were prohibited upon pain including possible torture from reading, writing, and receiving a formal education.

The genre of higher-education critique with its relentless emphasis on data, trends, and elite foundation funded reports can be quite prosaic. Nevertheless, Samuels offers a lively provocative work that is recommended for readers seeking primarily a cogent synthesis rather than an original study of the decline of American higher education. While perhaps most useful for professors in the rarefied air of the UC or research-university domain, there is broader relevance. While this work is not essential reading, most books are not, it illuminates the decline of quality across the corporate, venal world of higher education.

Notes

[1] Claire Goldstene. "The Emergent Academic Proletariat and Its Shortchanged Student", *Dissent*, August 2013.

[2] Robert Samuels. *Why Public Education Should Be Free: How to Decrease Costs and Increase Quality at American Universities,* (Rutgers University Press: 2013), 135.

[3] *Ibid*., 102.

[4] *Ibid*., *125*.

[5] Ibid., 132.

[6] *Ibid*., 120.

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Peter Hudis, Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism

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Review: Peter Hudis, *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2013)

Perhaps the most commonly-repeated cliché in regards to the writings of Karl Marx is that whatever the merits of his analysis of capitalism, he had little-to-nothing to say about what might replace it. Serious readers of Marx know this to be nonsense, of course, and there has been more than one attempt to clarify the nature of the post-capitalist classless society, which Marx alternately labeled "socialism" or "communism."[1] But Peter Hudis's book certainly represents the most comprehensive explanation of what Marx also called "the associated mode of production," and it is therefore the most useful one. While many writers have, in Hudis's words, analyzed "one aspect of [Marx's] *oeuvre* at the expense of others" and have thus "made it all the harder to discern whether he has a distinct concept of a new society that addresses the reality of the twenty-first century" (35), Hudis utilizes virtually all of the Marxian corpus to make his case.

Hudis makes plain from the beginning of *Marx's Concept* that he will not be visualizing the technical details of socialist society, nor does he pretend that Marx ever offered a comprehensive blueprint for such. His aim is modest: "to see what implicit or explicit indications [Marx's work] contains about a future, non-alienating society." (5) Hudis makes it clear that—contrary to those who would enlist Marx's support for an imagined "market socialism"—that *value*, or the computation of wealth in monetary terms, is seen by Marx as specific to capitalism and as incompatible with a classless society. The retention of value-production would render "socialist" society unable to overcome capitalism's "inversion of subject and predicate, in which the products as well as the *actions* of people take on the form of an autonomous power that determine and constrain the will of the subjects that engender them." (42) As early as his 1844 "Comments on James Mill, *Éléments D'économie Politique*," Marx critiqued the depersonalized exchange relations of capitalist society, in which "*all* products, regardless of their material content and the needs that they may fulfil, are treated as expressions of an abstract equivalent—money. *Generalised* commodity-exchange [inevitably] leads to wage-labour." (57) Such labor is *alienated* (estranged) labor, but Hudis is at pains to clarify that alienated labor is not the *result* of market-exchange relations but the *prerequisite* for such relations, contrary to what many Marxists have believed. Hudis explains that for Marx capital itself is a congealment of alienated (and *abstract*) labor, a result of workers' lack of a direct connection to the means of production. In Marx's words from the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, it follows that "*Private property* is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of *alienated labour*, of the external relation of the worker to

nature and to himself."[2] It follows that the object of Marx's critique of capitalism is not, directly, the market—it is "the relations of production and the distribution of the conditions of production" which make it possible for the market to dominate society (192). He opposes the existence of a generalized commodity-market because it necessarily acts as an autonomous power independent of the will of the producers.

Marx famously criticized other anti-capitalists of his day, most notably anarchist forefather Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, for their failure to acknowledge the centrality of alienated labor to capitalism, and Hudis stresses the importance of alienated labor in explaining the oppressive and defective nature of the official Communisms of the 20th century, which he claims merely changed wage- and property-relations in order to produce a "state capitalism" wherein a ruling class imposed forced labor on workers. Such "communism" was "crude"; in Hegelian terms, it represented only "the first negation" and not, to use the Hegelian phrase that Marx appropriated, "the negation of negation… [which] gives [workers] individual property based on the acquisition of the capitalist era: i.e., on cooperation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production."[3] If alienated labor is not overcome, Hudis believes, then neither is private property—and by extension state property in the Stalinist world was de facto private ownership by the relevant bureaucrats.[4]

In the process of delineating Marx's principles for the classless society, Hudis dispels various myths. Marx did not actually believe that history necessarily unfolds in progressive stages; he did not believe, contrary to official Communist doctrine, that socialism could be created in a single isolated country, but only on a global scale; contra Allan Megill in *The Burden of Reason*, Marx did not see "science and technology" as an "intentional agent" (87); against Leszek Kolokowski's dismissal of Marx's vision of socialism as "a society of perfect unity," Hudis illustrates that "Marx's emphasis on achieving a 'totality of manifestations of life' does not imply a life free of pain, contradiction, and suffering. It only implies a life in which we are able to come to terms with such afflictions, once we are no longer alienated from ourselves." (91) (Given how frequently ideologues of the Right repeat Kolokowski's assertion, pointing out this truth is rather important and commendable.) Hudis also proves that Marx's operative principle for the initial stage of communism is not "from each according to their ability, to each according to their work," which of course was the administrative formula used by the elites of Stalinist and Maoist societies; rather, remuneration would be based on "the individual labour time of the individual producer," instead of the capitalist basis where "remuneration is based on *socially-necessary* labour time." In such a society "one hour of actual labour is exchanged for goods or services produced in the same amount of time" (194), though "the output of *energy* in a given unit of time" may be taken into account (197). This is quite different from remuneration based on the amount of productive output within a given unit of time, which is what prevails (for workers) under capitalism.

Hudis's chapter on "The Conception of a Postcapitalist Society" draws upon major works from various points in Marx's life: *The Poverty of Philosophy*, the *Grundrisse*, the "third draft" of *Capital* from 1861-3, and then—in an ensuing chapter—*Capital* itself. He finds the hints that Marx provides regarding the nature of socialist society in all of these writings to be consistent

with one another. He is convincing on this score, and he proves that Marx said far more about what a classless society would be like than is popularly believed. However, he stumbles on a few matters. In analyzing Marx's writings on the Paris Commune, he attributes to Marx an exaggerated, quasi-anarchist anti-statism which results from conflating the published version of *The Civil War in France* with its draft form. The published version—which is far more consistent with Marx's subsequent notes on Mikhail Bakunin's *Statism and Anarchy*—strongly suggests that the proletarian revolution is "merely" a point in time when the working class becomes strong enough to utilize general means of coercion against anti-socialist forces.[5] Hudis himself later admits that Marx believed in the necessity of the working class making use of "governmental power, insofar as the social transformations that can lead to the abolition of the state itself are not yet fully achieved" (205), but this is inconsistent with his earlier remarks.

Also, Hudis claims that the organizational theories of Karl Kautsky and V.I. Lenin, the two most prominent post-Marx Marxists of their day, were influenced by Marx's rival Ferdinand Lassalle in that they believed "that the vehicle of 'science' was not the proletariat, but rather the radicalised bourgeois intelligentsia," (89) and hence that revolutionary consciousness is brought to the working class "from without." A selective reading of Kautsky may support this conclusion, but as early as 1903 Kautsky distanced himself from Lasalle's

aphorism on science and the proletariat [that] science…stands above the class struggle. […]When brought to the proletariat from the capitalist class, science is invariably adapted to suit capitalist interests. What the proletariat needs is a scientific understanding of its own position in society. That kind of science a worker cannot obtain in the officially and socially approved manner. *The proletarian himself must develop his own theory*. [emphasis added] For this reason he must be completely self-taught, no matter whether his origin is academic or proletarian. The object of study is the activity of the proletariat itself, its role in the process of production, its role in the class struggle. Only from this activity can the theory, the self-consciousness of the proletariat, arise.[6]

As to Lenin, there has been much reconsideration of his political thought and the history of Bolshevism since the publication of Lars T. Lih's *Lenin Rediscovered: 'What Is to Be Done?' in Context* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2008). It appears that Lenin was not, at least initially, the elitist-minded reviser of Marx that he is generally thought to be, nor was Bolshevism an authoritarian political trend prior to the Russian Civil War. Lih demonstrates that Lenin's famous pamphlet has been broadly misinterpreted, largely due to mistranslations of key terms. All Kautsky and Lenin were arguing, Lih maintains, is that it was the task of Marxists to bring about a "merger of socialism and the worker movement" which would not arise automatically.[7]

Finally, as noted above, Hudis believes that all of the societies ruled by "Marxist-Leninist" parties were "state capitalist." I used to believe this as well. But it is not the case. Hudis' analysis of official Communism rests on his belief that in such societies concrete labor—labor directed towards satisfying real human needs—was "still reduced to a monotonous, routinized activity through the dominance of abstract labour. Abstract labour continued to serve as the

substance of value." (104) As Hillel Ticktin explains, abstract labor is "the imposition of the specific social form of homogeneous human labour on the labour force in order to ensure a uniform rate of exchange. Without workers working at similar rates there is no basis for value and so price."[8] But under the Stalinist states each person and each section of the enterprise and each enterprise effectively worked in their own way at their own rates. Hence, though *alienated* labour existed in such societies, *abstract* labour did not, and hence "profit" was at most a minor indicator in a system of success indicators. Workers in the USSR, Eastern Europe, etc. did not actually *sell* their labor power: workers had to work by law, on pain of imprisonment; there was only one employer (the state); and housing, health, education and the utilities were outside the "wage" system.[9] I say "wage" because the wage in the USSR was something more like a pension ("we pretend to work and they pretend to pay us"). In reality the relationship of the worker to the Soviet firm was analogous to the serf industrial production of 18th century Russia. There was no mode of production at all in the USSR—that is, no "stable, relatively harmonious, combination of a social form and a material content."[10] Hudis' misunderstanding of the political economy of Stalinist society results from a conflation of alienated and abstract labor. He does not delineate between "the Marx of 1844 who assimilated feudalism and capitalism under the general category of alienation of the conditions of labour from the worker, and the Marx of 1857 who was concerned to sharply demarcate capitalist from pre-capitalist forms on the grounds that in capitalism the worker was at the mercy of the decisions of the private owner in finding work, whereas in feudalism the communal system of production was prior to and included the immediate producer."[11]

This topic, of course, has been at the center of a million sectarian debates on the anti-Stalinist left. But the reason it matters is that it simply will not do to brush off all of the USSR's problems—all the deficiencies of bureaucratic "planning"—as having been *capitalist* problems. They were of a very different nature. It follows that socialists have a task which we did not have one hundred-plus years ago. We have to be fairly precise about how participatory socialist planning could work; we need to provide technical details that Marx, for understandable reasons, did not believe that he should provide. Hudis, perhaps surprisingly, agrees; he writes that Marx's vision "must be developed and projected today in a far more comprehensive manner than appeared necessary in the nineteenth century." (214) I am glad that he says this, but it seems to me that holding onto a "state capitalist" analysis of official Communism opens the door to a great deal of hand-waving about socialist planning, aside from its general inaccuracy.

That said, Hudis has written a superb book. Given all the misconceptions that abound over what Marx truly advocated, one hopes that *Marx's Concept* will reach the widest possible audience.

Notes

[1] Bertell Ollman, "Marx's Vision of Communism: A Reconstruction," *Critique* Vol. 8No. 1

(1977); Hillel H. Ticktin, "What Will a Socialist Society Be Like?," *Critique* Vol.25 No. 1 (1997).

[2] Karl Marx, "Estranged Labour" (1844), https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm.

[3] Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. 1* (1867), Ch. 32, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch32.htm.

[4] See more on the issue of "state capitalism" below. I believe that Hudis's understanding of the USSR and like states is faulty. What existed there was not capitalist ownership (which would be subject to the law of value—Adam Smith's "invisible hand") but essentially *pre-capitalist* ownership.

[5] "The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par decret du peuple*. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, *through a series of historic processes* [emphasis added], transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant." Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*, Ch. 5, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/civil-war-france/ch05.htm. Hudis quotes this passage but does not seem to realize its full significance.

[6] Karl Kautsky, "The Intellectuals and the Workers," ***Die Neue Zeit*** Volume XXII, No.4 (1903), https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1903/xx/int-work.htm.

[7] Lars T. Lih, *Lenin Rediscovered: 'What Is to Be Done?' in Context* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2008), p. 41.

[8] Ticktin, op. cit., p. 153.

[9] Hillel Ticktin, "Stalinism—Its Nature and Role," *Critique* 39 No. 4 (December 2011), p. 504.

[10] Chris Arthur, *The New Dialectic and Marx's 'Capital'* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 210.

[11] Ibid, pp. 218-19. There was also simply no capitalist class in the USSR. Members of the "bureaucracy"—itself a too-vague term—could not guarantee their privileges would pass on to their children. They did not have an *inheritable* relation to the means of production.

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Worldly Philosopher: The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman, by Jeremy Adelman

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Albert O. Hirschman certainly led a life unlike most academics: born in Berlin in 1915, he engaged in street battles with Nazi thugs during his mid-teens, went underground and escaped Germany, fought in Spain for the Republic against the Fascists; joined the French army to fight the Nazis, and eventually even served in the US Army in Europe. In between, in Marseilles, Hirschman joined with Varian Fry to help smuggle somewhere around 2,000 intellectuals and especially Jewish intellectuals, out of Vichy and to the UK and the US. Hirschman later became one of the foremost thinkers in the world among development economists.

Peter Adelman, in an impressive work he titles *Worldly Philosopher: The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman*, brings Hirschman back to life, despite the latter's death in December 2012 at age 97. It is clear that Adelman really did accomplish the goal of seeing the world through his subject's eyes. This is a masterful and insightful work of which I imagine every biographical subject dreams.

Adelman covers every aspect of Hirschman's life—actually, his many lives—in great detail. After World War II, Adelman places him, as an intellectual and albeit uneasily, in the discipline of development economics. He shows Hirschman as a devoted husband and dedicated family man. He shows him working in Latin America, especially Colombia, but also later on with those intellectuals trying to survive under the dictatorships of (especially) Brazil and Chile. He reports of Hirschman's work with some of the key development foundations, such as the World Bank and the Ford. And in the later years of his career, working at the Institute of Advanced Study at Princeton.

Yet, overall, Adelman defines Hirschman as a "reformer." He writes, "This book is about someone who thought hard about and dwelled in the neglected, ravaged space between the romance of revolution and the firmament of reaction", and "His lifework represented a commitment to reform, which ranged from rebuilding war-torn Europe, to development in the Third World, and to defending a capitalism made humane by accepting the necessity of being reformable".[1]

Hirschman, nonetheless and to his credit, challenged the dominant way of thinking in development economics. Much of the thinking in the late 1950s and early '60s was that the people in the "developing world" were incapable of overcoming problems of their own, and thus needed massive infusions of capital from the so-called developed countries to overcome their backwardness, economic and often seen as cultural. People like Harvard's Walt Rostow, who later helped bring us the war in Southeast Asia, and MIT's Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, were

proponents of the “big push” approach. Hirschman, because of his experiences on the ground in Colombia and Latin America overall, challenged this thinking: in getting to know intellectuals in these countries, he knew that there already *was* economic growth in Latin America, and that aid had to be channeled to achieve specific results. While quite modest an understanding today, it was earth-shattering then.

The strength of Hirschman’s approach was that he was a supple thinker, who rejected a Manichean approach, opting against dichotomies. In other words, rather than a “either-or” approach, Hirschman adopted “both-and.” This gave him the ability to delve into an empirical world, and take from it what it offered, rather than forcing him to place findings into pre-created categories:

What he wanted was not so much a theory with predictive powers, but a way to think about societies and economics, beginning with the premise that living in the world means we cannot step out of time to divine universal laws of human motion severed from the day-to-day banalities and mysteries of existence. The intellectual is as much a creature of the world as his or her subject—and so to are his or her concepts, which are limited and liberated by the complex form from which they emerged. It is for this reason that experience of real life, appreciating one’s place in history, was such a wellspring for Hirschman, as it was for his inspiration.[2]

Yet this approach also hindered Hirschman’s influence and impact. There never was a Hirschman “school” of development economics and, of course, Hirschman never won a Nobel Prize. While honored in his later years for his prolific and intellectually stimulating writings, he was never able to move from insight, no matter how inspired, to abstraction at the level of unified thinking, much less prediction. And, challenging the “big dogs” in the field, this gave them the opportunity to deny him his public due.

Adelman conveys well what Hirschman was able to do within the confines of his times, location and intellectual heritage. And, if we confine our thinking to the world of capitalism and reform, we can see the importance of Hirschman’s work and overall career.

Yet I’m not satisfied: while I think Adelman really gets Hirschman in many, many ways—I can’t imagine a more complete account of the man and his work—where I think Adelman fails to deliver is that he never really asks what Hirschman didn’t get. In other words, he accepted Hirschman’s worldview as being all that was possible, not asking if there was anything more. And I think this was a failure of Hirschman’s work, and a limitation of Adelman’s. By this, I mean that Hirschman accepted the reality of the world as a “given,” not seriously asking how it got that way. The key piece of the puzzle missing from his work is that he never addressed the concept of imperialism.

Now, the Marxists—and especially Lenin in his “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism” (1916)—had developed the concept of imperialism to the greatest degree. While arguably having a “realistic” understanding of imperialism, and decrying colonialism and ensuing wars,

ultimately the Marxist theory of imperialism is limited because it is economistic; in short, it sees the motivation for imperialism being economic gain or, in a more precise term, profit.

Adelman writes early on in his narrative that Hirschman had rejected Marxism because of the dogmatism he saw during the Weimar Republic. Tied to that, undoubtedly, was the looming presence of Stalin's "ever present gaze" (my term) over German Communists. I can understand the debilitating impact that had on a young man. However, Adelman never questions why Hirschman never overcame that "blind spot" throughout the rest of his life.

I think this is Hirschman's greatest failure. The essence of imperialism—and I'm using it empirically, not ideologically—is that not all countries have equal economic and political power, and that the stronger ones seek to dominate, or at least gain hegemony over, the weaker ones, leading to economic (and often, political) benefit to the stronger. Whether one accepts the Marxist version or not—I don't; I prefer Jan Nederveen Pieterse's conceptualization in his 1989 book, *Empire and Emancipation: Power and Liberation on a World Scale* (Praeger)—the fact is that most if not all stronger nations *have* sought hegemony over weaker ones, and to the stronger one's benefit. (Now, following Nederveen Pieterse, this can be economic benefit, but it also can be of political benefit—such as geostrategic positioning or control of internal social forces—and the relationship is a primary/secondary one, not an either/or.)

If ignoring imperialism seems too severe a criticism, perhaps there is another way to approach this, and that's counterfactually: where would the countries of Africa be today had the 15 million people or so and their descendants not been exported/stolen from that continent? Or, perhaps much more difficult to imagine, how would the industrialization of the United States taken place—and so rapidly and intensively—had not the capital been generated in both the North and the South from the slave-based, plantation agricultural system and its enhancing industries (e.g., shipping, insurance, and investment banking), and used for development? Without that, the rapid industrialization of the US by the late 1800s-early 1900s becomes impossible.

Hirschman never questions economic development in Western and Central Europe, Japan or the United States on such a sweeping manner in his work. He accepts "underdevelopment" as a given and, to his credit, tries to help others overcome such limitations. Yet, he never questions how these countries got that way.

Adelman, unfortunately, never questions Hirschman on this, taking the latter's thinking as sufficient. And this is where Adelman loses in his efforts to truly understand Hirschman. For by "pulling his punch"—whether because of his own limitations, which is my analysis, or consciously trying to enhance Hirschman's reputation, which seems unlikely given the level of scrutiny of his subject—he gives Hirschman more cachet than this writer thinks is deserved.

By the end of the book, I was bored; it was a tough slog to finish. Adelman does not end with a summation of Hirschman's work, nor by placing him intellectually in his field, broadly or

narrowly fashioned. By limiting his vision to development economics or even "development" as a whole, Adelman can justify years of his work, and 657 pages. This reviewer, for better or worse, questions such expenditure of resources: the field, as traditionally defined, while being challenged by Hirschman, does not deserve this detail. Hirschman, by refusing to break out of its larger box (although going much further than most of his intellectual colleagues), ultimately cannot be seen as important as Adelman propagates.

Notes

[1] Adelman, Jeremy, *Worldly Philosopher: The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman*. (Princeton University Press: 2013), 14-15.

[2] *Worldly Philosopher,* 655.

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Review Essay: Never Let a Serious Crisis go to Waste, Philip Mirowski

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How could it be possible that the contemporary global financial system remains basically unaltered from its state before the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression? And more pointedly, how could the Left have failed so miserably while the Right has grown stronger and more boisterous than ever? In *Never Let a Serious Crisis go to Waste*, Philip Mirowski – perhaps the preeminent historian of modern economic thought – offers an answer that comes with a rebuke: The Left must stop dreaming of flowery meadows and rainbow skies and instead acquire knowledge of – and even borrow a few tactics from –the real winner of the financial crisis, that is to say its ultimate enemy: what Mirowski calls the neo-liberal thought collective (NTC).

By "the Left" Mirowski really has in mind those economists of the "legitimate left" who work within the framework of mainstream economics. This includes the likes of Paul Krugman, Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen, who according to Mirowski, believe that contemporary economists possesses all the necessary means for achieving social-democratic outcomes. But Mirowski wonders why, then, mainstream economics has proven so ineffectual in times of "political rough and tumble".

Mirowski traces the problem back to the 1950s when economic departments slowly began to rid their curriculums of philosophical and historical approaches to economic inquires in favor of mathematical/analytical methodologies. Mainstream economics thus suffers from a pernicious case of myopia that prevents it from considering alternative sources of knowledge when searching for solutions to crisis situations. Mirowski wants to show why neo-liberalism does not have this problem which, in turn, should force the Left to reconsider its stance against heterodox economic thinking.

Neo-liberalism still triumphs, according to Mirowski, because it not only has a playbook for how to strategically deal with big crises, but also possesses a world view that has sunk deep into roots of everyday life. Mirowski traces the origins of the NTC that promulgates this worldview back to the founding of the Mont Pelerin Society in 1946 – a neo-liberal institution pioneered by Frederick Hayek. What started off as an almost laughable, heterodox economic organization in the heyday of Keynesianism evolved into an exceptionally successful "multilevel, mulisector approach to the building of political capacity to incubate, critique and promulgate ideas."

The story of neo-liberalism's rise in the early 1980s under the Reagan and Thatcher regimes is well-charted territory. But it is essential to first understand that you have probably never heard

of the actual views of the NTC, so argues Mirowski, because its leadership is made up of a hierarchical elite of intellectuals who typically desire to stay out of the public eye.

One of Mirowski's goals, then, is to demonstrate to a doubting Left that the NTC actually exists and possess a highly stratified and fine-tuned structure. Mirowski takes as his starting point the Mont Pelerin society, whose ideas were taken up by certain academic departments (the University of Chicago, the LSE, 'Institutut Universitaire des Hautes Etudes internales at Geneva, and more.) well before neo-liberalism's breakout in the 1980s. Groups such as the Volker Fund, the Earhart Foundation and the Lilly Endowment provided funding for the teaching and promotion of neo-liberal ideas. Early post-war think tanks – the Institute for Economic Affairs, the Hoover Institution at Stanford – also facilitated the production of neo-liberal thought.

Most importantly, in 1981 The Atlas Economic Research foundation was established, which sought to assist neo-liberal think tanks around the globe. More recently, neo-liberals have bought their way into a number of economics departments such as at George Mason University, Clemson, the University of West Virginia, and most notoriously Florida State University – the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation gave the economics department at FSU 1.5 million dollars on condition that it would oversee a staffing board that would approve faculty hires and, among other things, offer a course requiring the writings of Ayn Rand.

Mirowski's aim is to disclose the underlying worldview of this complex network, which he compares to a Russian nesting doll, to the naïve Left. This can only be accomplished by recognizing that the NTC preaches certain ideas to the masses that, in reality, it does not practice. But does this not all sound like a big conspiracy theory? Mirowski firmly disagrees and does so by providing a number of examples documenting the NTC's double speak. Perhaps the most compelling is neo-liberalism's well-known concerns over state regulation, despite its attempt to root the stability of the market in an authoritarian vision of the state and not the citizenry at large. Intervention, from this perspective is really not the issue, but rather who gets to intervene.

By this point, a picture starts to emerge as to why the Left has gotten neo-liberals so wrong. Like the Left, neo-liberals are really interventionist, but are so for entirely illiberal, aristocratic, and authoritarian reasons. They have a robust statist philosophy that knows how to never let a serious crisis go to waste. Mirowski actually goes so far as to suggest that it "is striking the extent to which the neoliberals have repeatedly taken ideas from the Left over the last half twentieth century and twisted them to their own purposes." Yet the Left is accused by Mirowski of not only being ignorant of this, but of failing to recognize its complicity in the neo-liberal project.

Nowhere is this more evident than with the Left's acceptance of neoliberalism's underlying anthropology. Mirowski's argument is heavily reliant on Foucault's insight that neoliberalism involves new technologies of the self that reduce human beings to "an arbitrary bundle of "investments," skill sets, temporary alliances, and fungible body parts." This, so-called

entrepreneurial self involves no continuity from one decision to another; humans are in a constant state of recreation. It is a world where you can "virtually switch gender, assume any set of attributes, and reduce your social life to an arbitrary collection of statistics on a social networking site in a neoliberal playground." The reason the Occupy Movement failed, according to Mirowski, is that it had succumbed to these technologies of the self. Its fascination with Twitter, Facebook, and other social media proved it was to be a misadventure from the beginning since it worked within the neoliberal matrix.

This is a damning indictment, and Mirowski offers no explicit solution for how the Left at large can overcome this impasse. However, Mirowski does provide an answer of sorts. The Left must jettison its tendency to blame everything on class struggle and also give up romanticizing the *Trente Glorieuses* that is long dead. It must also reject embracing Twitter and Facebook as means to empower the people since these are neo-liberal incubators for the entrepreneurial self. The only hope for the Left is to establish something like its own Mont Pelerin Society that can confront and overcome the NTC. What Mirowski is calling for is a Neo-Left Thought Collective.[1]

Never Let a Serious Crisis go to Waste has an undeniable proclivity towards browbeating, but it is really intended to be an inspirational wakeup call for the Left. The book offers some fantastic insights on the current methodological state of economic departments in the academy, as well as neo-liberalism mischievous environmental policies. Unfortunately, many of its arguments about neo-liberalism are more polemically enforced than historically demonstrated. There is, for instance, a conscious effort to downplay the significant differences that exist between rival schools of neo-liberal thought: Hayekian legal theory, the Chicago School and the German-Ordoliberals. Mirowski purposefully sidesteps the recent work of Angus Burgin and Daniel Stedman Jones, both of whom emphasize the long historical evolution and significant diversity of neo-liberalism. Without much of an argument, he simply asserts that neo-liberalism was able to ward offer internal divisions through a unique structure that allowed for a great deal of unity in diversity. One, though, has the hunch that Mirowski had to downplay such differences in the attempt to establish the coherency of the NTC. It is perhaps for this reason that his book seems to offer its readers less of an intellectual history and more of a manifesto.

But it is not just Mirowski's historical lumping that raises questions. Some of his claims about the intellectual inspirations behind the NTC are either overstated or misleading. One of his biggest arguments is that Carl Schmitt – the so called Crown Jurist of the Third Reich – lurks behind the neo-liberal conviction that the state can bypass democratic processes in the attempt to protect itself during a state of emergency. Under the influence of Schmitt, the NTC embraces a strong conception of the state that, in time of crisis or moments of political exception, allows it to establish the type of markets it deems success worthy. And then comes the kicker: "For Hayek and the neoliberals, the Führer was replaced by the figure of the entrepreneur, the embodiment of the will-to-power for the community."

It is hard to take such an argument seriously. Foremost, it relies almost exclusively on a few

quotations from Hayek – some of which were critical of Schmitt – and tells us nothing of how Schmitt's ideas actually came to be embraced by neoliberals (Presumably they would have had to absorb his ideas through Hayek unless they were German Ordoliberals or could read German – the Schmitt reception in the U.S. did not really get going until the late 1980s). The case of British neo-liberals is much clearer cut: there is no need to make recourse to Schmitt since many of them, including Thatcher, became obsessed with Michael Oakeshott's Hobbesian interpretation of the State. More importantly, with all of his emphasis on knowing the enemy, states of exception and his criticisms of the Left's idealism, one wonders if Mirowski might be a little too indebted himself to the neo-liberal playbook he has outlined – a charge which Mirowski directs at Foucault's flirtation with neo-liberalism on a number of occasions. For many, the idea of a neo-liberal playbook filled with pleasantries and doublespeak borders on conspiracy theory. Now there does seem to be something almost "They Live" like about the story Mirowski wishes to tell. The irony, however, is that all of the core ideas of the NTC have been available in print for decades, along with a large and critical literature devoted to the histories and economic philosophies of the foundations Mirowski criticizes so extensively.

Why appeal to the Russian doll metaphor in the attempt to explain the concealed philosophy of the NTC, when you can simply encourage the Left to check out their books at the library?

Let me suggest an alternative reason for why neo-liberal ideas might appear so esoteric. Critiques of neo-liberalism echoing Mirowski's has been around for quite some time. In fact, many of neo-liberalism's most compelling critics have been conservatives: in the 1950s, Raymond Aron, Bertrand de Jouvenel and Michael Oakeshott all criticized the inherent ideology of neo-liberalism. They, and other similar critics, belonged to a larger post-War conservative network – that also included neo-liberals – which has yet to be parsed out at a transnational level of historical analysis. Part of the blame for this is perhaps due to the general lack of scholarly interest in conservatism by those academics who vigorously have opposed it. September 11th, the Iraq War, Evangelicals and the financial crisis ruptured this scholarly apathy. There is now a concentrated effort by the Left to read conservative literature, to offer courses on conservatism, and to devote studies to the conservative movement – one thinks most recently of Corey Robins' – *The Reactionary Mind*. Perhaps if the Left had started doing this years ago, the troublesome issues that *Never Let a Serious Crisis* raises could have been more vigorously confronted before the neo-liberal deluge.

Notes

[1] An example of this might be the "post-autistic economics" movement, which has become a rallying point for heterodox economic practitioners, now numbering over 12,000 via the World Economics Association.