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Egypt in Transition

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Part I – The Historical Background

The origins of *modern* Islamic Fundamentalism can be found in the clash of cultures that accompanied Western imperialist intrusion into the Muslim lands in the 18th and 19th centuries. That intrusion introduced Western and secular practices and outlooks into societies that had centuries-old Islamic roots.

Depending upon the area, Western control was direct or indirect. Either way, economic interests encouraged elements of the indigenous Middle Eastern elites (business men, politicians, military men, intellectuals, etc.) to adopt Western ways. Increasingly alienated from their own culture and religion, some of these people came to blame Islam and Islamic practices for keeping the region weak compared to the West. As a consequence, dictators, kings, prime ministers and parliaments of this period often attempted to secularize the law codes, courts, educational systems, and political structures of the Muslim lands as well as introduce capitalist free trade policies.

These elites, though politically powerful, represented but a tiny proportion of their populations. Their behavior and policies often deeply offended elements of the majority who feared the introduction of materialism, gender mixing, Western dress and entertainment, etc. into their society.

Their disapproval would probably not have mattered if the Westernization process had brought widespread prosperity and justice. But it did not. Rather, the result was an increased gap between rich and poor and the establishment of one or another form of Western oriented autocratic rule. And, along the way, a slow erosion of traditional (that is Muslim) values and lifestyles.

Islamic fundamentalist movements such as the Society of Muslim Brothers, established in Egypt in 1928, grew up in opposition to the Westernizing trend. As these organizations grew they developed deep populist roots. They often began as public service and charitable organizations providing services not supplied by the state. These could include welfare services, job training, medical care, recreation facilities, sanitation services, and even community security.

Along the way they taught their followers that the Middle East had entered into a new age of ignorance (of God’s ways) and paganism equivalent to that which existed in Arabia before the coming of Muhammad. The only way to escape this age of ignorance was to struggle to bring

society back to Islamic ways of living: to Sharia law, Islamic education, and the purging of Muslim society of Western cultural influences.

The logic of their vision, the need to return to the values and faith of what they saw as true Islam in order to regain the favor of God, eventually led to the conclusion that the state itself had to be captured, either peacefully if there existed a democratic, electoral route, or violently if the state operated dictatorially.

In Egypt, the Society of Muslim Brothers became the largest non-government organization in the country by the 1940s. Since its ambitions were ultimately political, the Brothers were looked upon with suspicion by the more secular Egyptian government. In 1948 the Egyptian monarchy tried to suppress the movement by dissolving the Society and imprisoning its leadership. That lasted until 1951. However, not long after, in 1952, Gamal Abd al-Nasser and his "free officers" movement overthrew the Egyptian monarchy and the secular and socialist nature of the new military regime brought on another clash with the Brothers. The Society was violently suppressed for a second time in 1954. It was not able to operate legally again until the 1970s and even then it was constantly monitored, periodically harassed and often banned from engaging in any political activities.

Part II – Rebellion

This situation still persisted in the year 2011. At that point Egypt had long suffered under the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak, an air force officer who took over the country after the 1981 assassination of Anwar Sadat. In 2011 a particularly brutal police murder of a young Egyptian businessman, Khalid Said, and the subsequent attempt at a cover up created widespread dissatisfaction in Egypt. Some of this anger was vented in public demonstrations organized through electronic communications such as Facebook. Though electronic and on-line social networking would facilitate the protest movement in Egypt, it is an exaggeration to say that it made these protests possible. It was the material conditions of ongoing economic despair, repression and corruption that made them possible. In terms of the latter, Wikileaks released U.S. government cables describing the depth of Egyptian corruption in January 2011 and this only increased the growing anger within Egypt. Activists were also spurred on by a recent successful rebellion that toppled the dictatorship in Tunisia.

On January 25, 2011, a day set aside in Egypt to honor the police, large numbers of citizens took to the streets in what they labeled a "Day of Rage" *protesting* police conduct. Soon there were almost daily demonstrations in Cairo, centered at the now famous Tahrir Square, and also in Alexandria, Suez, Ismailia and elsewhere.

The Mubarak regime initially responded with tear gas and water canon in an attempt to control the crowds. Soon the authorities were also trying to disrupt internet communications. The regime started to target journalists, both foreign and domestic, for physical abuse and arrest. As time went on police violence escalated. Toward the end of January, the Egyptian army was ordered onto the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and Suez as a show of force, but did not take part

in suppressing the protests. None of these moves lessened the demonstrations.

At this point Mubarak began to fire and replace members of the regime in the hope that superficial changes would placate public opinion. He fired his cabinet on January 29 and appointed Omar Suleiman, his intelligence chief, as vice president in charge of handling the emergency. On February 1 he promised not to run for reelection as president and to reform the constitution. He also ordered a cut in food prices. However, events had gone too far. As Mohamed El Baradei, the Egyptian born Director General of the International Atomic Energy

Agency, said upon returning to Cairo, "what we started can never be pushed back." By this time it was clear that the primary demand was for the resignation of Mubarak and an end to his dictatorship. His attempts at cosmetic changes would not work.

By February 3, the regime was attacking protesters with live ammunition. The army now moved tanks onto the streets. It is in the period between February 3 and 10 that the Egyptian army leaders must have made the decision that they were not willing, or possibly just not able, to command the troops to attack the protesting crowds. Egypt's army is a conscript one. The troops are of the same general background as the protesters. This decision probably played a part in Mubarak's February 11 decision to finally resign and give over power to a military council (the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces or SCAF) . The SCAF commanders quickly announced that a process leading to democratic government would begin.

Part III – The Chess Game

However, the old dichotomy between the secular (represented since the 1950s by Egypt's military officer corps) and the religious (represented by the Society of Muslim Brothers as well as an even more conservative group, the Salafis), now on-going in Egypt for well over a century, could not just disappear. Mubarak was replaced by SCAF and it insisted on holding power until elections for a new parliament and the writing of a new constitution. In addition, SCAF saw itself as an institution that had interests separate from and more important than any civilian government. Essentially, the officer corps saw itself as the foundation of the modern Egyptian nation and had done so since its overthrow of the monarchy. Since that time it had functioned independent of any civilian government and its leaders had no intention of altering that situation. As far as SCAF was concerned, it was the military that would oversee the civilians, and not the other way around.

For the rest of the year 2011 periodic demonstrations continued in Egypt as the populace came to the realization that getting rid of Mubarak did not mean getting rid of military oversight of civilian affairs. Significantly, *these demonstrations were small or large depending on the participation level of the Society of Muslim Brothers*. Of course, the Brothers were not the only ones in the streets. Indeed, the rebellion against the Mubarak regime had been initiated by secularist/liberal groups seeking political freedoms. The Muslim Brothers, made gun-shy by decades of repression, decided upon participation in the demonstrations only after assuring themselves that there was real potential for success. But the Brothers were not really seeking

the same thing as the secularists, a factor that would play into developments by the end of the year.

The election for Egypt's post-Mubarak parliament was held in stages between 29 November 2011 and 11 January 2012. This was the first relatively free and fair election held in the country since the 1920s. The results were surprising only to those, mostly in the West, who never paid attention to the Egyptian masses. It was the Hizb al-hurriya wa al-adala (Freedom and Justice Party), affiliated with country's Muslim Brotherhood, that got 47% of the votes, while the even more conservative Salafi Muslim group, al-Nour (the Light) party got 29%. The Westernized secularist/liberals did poorly–the liberal Egyptian Bloc Coalition only managed 8.9% of the vote.

The electoral victory of the Muslim Brothers confirmed Egypt's status as a country where the majority sought to preserve Muslim heritage in the face of a centuries-long incursion of Western culture and influence. It also set in motion a delicate chess game between the Society of Muslim Brothers and a military establishment long subsidized by the United States. The game was one of position looking toward the maximization of political influence. It was also a process that substituted for civil war.

The parliament, or People's Assembly, that resulted from the election was overwhelmingly controlled by Islamic fundamentalists. This frightened not only SCAF and the civilian secularist/liberals but also the Egyptian Christians, mostly Copts, who made up between 15 and 20% of the population. Their position in the evolving chess game was complicated. They did not favor military rule, but were afraid that their civil and religious rights would suffer even more under an Islamic government.

By the end January 2012 the new parliament was meeting as was a hundred member committee chosen by the parliament to draft a new constitution. At this point SCAF, supported by the secularist/liberals and religious minorities, turned to the Egyptian court system to undermine the authority of the newly elected government. On 12 April 2012 an "administrative court" made up of judges appointed by the old Mubarak regime, suspended the committee fashioning the new constitution, observing that it did not reflect the diversity of the citizenry.

This was just the beginning of the legal assault on the new government. On 14 June the Egyptian "Supreme Constitutional Court," another still functioning holdover from the Mubarak era, declared the election that had created the new parliament invalid because it violated the old regime's electoral rules. It ordered the legislature dissolved and new elections held. Immediately, SCAF claimed full legislative authority and said it would also appoint the members of the committee charged to write a new constitution. SCAF also announced that no future civilian government would be able to supervise the military or the defense ministry or control their budgets.

In the meantime, also in June of 2012, voting took place for a new Egyptian president. Once more the popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood was demonstrated when their candidate,

Mohammed Morsi, was declared the winner in what again appeared to be a relatively free and fair election. In an important symbolic act Morsi took his oath of office in Tahrir Square, the center of the rebellion in the capital city of Cairo. He declared that "the people are the source of power which they grant and withdraw." Simultaneously, SCAF declared that it would assume important powers of the president in an effort to emasculate Morsi.

The potential for civil war was now clear. Morsi initially proceeded as if the Islamist dominated parliament that the court had invalidated was still legitimate and functional. He called it briefly back into session and had a new constitutional committee selected to write the constitution. However, he also agreed that new elections for parliament would be held within 60 days of the promulgation of the new constitution. The Egyptian courts have declared Morsi's actions invalid, but he and his party have only a superficial regard for their judgments. He says he will respect the courts, but it is SCAF (which says it only seeks to assure "constitutional continuity") that he and the Islamists fear. Simultaneously, Morsi has proceeded to form a government. He has named ministers who are mostly technocrats. But there are two notable exceptions. The defense ministry remains in the hands of Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, who is also head of SCAF. This move postpones any direct clash between the new government and the military. The other exception is the appointment of Ahmed Mekky as justice minister. Mekky is a long standing champion of an independent judiciary. Right now the judiciary is dominated by old guard Mubarak appointees tied to the military. Mekky will attempt to break that alliance. For the Morsi government the strategy appears one of incremental change, taking things one step at a time. The first step might well be reform of the Egyptian court system.

Part IV – The Dual Power Factor

For a very long time the Society of Muslim Brothers has evolved as a parallel governing power in the *social sphere* of Egyptian society. Many of the what in the West would be considered areas of governmental responsibility in terms of social, health and welfare services are carried out by organizations that, for all intents and purposes, are under the authority of the Society.

However, as we have seen, the Society of Muslim Brothers has always had real political potential. It is through the events of the Egyptian rebellion of 2011 that this potential has begun to be realized in a way that, so far, has defied suppression. Thus, at the time of this writing the country's newly elected president is affiliated with the Society. If, as seems likely, the parliament is to be replaced through new free and fair elections it too will have a strong plurality of Islamists.

In other words, directly or indirectly, the Society of Muslim Brothers now controls not only a large number of Egypt's social institutions but also the institutions of civilian government. What it does not control are the courts, police and the military. These instruments of state coercion are still in the hands of a more secular, old guard element who represent a distinct minority of the Egyptian population. (There is this caveat, can assume that an unknown number of regular policemen and soldiers are sympathetic to the aspirations of the Islamists). Thus, as

of this writing, what we have in Egypt is a situation of dual power.

It was Leon Trotsky, in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, who first made clear the problem of dual power.[1] According to Trotsky a "single government" is a "necessary condition of stability in any regime." Where there is a situation of dual power, there must be underlying tension which, over time, leads to instability. This is all the more so when one element of the duality has "focused upon itself the hopes of intermediate classes and layers, dissatisfied with the existing state of affairs…" Essentially, what you have here is a "splitting of sovereignty." Trotsky's description fits well the evolving Egyptian situation. The Islamists reflect the popular will as is clear from the electoral success of the Freedom and Justice Party affiliated with the Society of Muslim Brothers.

As noted, this unstable situation has in it the potential for civil war. Yet neither side is rushing to start such a war. Both sides have recent precedents in other Middle Eastern countries, such as Syria, Libya, Yemen and Algeria to look to and see just what civil war will do to Egypt. The leadership of the Muslim Brothers also has its own recent history to give it pause. Under decades of military rule the Society has been repeatedly suppressed and its leaders killed or cast into prison. Yet, this time around, with millions of Egyptians in the streets and elections held, that sort of repression will be harder to accomplish. So we are in a period of careful maneuver during which, as Trotsky puts it, "both sides may feel compelled for quite a long time to endure, and even to sanction, a two-power system." Nonetheless, sooner or later, this "double bookkeeping" will have to end.

Part V – Conclusion

In the Middle East, the Arab Spring has come down to a three way competition between Islamists, secularist/liberals and old guard forces which, more often than not, are the military elites or secular minded dictators. It is possible that, under the auspices of democratic elections and parliamentary coalition building, the Islamists and the secularist/liberals can find ways of compromising and thereby cooperating with each other. This appears to be what is happening in Tunisia and perhaps Libya as well. However, this process of compromise under democratic auspices requires the secularist/liberals to have a sufficiently strong constituency that they can stand as an independent political force. Where they cannot, as appears to be the case in Egypt, the Islamists will sweep the electoral field. At that point the secularist/liberal element either fades into impotency or throws its support to the old guard forces in order to stave off Islamist rule and the cultural and social changes it entails. Something like this alliance might be in the works in Egypt.

The reason why the Islamists come forward as the most popular and electorally powerful force in the region is not a complicated one. The Middle East is an Islamic religious and cultural place, and organizations like the Society of Muslim Brothers have deep populist roots. In the long run the old guard forces, be they the military or the secular minded dictators will fail in their efforts to hold back the Islamists. The only question is will they give way relatively peacefully, as has been the case in Turkey and Tunisia, or will they risk civil war, as was the

case in Algeria, Yemen and elsewhere. Current events in Egypt should be seen in this context.

As to the secularist/liberals, if they want to play a political role in the evolving Middle East they must learn a lesson from their religious competitors. Even as they promote civil and political rights, they must look to the economic needs of their all citizens and not just the middle and upper classes. They must accept, rather than fear, the popular religious symbolism of their societies. In other words, they must work to meld two worlds: the world of liberal tolerance and the world of religious faith. Not an easy task, particularly in today's Egypt where the Islamists can win every free and fair election that takes place.

Notes

[1] Leon Trotsky, The History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I, Chapter 11. https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1930/hrr/ch11.htm

Year Two of the Arab Revolutions

By | 2012: vol. 11 issues 2-3

I. Prologue

The 2011 Arab revolutions have shaken the world, toppling three well-entrenched dictatorships – in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya — in a battle not only for democracy, but also one that raised issues of economic and social justice while attacking neoliberal capitalism. Moreover, they touched off a year of upheaval, from Wisconsin to Spain, and from London to Wall Street. They have brought to mind Karl Marx's expressed hopes about the internationalization of revolution in another revolutionary period, that of the Polish uprising of 1863: "This time, let us hope, the lava will flow from East to West" (letter to Engels of Feb. 13, 1863, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 453).

However, as dialectics teaches us, there is no progress without contradiction, and as Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism noted since its inception, counter-revolution arises not just from openly reactionary forces, but can be found in the very innards of revolution itself. (See especially her *Marxism and Freedom* [1958], just translated into Arabic.) This is not of course an inevitability, let alone a cyclical process, but a danger that needs first to be recognized and then fought against. Thus, there was much dismay, not only among their international supporters, but also among Arab revolutionaries themselves, when Islamist parties won big electoral victories in post-revolutionary Tunisia and Egypt, and seemed poised to do well in Libya as well. Then came June's presidential election in Egypt, when the final round pitted the Muslim Brotherhood, which won very narrowly, against a candidate linked to the Mubarak dictatorship. All of this led many to feel that the hopes of 2011 had been dealt a most severe setback.

To be sure, it must acknowledged that even though Islamist politics had not dominated the 2011 revolutions themselves, in their aftermath Islamist parties and movements possessed both a cohesion and a clear sense of purpose lacking in the more secular and leftist groupings. This does not mean that the game is up, however, let alone that the 2011 revolutions were really Islamist at their core. But it must be admitted that Islamism is a bigger danger now than it seemed to be in the heady early months of 2011.

At the same time, we have witnessed, over the past year, the continued articulation of a more secular and leftist politics, whether on the streets or in some of the election returns, both in Egypt and Tunisia. Nor have the large Islamist parties advocated anything resembling Khomeinism or Taliban-style politics, although the minority Salafists have certainly done so. Still, it must be said that even a relatively moderate Islamism is almost always a conservative movement, whether on culture, economic policy, or basic democratic principles, at best akin to

groups like the Republican Right in the USA or the European Christian Democrats.

Over the past 2 decades, Islamism in various forms – from Hamas in Palestine, to the Muslim Brotherhood and more militant strands in Egypt, to the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria – has been ascendant in the region. It came to the fore in the 1980s, an era of ideological reaction exemplified not only by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, but also by Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Pope John Paul II. This legacy did not completely disappear in the fires of 2011, any more than Reagan-Thatcher style neoliberalism has disappeared in the wake of the 2008 economic crisis and the rise of movements like Occupy. However, the 2011 Arab revolutions changed the conversation in the Middle East, taking us beyond the retrogressive duality of nominally secular nationalist dictatorship vs. radical Islamism.

With all this in mind, let us examine year two of the Arab revolutions, especially in Tunisia and Egypt, but with a glance at Libya and Syria as well.

II. Tunisia as Bellwether

Tunisia's youth, women, and workers sparked the new era of revolution with lighting speed with their January 2011 overthrow of an entrenched dictatorial regime. But by October, the elections for a constituent assembly gave a 35% plurality to the moderate Islamist Ennahda Party, with the largest secular leftist group, the Congress for the Republic (CPR), receiving only 8% of the vote. The militantly secularist Progressive Democratic Party, whose campaign emphasized attacks on Islamism as a reactionary force, won very few votes. Afterwards, Ennahda allowed the CPR's Moncef Marzouki to become the new president, while its Hamadi Jebali took over as prime minister.

On the eve of the election, the privately owned Nessma TV showed the celebrated Iranian film "Persepolis," based upon Marjane Satrapi's moving leftist feminist account of growing up as a young woman during the harshest days of the Khomeini regime in Iran. Outraged by the fact that the central character at one point expresses anger at Allah, an image of whom is also given (this itself considered blasphemous by pious Muslims), militant fundamentalists known as Salafists attacked both the station and the home of its owner, Nabil Karoui. The fact that Karoui had strong links to the old regime undermined support for him among the broader public as well. In May, Karoui was fined $1500 for "disturbing public order and undermining good morals" (*Le Monde*, 5/4/12). In the ensuing months, Salafists, with lavish funding from Saudi Arabia, have taken over about a fifth of the country's 2500 mosques, from which they have staged attacks on the Left and challenged the more moderate Ennahda, which says it is opposed to incorporating Sharia law into the constitution.

Over the past year, a number of other cultural and class conflicts have illustrated both the power of retrogressionist forces and the spirited resistance of more secular and leftist ones, with the outcome still in the balance. One big confrontation took place in December 2011, when some 3000 teachers, students, and workers demonstrated against unemployment, fundamentalism, and corruption outside the Constituent Assembly. Their ranks included

mineworkers from the Gafsa region who camped out in tents under the slogan “work, freedom, dignity.” Within a few days, a larger group involving thousands of Islamists, many of them extremist Salafists, staged a counter-demonstration demanding sex segregation at universities and the right of students to wear the full veil in the classroom. A physical attack by the Salafists was narrowly averted.

Then, on February 25, another demonstration of about 3000 secularists and leftists was staged against the current government’s inaction in the face of Salafist attacks, especially on trade union headquarters, accusing Ennahda of complicity in those attacks. The major speaker, Hocine Abassi, Secretary General of the General Union of Tunisian Workers, did not help the cause when he denounced the “imperialist and Zionist plot” against the Assad regime in Syria. Unfortunately, this kind of statement is not uncommon among the Middle Eastern and global left, some of which also supported the Qaddafi regime to the bitter end.

A series of confrontations has also taken place at Manouba University, whose faculty and more secular students have repeatedly repulsed Salafist demands for prayer rooms and allowing students veiled in the niqab, which shows only the eyes, to attend classes. One secular woman student briefly became a hero on national TV in March, after she was filmed being thrown to the ground by a large man while trying to prevent Salafists from replacing the national flag with a black Salafist one. A few days later a large national demonstration of mainly secular women celebrated March 8, International Women’s Day. But the next day, radical Islamist women wearing black veils demonstrated outside the national TV station, accusing it of being “allied to the left.”

The most recent confrontation involved a major art exhibition in a middle class and secular neighborhood of the capital. Among the artworks was one spelling out the name of Allah with figures of ants, and another depicting the bearded heads of fundamentalist men surrounding a naked woman, whose vagina was covered by a plate of couscous. In response, well-organized Salafist mobs attacked the exhibit hall. A few managed to overwhelm police, getting into the hall and destroying some paintings. Mobs also attacked several police stations. The government condemned the mob attacks, declared a curfew, and carried out a number of arrests. It called for national unity, but Ennahda head Rachid Ghannouchi also framed the events not as a fight over free speech, but as having been caused by both “secular and religious extremists” (Isabel Madraud, “Ambiance délétère en Tunisie après la vague d’émeutes,” *Le Monde*, 6/15/12). Since then, the exhibition hall has been closed by the government, while a number of the artists have received death threats.

As much of the left sees things, the Ennahda-dominated government has no solution to the class and economic problems that underlay the revolution, such as a depression-level official unemployment rate of 19%. Nor has it taken up the grievances of employed workers, like those at the German-owned Leoni auto cable plant, who staged strikes and sit-ins in January and then had to face management threats to close the plant. Instead, the government is allowing cultural conflicts to simmer, both to distract the working people from the real issues and to undermine its opponents among a population that is as a whole more pious than the secular and leftist

groups. At the same time, wary of international public opinion, Ennahda has also been careful to distance itself from the Salafist extremists, but without really cracking down on them.

It must also be said, however, that some of the actions of our secular and leftist comrades, like continuing to forbid veiled women to attend classes at Manouba University, need to be rethought, let alone the outrageous support of some for the Assad regime. As Marxist-Humanists, we have never held to a French Enlightenment or Leninist type of atheism, which in any case cannot be found in any of the political programs endorsed by Marx. Instead, we have acknowledged progressive as well as retrogressive trends in religion's relation to politics. Take, for example, our co-founder Charles Denby's Lowndes County Christian Movement, a Black liberation association of workers and farmers in Detroit and Alabama that was described so eloquently in part 2 of his *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* (1978).

III. The Egyptian Linchpin

While neither Tunisia nor Egypt has experienced any significant change in the class and economic structure of society despite having undergone political revolutions, the outcomes have been somewhat different at the political level. Where Tunisians have suffered under the vicissitudes of a new political system dominated Islamists, Egyptians have seen the survival of important elements of the old military-security-judicial state, along with the ascendance of the Muslim Brotherhood, which remains more fundamentalist than its Tunisian counterparts. As a result of months of painful betrayals and repression, the Egyptian revolutionary forces have learned that they need to oppose not only the military-police apparatus, but also the Brotherhood. Month after month, the revolutionaries have mobilized on Tahrir Square, often in the hundreds of thousands, to keep alive the spirit of February 2011 in the face of violent attacks and even sexual assaults by the military.

For most of the time since the 2011 revolution, as *Le Monde's* Christoph Ayad notes, "[Muslim] Brothers and military men had managed to agree insofar as keeping a lid on the street and the revolutionaries of Tahrir Square" ("Egypt: 60 ans de lutte entre islamistes et militaires," *Le Monde,* 6/18/12). This meant helping the military to ram through a slightly amended constitution in March 2011 that favored well-entrenched organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood. It also meant blocking demonstrators from entering Tahrir Square on January 31, 2012. These demonstrators were targeting continued rule by the supposedly interim Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) for its failure to relinquish power and its continuing to arrest, torture, sexually abuse, and imprison democratic and leftist political activists. But at the sight of the Brothers taking an openly anti-revolutionary position, the revolutionaries broke into the chant, "No Brotherhood, no officers."

During this same period, the Muslim Brotherhood seemed to consolidate its hold on the levers of what was at the time projected to be a new political order based upon a new constitution. Taking advantage of its large, disciplined organization and lavish funding from Qatar, and not hesitating to slander its opponents as anti-Islamic, the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party garnered a large victory in the parliamentary elections last winter. When the final votes

were tallied in January, Freedom and Justice had won 47% of the vote, while the utterly reactionary Salafists had won 24%, the latter with substantial financial support from Saudi Arabia. Liberal parties scored a total of only 16%, while the left was shut out almost completely. This marked the low point of the Egyptian revolution, as it now appeared that Egypt was heading for a transition toward some kind of amalgam of Islamist conservatism and the old state apparatus under SCAF.

At this point, however, the Brotherhood began to overreach. Rather than form even a token alliance with the small secular wing of the new parliament, it tacitly allied with the Salafists, granting them leadership of committees on human rights and on culture and the media. It also betrayed its promises regarding the Egyptian presidency. In early 2011, the Brotherhood had stated repeatedly that it would not seek a political monopoly even if it had the votes to do so, intimating that it would back the candidacy of a well-known liberal democrat like Mohamed El Baradei, popular among the revolutionary youth as well. But on March 21, 2012 the Brotherhood went back on that promise, announcing that it would run one of its own for president, this while still controlling both parliament and the committee to write the constitution.

At this point, the military leaders of SCAF saw an opening for themselves. After all, they and their close allies still controlled the state, including the organization of the elections and the counting of the votes. Election judges loyal to SCAF thereupon disqualified the candidacy of a charismatic leader of the Brotherhood, forcing them to run the dour Mohamed Morsi. They also disqualified a prominent Salafist. Meanwhile, the military quietly backed the candidacy of former Air Force officer Ahmad Shafiq, who ran on ferocious “law and order” platform, promising to silence by overwhelming force the disorderly demonstrations on Tahrir Square, while also stoking fears of an Islamist Egypt.

The first round of the presidential election, held on March 31, 2012, saw a big drop in support for the Muslim Brotherhood versus the parliamentary elections of only a few months earlier. While the Brotherhood’s Morsi came in first, he scored only 25%, way down from the Brotherhood’s parliamentary total of 47% in January. Shocking to many, and possibly due to a degree of election fraud, Shafiq placed second, with 24%. Another surprise lay in the new and surprising strength of leftists and progressives. Left-wing nationalist Hamdin Sabbahi, who had worked closely with the youthful protestors even before 2011, was just behind, with 21% of the vote. In addition, Abdel Moneim Aboul Foutou, a very liberal Islamist with a progressive social agenda who had been pushed out of the Brotherhood, received 17% of the vote.

This outcome suggested that the broad Egyptian public had not turned into supporters of a conservative form of Islamism and that they were also open to progressive and leftist politics. After all, the combined vote for Sabbahi and Abdel Foutou was no less than 38%, with Sabbahi besting the Brotherhood in some of Cairo’s poorest neighborhoods, which he and Abdel Foutou also did in Alexandria. In short, the Egyptian revolution remained in play.

As voters awaited the final round for the presidency between the Brotherhood’s Morsi and the

military-backed Shafiq, it was now the military's turn to overreach. Judges close to SCAF disbanded parliament, leaving the process of creating a new constitution in utter limbo. SCAF also arrogated vast new powers to itself, suggesting that it, rather than voters or the new president, would nominate a new constituent assembly.

On June 8, another very large demonstration filled Tahrir Square. All opposed what amounted to a coup by the military, with some giving critical support to Morsi and others shouting slogans against both Morsi and Shafiq. Eventually, Morsi won a fairly narrow victory against Shafiq, 52% to 48%. At one level, this was a shocking and retrogressive outcome. Shocking because an open supporter of the old regime received nearly half of the vote. Retrogressive because the political openings of 2011 had been reduced, in this final round, at least, to a choice between two conservatives.

But at another level, this presented an opening. Both the military and the Muslim Brotherhood had discredited themselves, plus they were now at odds with each other, giving an opening to the revolutionary forces. Whereas their cooperation during 2011 and early 2012 had almost completely closed out any type of progressive politics, the sharp new divergences between them may now have created openings for leftists and progressive forces.

During the past year, two other indicators showed the obstacles facing the Egyptian revolution. One indicator of the deep challenges facing the Egyptian revolution is the state of labor. Tellingly, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions was founded just as Mubarak was being overthrown. Many strikes broke out soon after, with not only economic demands, but also calls for firing corrupt and oppressive bosses, many of whom were pushed out. But by late 2011, SCAF promulgated a new labor law that criminalized strikes that disturbed production, in other words almost all strikes. Penalties include prison sentences and stiff fines. A draft labor law proposed by the Muslim Brotherhood was little better.

A second indicator of deep contradictions since 2011 involved women's rights, so often a bellwether of where a revolution is going. On November 25 of last year, a monster demonstration drew at least 500,000 to Tahrir Square, demanding the resignation of the SCAF in favor of a government of national salvation involving all the nation's political forces. As these protests persisted into December, the military police cracked down. On December 17, soldiers accosted and stripped several women demonstrators, and one of these women was videoed being kicked on the ground by 2 male soldiers who had torn off her blouse. After the "blue bra" video went viral on the Internet, 10,000 women came onto the streets to demonstrate 3 days later, on December 20. This constituted the largest women's rights demonstration in modern Egyptian history, larger than the historic women's demonstration of 1919 against British imperialism.

Other women who had been arrested in various demonstrations also came forward to lodge legal complaints against sexual assaults by soldiers or military doctors, dubbed "virginity tests," which had been going on all through 2011, in fact continuing a practice begun by Mubarak's police. While the courts initially allowed these cases to go forward, by March of this

year the cases were dismissed.

Despite this, Egyptian women have continued to protest with great courage in the face of ongoing sexual assaults in broad daylight in Tahrir Square, not only by the police and military, but also by male civilians. For example, a dozen women came to the June 8 demonstration against what amounted to SCAF's coup, but their target was the sexual assaults in Tahrir Square that have made it so difficult for women to participate in demonstrations there. Even though they had several dozen male escorts, their small group of fifty was driven off Tahrir almost immediately, under a shower of rocks and bottles. Feminists suspect that at least some of these sexual attacks have been orchestrated by the military-security apparatus, which has long employed thugs to attack protestors, and which targeted women in this way at demonstrations in the years leading up to 2011. But even if this is the case, how was a group of progressive women and their supporters driven off Tahrir Square in the midst of a demonstration that had an overall revolutionary character?

This points to a problem we noted in our earlier analysis of the Egyptian revolution, even at the height of its revolutionary creativity, when millions flocked to and occupied Tahrir Square day and night: "One youth in the square, Amira Magdy, declared, 'We don't need a leader. This system is beautiful' (Kareem Fahim and Mona El-Naggar, "Some Fear a Street Movement's Leaderless Status May Become a Liability," *New York Times*, Feb. 4, 2011). Such skepticism about a leader from on high was certainly warranted, especially given Egypt's history of military rulers, but it begged the question of what to do about the fact that some groups like the Army and the Muslim Brotherhood – not to speak of remnants of Mubarak's National Democratic Party — were already organized, had their agendas, and would sooner or later seek to project those agendas, something they would be able to all the more easily if the more grassroots, secular, and leftist elements of the revolution did not themselves develop a stronger organizational presence in Egyptian society" (Kevin Anderson, "Arab Revolutions at the Crossroads," *US Marxist-Humanists*, April 2, 2011)

IV. Libya and Syria

I can only touch very briefly here on the two other major revolutions in the region, Libya and Syria. In Libya, the long and bloody process of overthrowing the Qaddafi regime took more than six months, even with significant air support from NATO. The regime's intransigence to the end meant that the old state had to be destroyed. The extent to which the revolution succeeded as a result of NATO intervention has been hotly debated on the Left, but some of the more astute commentators – like Stephen Zunes and Juan Cole — have emphasized that Libyan forces might have won anyway without the foreign assistance. Moreover, these same observers have argued that the endgame of the uprising, the fall of the capital, Tripoli, last August was more the product of an internal mass uprising than of an invasion by the military forces of the uprising. As Cole put it, "working-class districts rose up, in the hundreds of thousands and just threw off the regime" (cited in Zunes, "Lessons and False Lessons from Libya," *Truthout*, 8/30/11).

What will replace the murderous, totalitarian Qaddafi regime is still unclear. So far, some regional militia leaders that fought Qaddafi have turned into warlords, who have dominated some areas of the country. This has led to sometimes-arbitrary revenge killings and persecutions of real or perceived regime supporters. Most tragically, some of these attacks have targeted Black Libyans or foreign workers, accused simply on the basis of their skin color or national origin of having fought in the regime's African Legion. In addition, Libyan women have often been shunted aside, despite their crucial participation in the uprising, both by these warlords and sometimes by the provisional governing authorities.

But the situation is still in flux, and there have been a number of positive developments as well. The first post-revolutionary elections, held in July 2012, seem to have given the country more of a sense of national identity and unity. Turnout was relatively high, and little of the threatened violence from regional warlords actually took place. Moreover, unlike much of the rest of the region, liberal rather than Islamist parties like the Muslim Brotherhood may have won a plurality, putting them in a strong position to influence the new constitution.

In addition, some ethno-linguistic minorities like the Imazhigen (Berbers) have achieved an important degree of autonomy, more than anywhere else in the region. Under Qaddafi, people could be imprisoned for even speaking Tamazight (Berber) in public, but since the uprising they have been able to establish a Tamazhight TV station. In addition, most Libyans seem to feel a sense of greater freedom and remain optimistic about the future.

Overall, the Libyan revolution stands out as the only example in the current Arab revolutionary wave of an oil-rich country, whose rulers were able to use oil money for a nearly limitless supply of weapons and mercenaries to use them, and yet still succumbed to a popular uprising. This surely holds lessons for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf monarchies, a base of counter-revolutionary politics in the region. The Libyan revolution also exposed contradictions within the international left, some of which, including prominent figures like Hugo Chavez, backed Qaddafi to the end, claiming this megalomaniacal dictator as a progressive because he had sometimes clashed with Western imperialism. At a more general level, Libya, and then Syria, to which I now turn, also called into question the way in which many on the left, for example Tariq Ali, had attempted, early on when only Tunisia and Egypt had risen up, to portray the Arab revolutions as directed solely against regimes backed by Western imperialism.

Syria offers another example of an Arab revolution that has been forced to take up arms in the face of violent repression, and one that also tests and exposes contradictions on the left, as the Assad regime has long opposed both Israel and US imperialism. This has led to misguided support for Assad from some prominent international leftists like Chavez. Inside the region, the regime continues to receive support not only from the Shia fundamentalist Hezbollah in Lebanon, but also from ostensibly leftist currents like the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which the Assad regime has sometimes backed in its fight against Turkish domination of the Kurds. Another leftist group that has supported Assad is the Syrian-based splinter group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Since March 2011, when mass protests began in one of the country's most impoverished regions, the Syrian regime has killed some 16,000 civilians and imprisoned (and often tortured) as many as 200,000 more. The revolutionary movement is broadly based, ranging from liberal and leftist youth to hardline Islamists. By now, it is said to exercise at least partial control, at least at night, of some 60% of the national territory. As with Egypt or Tunisia during their uprisings of early 2011, the revolutionary activists inside the country have worked scrupulously to keep a sense of unity on a national-democratic basis rather than a sectarian ethnic or religious one.

As reported by French novelist Jonathan Littell, who made a clandestine trip to rebel-controlled areas a few months ago, one youthful activist had this response to his question about fundamentalist influence. Littell's interlocutor began by referring to the failed Muslim Brotherhood uprising in Hama in 1982, which began on a sectarian basis with the killing of a group of military cadets of Alawite origin, that is, from the breakaway Shia religious grouping of the Assad family and many of its closest supporters: "Today, as against Hama in 1982, it is the people that is rising up. The Muslim Brothers, the communists, the Salafists and the other political movements are rushing to capture the people and stand on their shoulders. But the Syrian street opposes the politicization of the movement. It accepts aid from wherever it comes, but this aid cannot come with strings. The street has not risen up to demand a particular political option, but in response to oppression and humiliation" ("Passage Clandestin," *Le Monde*, 2/16/12). Whether this kind of politics can be maintained, in the face of both the regime's sectarian brutality and the lessons of Egypt, remains to be seen.

If the Syrian revolutionary movement has sought to overcome the nation's ethnic divisions, the the regime has played the ethno-religious card, attempting to scare its Alawite base, as well as the Christians, the Kurds, and the Druze by arguing that the revolution (which they term terrorism) will bring about domination by fundamentalists from the Sunni Muslim majority, who constitute about 75% of the population. The regime's thugs, many of them drawn from the Alawite community, have targeted Sunni neighborhoods, carrying out brutal massacres. So far, the revolutionary movement has held to a to great extent to disciplined, humanist stance, not only stopping reprisals against Alawite civilians, but also going to great length to highlight the fact that supporters of the revolution come from all ethnic groups and religious communities. At the same time, however, some sectarian and jihadist elements have entered the fray against the Assad regime, raising the danger of an ethno-religious war.

The July 18 bombing that killed a number of top officials of the Assad regime will not in itself alter the course of events, as leaders like these can be replaced, but it is an important sign of the regime's underlying weakness in the face of mass popular unrest.

Above all, the Syrian uprising shows that the Arab revolutions are ongoing, despite the many setbacks and contradictions that have arisen since 2011. Many different forces, among them a secular left, are contending with each other in a vast regional revolution that has yet to run its course.

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Liberal Values in the Age of Interdependence

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In 1976, the great pragmatic American liberal James MacGregor Burns, who was a student of the Roosevelt Era, was elected (rather surprisingly) as president of the American Political Science Association. He asked two young scholars on the left to organize his annual program for the 1976 American Political Science Association, which coincided with the American bicentennial. The two young scholars he asked were Frances Fox Piven and myself. That was the first time we worked together, and I've been so pleased to know her all these years since. We've had many areas of agreement, and ample disagreement too. But back then I learned—and I know today—that Frances Piven is a great American patriot who cares deeply about two core American challenges: realizing social justice and overcoming inequality. We are here today at the Left Forum still addressing these problems.

In taking up issues facing liberalism today, we need not focus on liberal values, because they haven't changed. They are still defined by equality, social and economic justice, democracy and democratic participation and engaged citizenship, which has been true since the inception of liberal democracy in the age of democratic revolutions in the 18th and 19th centuries. And as the name suggests, as liberals we continue to cherish liberty; we know however that sustaining liberty require citizenship, equal access to political power and a democratic political community – call it public liberty.

Nor need we divert ourselves with nomenclature. In speaking of liberals, I mean progressives, leftists, small-d democrats, those willing to advocate change on behalf of improving the world and who work on behalf of equality, justice and democracy. It saddens me that so many liberals are reluctant to be called liberal when the term should be a banner for effective political struggle and a fighting liberal creed.

We do need to address our altered realities, however. For liberals seem to have taken too little account of changes in capitalism, technology and the global order that impact how liberal values must be framed to be relevant to today's political struggles. Where capitalism and its political allies acknowledge automation, globalization and the new information economy (if only in order to exploit to further their political and economic interests), liberalism has remained stationery, failing to take the measure of such changes. As a consequence, a politically costly asymmetry has emerged between conservative political thinking and liberal political thinking. Liberals too often act as if we still live and organize and vote in a 19th century society of manufacturing jobs, bi-polar class struggle and independent and sovereign nation states; and in a political arena where the goal is to maintain the power of national syndicalism and enlarge

the social-state and improve the conditions of our American working class without thinking about the consequence for workers elsewhere in the world.

Capitalism, and particularly the predatory elements that support a brute version of unregulated capitalism, have taken the measure of change and developed an approach to privatization, markets and the flow of labor and capital that take advantage of new conditions and thus privilege neo-liberal ideology, however unjust, as relevant and effective. The liberal reaction to globalization has been parochial, to oppose or overcome it. The neo-liberal and conservative reaction has been cosmopolitan, to embrace it.

The Marx no one wants to talk about today once minted a notable war cry: “workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains.” Nowadays we don’t talk much workers of the world. We talk rather about American workers, “our” workers—in Wisconsin, or in New York; or theirs in France or China or Malawi. This parochialism has even infected our conference. As we speak, there is another major session taking place (one I would love to attend) called, “The European Left.” Why are they there and we here? Is the crisis for the European Left really something wholly independent from the crisis of the American left? Are there not common decisions to be made? Common challenges to be faced? How can we challenge parochialism if it is endemic to our own organizational thinking?

Let me put on the table a number of what we may regard as fundamental changes in the landscape, changed conditions in the economic and social world, that have impacted how we ought to be thinking about what it means to be a liberal, what is to care about social justice and democracy in the world today. The changes I want to address are not particularly novel; they simply reflect a reality to which we have paid too little attention.

Among the most important are: first, the shift from an industrial to an information economy in which digital media and automation play a critical role; second, the ideological shift to a neo-liberal ideology that defines the democratic state as the enemy of liberty and sees in markets liberty’s allies, leading to a massive privatization and commercialization of our life worlds; and third, a shift from a world of independent states each capable of governing the sovereign interests of their peoples to a world of interdependence in which national states are increasingly powerless to resolve cross–border issues.

The emergence of automation and the information economy has had a profound impact on work. Capitalist productivity has in effect made full employment an “externality” no longer required as condition for production and profits. To be productive in the information age where automation is the new norm, is measured by having fewer and fewer workers (and jobs) capable of generating more and more goods, services and profits.

Increased productivity suggests we do not need to challenge the idea of shorter working hours for workers. Shorter hours is a useful response to greater productivity, as long as pay is . The reality is the efficiency and productivity of the modern information society is such that you simply don’t need people working even eight hour days, let alone twelve or fifteen hour days in

order to create a productive economy. The class struggle model still presumes that there are workers and owners of capital locked in a struggle over who or what makes the real contribution to productivity: those who supposedly take risks in the name of capital, or those who actually produce the goods through their labor, that produce the value of goods. But in an automated information economy—worldwide and global—that's not a very helpful way to conceptualize what's at stake or to determine what we need to do in order to defend justice and equality around the world.

The same point has been made by several speakers today. Frances too has noted that at least since the 1980's we have live in an economy that was not only rooted in increased automation and information in the traditional manufacturing economy, but we have also lived in a world defined by increasing privatization.

The great victory of the right and of capitalism in the last thirty or forty years has had little to do with its old theology of breaking up unions and controlling the Republican Party. It has done these things on the way to accomplishing something much more potent and politically efficacious – and not just here, but in Europe and around the world. The tactic has been not just to attack government in fundamental ways, but to attack government as representation, as an emblem of the public. What is the public but what belongs to us and is constituted by us? The attack has also been aimed beyond the idea of the public to the idea of democracy itself.

The notion of democracy is centered on our right as a collective community (a people) to make decisions that benefit us as a people. Hence, we speak of the "the commonwealth." To argue, as critics of liberalism from the time of Reagan and Thatcher have done, that government is the problem and markets the solution, is to argue that "we the people" are the problem; the public is the problem; citizens are the problem. We are being urged to regard ourselves as consumers and producers rather than as citizens. Citizenship speaks to our collective identity as a national (or international) community. Privatization takes this away from us, leaving us with the identities of private consumers and personal bearers of individual rights only.

Ironically, what has followed the diminishing of government and derogation of democracy by conservatives has been the free reign of large, monopolistic, predatory corporations. Yet most Americans, even those on the so-called right, have little sympathy for the predatory policies of these corporations and banks. Yet their dangers are rendered invisible by the glaring light being shone on supposedly liberty-crushing government. So that the Tea Party ends up not only critiquing government but undermining the very idea of public goods—(the *res publica* from which our word for Republicans comes). In the lexicon of neo-liberals, there is no such thing as public goods, only private commodities; there's no such thing as a public interest, only private interests, special interests, our own interests.

Both Parties have been complicit in this corruption of public language. The Clinton administration and now the Obama administration often speak of the President as the "CEO" of America, and reduce their public achievements to accomplishments that can be spoken of in terms of special interests – public employees, or persons with disabilities, or immigrants

without papers, or seniors in need of medical care. President Clinton summarized the achievements of his two terms at the end of his second with a tome listing more than 400 interest groups that had benefited from his policies. The public interest, the American people, America the beautiful, were nowhere to be found.

The Democratic Party has managed to turn the public good into a series of fractured, private interests, and it seems content to refer to its aims exclusively in this manner. No wonder public employee unions are seen as a special interest feeding off the public trough; no wonder public school teachers are assumed to be one more private party seeking special advantage rather than the foundation for educating Americans into democratic citizenship and critical thinking. One can't build a liberal public interest by enumerating the distinctive interests of Latinos with disabilities or of gay Marines able to marry their parters. Break America into a thousand splinters and factions, privatize their interests and see only individuals where citizens once were, and of course America as a republic with great national interests and overriding common goals will vanish. And so it has.

The Republicans, who in fact quintessentially represent what I understand to be private and special interests of a narrow economic kind, have nevertheless managed, flying in the slipstream of Ronald Reagan's rhetoric, to look like the true guardians of the nation's public interest. "Morning in America" became a metaphor for national revival and public greatness though the policies it celebrated were privatization, smaller government and tax breaks for the privileged and wealthy, all of which helped diminish America's greatness and downgrade it from "Number One" in the world to something far less impressive. Thus the modern irony of conservatives advocates of private good using the language of the public, while liberals representing—genuinely and authentically— public goods and the democratic republic resting satisfied with the language of faction and interest.

How can this do anything other than undermine liberal aims? How can public servants including public school teachers, civil service employees, police and firemen and government bureaucrats be seen as any other than private parasites sucking on the body politic for their own private nourishment? It is hard to think of our fellow citizens even as "fellow Americans," which adds fuel to the fire of those inflamed against immigrants, whether Latinos or Muslims. These might seem little more than rhetorical battles over what we call things, and so they are. But when we call democracy a bureaucratic scam by demagogues who disdain the people, and when we see in multicultural American citizens a fifth column for gang members and terrorists, names really do hurt.

How this plays out in practice can be seen in the attacks on public employee unions in Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania and elsewhere where middle and working class folks have been persuaded that public workers with whom one might imagine they would sympathize are actually stealing their dough (via taxation). Even in New York, as Stanley Aronowitz has pointed out, this pillorying of public employees continues apace. So rather than say liberals are losing the battle for collective bargaining, it might be more accurate to say liberals are losing the battle for the very notion of what a public good is, losing sight of the meaning of the

"commonwealth." When we lose that battle over meaning and rhetorical context, it becomes impossible to win the political and practical battle to preserve public employee unions.

The third problem liberals face is the loss of their alternative paradigm – the vanquishing of socialism and communism by the market paradigm. Call it the disintegration of the "Great Left Alternative Paradigm," which was always a difficult and troublesome and problematic, not least of all because the abstract and noble socialist paradigm was attached to the ignoble and failed practices of Soviet (and Chines) Communism. The paradox was that what illuminated egalitarianism and social justice in a theoretical perspective seemed to contradict them when put into practice by revolutionaries in Russia, China, Cuba and North Korea. As long as there was an alternative to markets and wild capitalism they produced in the global setting, it was possible to criticize market paradigms and capitalism's claim to represent the "best" solution to social justice as well as productivity and prosperity. However deficient the actual practices of socialism, the paradigm beckoned. (Keep in mind that socialism was judged by its practices and condemned while capitalism is judged by its theory, and celebrated!) There was an alternative, whatever its problems. It produced a good deal of embarrassed stammering and temporizing, along the lines of "Well, OK Stalinism is a pretty extreme and maybe destructive version of socialism, what with the liquidation of millions and the totalitarian tendencies, but still, at least it *is* an alternative.

The very presence of an alternative paradigm, however flawed in practice, gave hope to critics of capitalism and allowed them to imagine that under the right circumstances (like America's) it could result in social justice and a more egalitarian society – as it had in Scandinavia, for example. The very presence of a paradigm, however flawed, was deeply important, because it gave progressives the sense that there was some alternative out there. The total historical discrediting and failure of that paradigm via the actual history of the Soviet Union, including its collapse in 1989, was a deep and powerful blow that the left can scarcely acknowledge – not just because it doesn't like to admit it held the paradigm with a kind of colossal naiveté, but because the paradigm failed so abysmally. It hardly helped that after 1989, Francis Fukuyama wrote his book about "The End of History" celebrating the last paradigm standing as if it were the only and best and most awesome model history ever knew – "democratic capitalism." Fukuyama was recognizing that the great historical, dialectical struggle between capitalism and communism was over—and that capitalism had won. History as ideological struggle was over (not so different than what Daniel Bell had called decades earlier "the end of ideology." What Fukuyama wanted to argue was that market democracy was the only paradigm left, and that the political battles from that time on would be confined to battles within that paradigm rather than between it and some other paradigm. The only question left was what kind of market democracy? It was hardly a surprise then that the Democratic Leadership Council, led by the future President Bill Clinton, staked out a position for Democrats within the capitalist paradigm. Or that today President Obama can say without blinking an eye we are pro-business, not anti-business; I'm an ardent capitalist… a market man.

The democratic state has become a surrogate for the socialist collective, and with socialism discredited, the democratic state hasn't a leg to stand on. The only question is should

government be little or less? Are markets sufficiently free or should they be still more unregulated? The job of the left is to fit into capitalism somewhere, a small voice whispering "maybe a little regulation wouldn't hurt? Is justice really a collectivist principle?" The compromises wrought by President Obama seem to arise at least in part out of the fact that he sees no real alternative to the anti-government, anti-tax, individualistic, market solutions Republicans offer. He can say "slow down a little" and "can't we cut a little bit less?" but he can't defend government as the vox populii or insist that liberty is public rather than private, because the paradigm that allowed such claims has vanished. None of this is to wish the Soviet Union back into existence, or to deny the deficiencies of socialist collectivism, let alone to rationalize Bolshevik tyranny.

Yet we desperately miss having an alternative paradigm of justice rooted in public freedom, social equality and egalitarian justice. Marxism isn't really the issue: I mean, after all, we actually know that in 1967 the only real Marxists were in the University of Massachusetts economics department. Those governing in Russia, Cuba, Vietnam or China were fakes using an old ideology to impose a new form of terror.

Yet the absence of a viable alternative theoretical paradigm, the absence of a language which at least in theory (however discredited in practice) had bite and reach, has made the struggle of liberalism today extremely difficult. This is not an argument to go back to older models or resurrect a socialist paradigm but to understand that without a fresh vision that illuminates new circumstances liberalism will be in trouble both as a theory and as an alternative set of policies and practices that can confront neo-liberalism, cultural conservatism and the Tea Party disdain for government, regulation and taxation.

Which leads us to how market capitalism has adjusted to changed realities that have left liberals puzzled and unsettled. Capitalism has made a full adjustment (not a very significant adjustment) to the new world and in particular to its most striking feature: its interdependent character. Market ideologues understand interdependence as globalization, and see in it an escape from the regulatory oversight of sovereign national states. Where individual countries still oversee what happens within their borders, many important issues from global financial and labor markets to environmental and labor concerns occupy global terrain beyond their reach.

After all, the nation state was an invention of the 16th century that lasted four hundred years. It made a brilliant home for democracy, but today traps democratic institutions inside borders that do not reflect global realities. The problems democracy must address are transnational and cross-border and supersede the compass of its national institutions. Yet here is no global democracy or democratized globalization. At this point then, what nations face is a negative or malevolent form of independence: the interdependence of global warming; the interdependence of health pandemics; the interdependence of predatory global markets; the interdependence of financial institutions and banks, unregulated in the international sector.

Corporate CEOs understood a long time ago following World War II that no firm could ever

again regard itself as “American,” that economic markets are global. Yet liberals continue to treat unions as national, social justice as American, environmental policy as a parochial issue. We continue to believe that we can find our way forward inside the confines of the nation state, where others long ago have gone global, Even al Qaeda operates not as a client of individual rogue states but as a malevolent NGO at home everywhere but tied to no one country. They figured out that in a truly interdependent world an effective global terrorist organization cannot tie itself to individual nations. That is one reason why the American war against al Qaeda despite the tens of thousands of p and billions of dollars has been so inadequate. We go looking for terrorists in Afghanistan, then Iraq, then Pakistan and Yemen and Somalia, never seeming to grasp that taking on the armies of tribal or national entities cannot overcome terrorists who know no national allegiance and respect no borders. So al Qaeda seems finally to understand interdependence better than the State Department or the Department of Defense.

Liberals and progressives need then to come to terms with interdependence: overcome parochialism, vanquish unilateralism, move behind the insufficiencies of hard power and formal military campaigns against informal insurgents. The left speaks the language of multilateralism and cooperation – just listen to President Obama – but often acts unilaterally in the economic sector. Our unions pit American workers against others elsewhere, insisting on bringing back jobs that are executed more economically and justly elsewhere. Distributive markets in labor suggest it is less than just to try to grab back jobs from poor people elsewhere. Liberals need to solve the labor problem globally in order to solve it justly inside the United States. Once again the challenge is either to democratize globalization or globalize democracy. Unless we can remove democratic oversight from the sovereign box in which it sits and find a way to apply it globally, we will have neither democracy nor social justice within or among nations. Meanwhile, those who understand globalization on the right will accommodate it in undemocratic ways that benefit stakeholders while undermining justice.

Liberals have also had issues dealing with what is sometimes seen as a conservative view of American exceptionalism, although views on it do not follow partisan lines. Liberal often celebrate exceptionalism in terms of America’s founding virtues of liberty and justice for all, and Democratic Presidents from Wilson to Kennedy and LBJ have certainly spoken of American military missions as growing out of America’s special relationship to virtue and natural right. We don’t crow “we’re Number One!” but can seem arrogant and even chauvinist or jingoist in foreign policy. Nor would we want to go into elections proclaiming, “No, America is not great, and please God, don’t bless America.” What does a liberal exceptionalism look like that isn’t predicated on the United States being better than others but having some unique qualities worth being proud about. That is not the view of the Tea Party and the “we’re number one crowd” who preferring shouting “USA! USA! USA!” to talking about the hard policy choices the USA faces. It is not the Superbowl where all-American teams compete to be “world” champions, but the question of what America stands for and can be proud of. But it is not clear to me that liberals really have a clear way to talk about exceptionalism.

We do not have to choose “for” or “against” the right’s view of exceptionalism – all or nothing.

I myself am an American exceptionalist; but I am an exceptionalist not because we're number one, but because this country is emblematic of a global history: multicultural; open and tolerant; deeply democratic and willing to invite serious self-criticism. Exceptional precisely because of its commitment to liberal principles! It's not that we are the world—as the old song had it—it is rather that the world is us, and we are posed for international leadership in these issues as a consequence of are being part of the world. If the world looks to us for leadership, it isn't about American jet fighters over Libya but about democratic ideas. Not the ones to be dropped out of a Stealth bomber or sent in by Fed-Ex, but the ones we manifest in our politics of diversity, multiculturalism, and justice for all.

With interdependence our new reality, we need a liberalism of constructive interdependence that will make democracy not only just but global. In developing strategies appropriate to interdependence, the Left will not just rediscover its mission, but once again become the real shining beacon of America around the world.

My sense is that it's not just about names and labels, but that "class struggle" has a very specific sociological and economic meaning. It is about a world in which there was an ownership class and a working class; and the claim made by Marx and other critics, I think quite rightly, was the that real value, or most of the value, of capitalism's products and commodities was the contribution of workers who were never paid properly for that contribution in accord with the value of their labor. And it goes back to Locke's "labor theory of value" where because we "own ourselves" we own our labor and those things with which we mix our labor.

It's probably also the case that the Left never fully appreciated issues of risk – for which capitalists have a right to earn a profit. But those issues of risk aren't particularly relevant today, since it's very clear that since large corporations and banks no longer have to take any risks at all, since those have been socialized and put on the back of the workers, they deserve little in return for risks they no longer take. In a system where profit is privatized, and risk is socialized, we confront a new socialism – corporate socialism.

There must be Utopia, no question, but if our concern is exploitation and suffering, and the alleviation of suffering not through helping victims but changing the systems in which victims are created, then we have to be willing to work in the world, though we are liberals, as pragmatists. And if we're not pragmatic, we can sit and write books and meanwhile people will go on suffering. So perhaps we need a kind of utopian pragmatism, a politics that reflects utopian ideas but is willing to dirty its hands and in the real world of compromise to achieve system change that will help those who suffer and allow them to become empowered, to become part of the equation. And that is, as far as I am concerned, *not* what we have.

I want to raise two other points concerning interdependence. Interdependence does not mean that we say, "Since capitalists have an interdependent ideology, for us to be interdependent

means we accept their paradigm." Just the opposite! They do have a powerful, governing, interdependent paradigm—it's about anarchic (yet also, paradoxically, monopolistic) global markets, it's about global competitions, it's about free trade—and right now it's the dominant, operating paradigm in the world.

The left if just simply not responding to it. So when I say, "Let's think interdependently," I don't mean "Let's accept their paradigm." I mean, "Let's go out into an interdependent world and find an alternative constructive paradigm that actually will combat theirs, but will combat it not by talking about tariffs and protections country by country, but will talk about a way of dealing with labor that genuinely deals with it in an interdependent and global context." But here's the point: we really talked a lot about class struggle. Honestly, as somebody who's been involved in politics all my life, we've all been….You know, the idea that "class struggle" is the term that is really going to animate Americans now and get them going—"That's what we need to do, we need a new theory of class struggle!"—I just think is silly, unrealistic, it just doesn't work.

Finally, I want to put on the table what we liberals never talk about – a politically relevant approach to new digital media. If I am going to address where America is today (and where the world is) interdependently, I want to address— it's probably not a class—call it "Those Who Are On Facebook" — five hundred million people around the world on Facebook— more than half of all Americans. I want to talk more generally about social media. Democratic or anti-democratic? Exploitative or not? Are they part of a class struggle, or not? I'm not sure those terms really help; I do know this—I believe (and be happy I won't make the argument now!) that Facebook and social media are actually anti-social media, anti-political media, anti-civic media. They act against the interest of participatory democracy; they act against the interest of interdependence—even though they use a web archeology that is both interdependent and democratic. Democratic in the sense that their architecture is horizontal, face-to-face, person-to-person. That, to me, is a great tragedy; that the great new innovative technology of our time—that young people particularly love—is being used not for purposes of democracy and leveling and equality and the struggle for justice, but is used instead for privatized gossip, for interaction among people who are looking for others just like them rather than looking for people who are different than they are. In other words, the misuses, the abuses—the privatization of social media, which should be a powerful civic media—to me is a powerful and important theme. Especially because in their conception and architecture the new media are so promising, a veritable new electronic frontier for freedom.

Maybe I'm wrong, and maybe there will somebody who will defend Facebook as a civic medium, but whether or not I'm right, the issue ought to be on the table. It ought to be one of the big sessions here. We ought to be talking about, "What do we think about Facebook? What we talk about, what we think about social networks? Can they play a role?" When Howard Dean, with whom I worked with in 2006, introduced the idea of using the new media, he introduced it basically just do what the old media and public relations always did. Same with President Obama's campaign, where the web was used to pull together and draw in supporters, who would go out and work for him; to exploit the interactivity of it as a promise about ongoing

participation that was never realized. All that disappeared right after the election was over. We that know one of the reasons Obama and the Democrats didn't do very well in 2010 is that they pushed aside the social network they had created around the Obama campaign in 2008, and therefore turned off a lot of young people who could have play a role in 2010. What we do know is that 18% of the vote in 2008 was between 18 and 25, and only 11% of the vote was this last time in 2010; the handheld generation wasn't there second time around.

Ask yourself, are people on Facebook exploiters or exploited? Are they conquerors, victims or are they neither? Is it class or is it something else? I'm not sure those terms help us to understand the civic vices or potential virtues of new media. But we do know that the new media are playing a vital role in how young people think about the world, think about society and, I believe, how they become privatized, selfish, gossip oriented, and uninterested/disinterested in democracy. And I think that's a very serious problem, and I think developing a liberal or radical point of view on that could be truly important. We still do what we used to do, and that's good; we understand that the old media—the broadcast and print media—are now subject to private ownership and big corporations, and fat cat money, who use them not as instruments of civic education, but for something very different. If you want to follow the money, then you follow the money of the NewsCorp and Fox and so on, back to capitalist ownership, and you follow that back to the Koch brothers; or to oil money.

Kingdom Holdings (a Saudi foundation) owns the largest minority stake holding in Rupert Murdoch's news corporation that controls Fox News, which means that folks for Fox News—though I think they're trying to do what they believe and believe they're trying to be good journalists—are paid in part from Kingdom Holdings, big oil money. So we know that tainted money is an argument we have, and that we use.

But it's much harder, because it doesn't let itself to these easy kinds of things, to talk about who "owns" social media, who owns the World Wide Web. Does ownership of hardware or a software platform mean control of the medium? What if the software is "bundled" into the hardware? Should we be for or against "net neutrality" or open source software? …from the perspective of social justice? I've heard arguments on both sides, but those are vital arguments, because that's where the next generation—that's largely not in this room and at this conference; there's some, but largely not—that's where they are. There are far more people on Facebook this morning in this neighborhood than are at this conference. And we need to go where they are and address those issues and try to figure out what it is about social media that's so attractive yet so dangerous. Is it part of privatization, or can it be part of a new theory of public media?

Addressing such questions to new media is just one example of the way in which fresh thinking about interdependence can perhaps enlarge our political perspective and allow us to address new and real problem. Here I completely agree with Stanley—it's not enough to win elections, particularly when the parties are so like one another, we have to do a lot more than that—although I need to add (on the other hand), that the first step in even the weakest democracy is to win elections. We can't forego winning elections—you see what happens to the

supreme court and the judiciary when we lose. So we also have to win elections, even if the victories are pyrrhic and even if we don't get very much in the way of serious socio-economic change.

And to win elections, we better understand the information age; we better understand the impact of social media; we better understand why five hundred million people around the world do get together on Facebook, but don't get together around social economic exploitation, do not get together to defend themselves, do not get together to try to change the global economic system that exists today.

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This essay is adapted from a talk given at the 2011 Left Forum in New York City.

Equality, Identity and Social Justice

By | 2012: vol. 11 issues 2-3

“Recognition” has become a keyword of our time. Hegel’s old figure of “the struggle for recognition” finds new purchase as a rapidly globalizing capitalism accelerates transcultural contacts, fracturing interpretative schemata, pluralizing value horizons, and politicizing identities and differences. Demands for ‘recognition of difference’ fuel struggles of groups mobilized under the banners of nationality, “race”-ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. In these ‘post-socialist’ conflicts, group identity supplants class interest as the chief vehicle of political mobilization. Cultural domination supplants exploitation as the fundamental injustice. And cultural recognition displaces socioeconomic redistribution as the remedy for injustice and the goal of political struggle.

How should we evaluate this shift “from redistribution to recognition”? Is the focus on recognition a counterproductive diversion from the real economic issues, one that balkanizes groups and rejects universalist moral norms? Or does it represent a salutary corrective to the culture-blindness of a materialist paradigm that reinforced domination by falsely universalizing the value horizons of dominant groups?

At first sight, we seem to be confronted here with two incompatible views of injustice. One view highlights socioeconomic inequities, rooted in the political-economic structure of society. Injustices like these, such as exploitation and poverty, arise when economic arrangements deprive some members of society of the material resources they need to participate fully, on a par with others, in social life. The other view stresses cultural or symbolic injustices, rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. These inequities, such as cultural domination, non-recognition, and disrespect, arise when institutionalized patterns of cultural value stigmatize subordinated groups, depriving them of standing as full partners in social interaction.

Properly understood, the redistribution/recognition contrast is not an incompatibility, but an analytical distinction. Conceptually distinct and mutually irreducible, economic and cultural injustices are entwined with one another in social reality. Cultural norms that are unfairly biased against some are institutionalized in the state and the economy, thereby skewing distribution of material resources. At the same time, economic disadvantage impedes equal participation in the making of culture, in public spheres and in everyday life. In actuality, therefore, the two types of injustice–maldistribution and misrecognition–reinforce one another dialectically.

Analytically, however, the two paradigms diverge in important respects. According to the redistribution paradigm, the remedy for injustice is political-economic restructuring–whether

by redistributing income, reorganizing the division of labor, subjecting investment to democratic decision-making, or transforming other basic economic structures. Although these remedies differ from one another, they can be grouped together under the generic term *redistribution*. For the recognition paradigm, in contrast, redressing injustice requires cultural or symbolic change–whether by upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups, or by recognizing and positively valorizing cultural diversity, or more radically, by transforming institutionalized patterns of cultural value in ways that would change *everyone's* self-understanding. Although these remedies, too, diverge from one another, they can be grouped together under the rubric of *recognition* in contrast to that of redistribution.

The two paradigms also differ in their respective views of the groups that suffer injustice. In the redistribution framework, the collective subjects of injustice are classes or class-like collectivities, which are defined economically by a distinctive relation to the market or the means of production. The classic case in the Marxian paradigm is the exploited working class, but the conception can cover other cases as well, such as racialized groups of immigrants or ethnic minorities. From the recognition perspective, in contrast, the victims of injustice resemble Weberian status groups, defined not by the relations of production, but rather by the relations of recognition. Associated chiefly with low-status ethnic groups, this conception too can apply more broadly–for example, to homosexuals and to women, whose contributions and ascribed traits are devalued by dominant patterns of cultural value.

These conceptual differences between redistribution and recognition often find expression in political tensions. Typically, recognition claims call attention to, if they do not performatively create, the putative specificity of some group, whose value they proceed to affirm. Thus, they tend to promote group differentiation. Redistribution claims, in contrast, often aim to abolish economic arrangements that underpin group specificity–witness socialist demands to abolish classes and feminist demands to dismantle the gender division of labor. Thus, they are likely to promote group de-differentiation. The upshot is that the politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution appear to have mutually contradictory aims. If the first tends to promote group differentiation, and the second tends to undermine it, then the two kinds of claim stand in tension with each other. They can interfere with, or work against, one another.

In light of these tensions, how can we best understand social justice in the current conjuncture? Should we favor redistribution, rejecting 'minoritarian' claims, demanding assimilation to majority norms, and prioritizing class struggle—in the name of secularism, universalism or republicanism? Or should we prefer recognition, jettisoning distributive politics as outmoded, difference-blind, and incapable of assuring justice for minorities and women?

If neither of those options is defensible, we might try to develop a third approach: allying what remains unsurpassable in the socialist vision with the best, "post-socialist," insights of multiculturalism. To advance such a "both/and" strategy, I suggest we distinguish between affirmative and transformative strategies. Affirmative approaches aim to correct inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the fundamental structures that generate

them. Transformative strategies, in contrast, would redress injustice precisely by restructuring the deep generative framework. Whereas the first approach attacks surface symptoms, the second targets root causes.

Affirmative remedies for distributive injustice have been associated historically with the liberal welfare state. Seeking to redress end-state maldistribution, they would increase the consumption share of economically disadvantaged groups, without disturbing the deep structures of the political economy. Transformative remedies, in contrast, have been historically associated with socialism. Seeking to prevent maldistribution from the get-go, they would transform the relations of production, altering the division of labor and conditions of existence for everyone.

An example can clarify this distinction. In the United States, efforts to combat racialized poverty have typically taken the form of public assistance and affirmative action, both of which count as affirmative forms of redistribution. The first provides paltry material aid without addressing the root causes of deprivation, while the second aims to assure fair access to existing jobs and educational places without macroeconomic change. Because both policies fail to attack the deep sources of disadvantage, they ensure that surface reallocations must be made again and again. The result is to mark the most disadvantaged class as inherently deficient and insatiable, as always needing more and more. In time, such a class can even come to appear privileged, the recipient of special treatment and undeserved largesse. Thus, an approach aimed at redressing injustices of distribution can end up creating or exacerbating injustices of recognition.

This problem can be avoided by switching from affirmation to transformation. Transformative efforts to remedy economic injustice typically combine universalist social programs, steeply progressive taxation, macroeconomic policies aimed at creating full employment, a large non-market public sector, significant public and/or collective ownership, and democratic decision-making about basic socioeconomic priorities. Aiming to provide jobs for all, while de-linking basic consumption shares from employment, these strategies reduce social inequality without creating stigmatized classes of vulnerable people perceived as beneficiaries of special largesse. Effectively undermining class differentiation, they tend to generate social solidarity. Thus, an approach that begins by targeting injustices of distribution can also help to remedy certain injustices of recognition.

Officially, of course, both affirmative redistribution and transformative redistribution presuppose universalist views of recognition, centered on the equal moral worth of persons. But in practice they generate different logics of group differentiation. Whereas the first undermines its professed universalism, the second tends rather to realize it.

If transformation is best for redistribution, is it also preferable for recognition? Affirmative remedies for cultural injustices are currently associated with mainstream multiculturalism. This approach proposes to redress disrespect by revaluing unjustly devalued group identities, while leaving intact both the contents of those identities and the group differentiations that

underlie them. Transformative remedies, by contrast, are currently associated with deconstruction. They would overcome misrecognition by transforming underlying patterns of cultural value. By destabilizing existing group identities and differentiations, these remedies would not only raise the self-esteem of members of currently disrespected groups. Beyond that, they would change *everyone's* sense of belonging, affiliation, and self.

The case of "despised sexualities" illustrates the point. Affirmative remedies for homophobia and heterosexism are currently associated with gay identity politics, which aims to revalue LGBT identities. Transformative remedies, in contrast, are exemplified by queer politics, which would deconstruct the homo-hetero dichotomy. Assuming an identitarian view of recognition, the first approach politics treats gay identity as a culture, endowed with particular contents, much like ethnicity. Dismantling false heterosexist self-images, it aims to build, publically display, and eventually win widespread respect for a "genuine" homosexual culture. Reinforcing an authentic gay identity, this approach assimilates the politics of recognition to identity politics. As a result, it tends to naturalize, even essentialize, group identity.

Here, too, the trouble can be avoided by shifting from affirmation to transformation. Queer politics treats homosexuality, not as a positive identity, but as the constructed and devalued correlate of heterosexuality. In its view, both "orientations" are reifications of sexual ambiguity, co-defined only in virtue of one another. The transformative objective is, accordingly, not to solidify a gay identity, but to dissolve all fixed sexual identities into a fluid field of multiple, ever-shifting differences.

In general, then, the affirmative approach of gay identity politics tends to enhance existing sexual group differentiation, much like the liberal welfare state's affirmative politics of redistribution. In contrast, the transformative approach of queer politics tends to destabilize group divisions, just as socialism's transformative politics of redistribution seeks to dismantle social classes. For both recognition and redistribution, then, transformation is preferable to affirmation.

Transformation has yet another advantage: far better than affirmation, it promotes efforts to link struggles for recognition with struggles for redistribution in a broader overarching political project. Recall that the identity approach treats misrecognition as a matter of free-floating prejudice, thereby occulting its structural-institutional underpinnings and its entwinement with maldistribution. Many of its proponents ignore distributive injustice altogether and focus exclusively on efforts to change culture. Slighting structural considerations, they miss the links between, say, heterosexist norms institutionalized within social-welfare systems, on the one hand, and the denial of resources and benefits to homosexuals, on the other. Obfuscating such connections, they strip misrecognition of its institutional underpinnings and equate it with distorted identity. For them, economic inequalities are simple expressions of cultural hierarchies—thus, class oppression is a superstructural effect of the cultural devaluation of proletarian identity. In this way, culturalist proponents of identity politics simply reverse the claims of an earlier form of vulgar Marxist economism: they allow the politics of recognition to displace the politics of redistribution.

For these reasons, one should reject the identity model of recognition in favor of what I call "the status model." In the status model, misrecognition is neither a psychic deformation nor a free-standing cultural harm but an institutionalized relation of social subordination. What requires recognition, therefore, is not group-specific identity but rather the status of individual group members as full partners in social interaction. Status equality, not authentic identity, is the political objective. This focus on overcoming institutionalized subordination makes it possible to connect transformative struggles for recognition with transformative struggles for redistribution.

Here, in sum, is a framework that overcomes the redistribution/recognition divide. Linking those two dimensions of justice, the approach I propose would combine socialism in the economy with deconstruction in the culture. The result would be a *politics of redistribution-cum-recognition*, aimed at overcoming class inequality and status hierarchy simultaneously. Centered on removing both types of obstacles to participatory parity, it avoids not only old-fashioned vulgar economism but also new-fangled reductive culturalism. Defining the terrain of social justice as at once economic and cultural, the approach I propose offers a coherent political project encompassing both. Minimizing the tensions between redistribution and recognition, it can help us overcome their separation.

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The Quebec Strike and the Politics of a New Social Awakening

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"The only possible reawakening is the popular

initiative in which the power of an idea will take root."

—Alain Badiou

Across the globe, young people are speaking out. They are using their voices and bodies to redefine the boundaries of the possible and to protest the crushing currents of neoliberal regimes that ruthlessly assert their power and policies through appeals to destiny, political theology, and unabashed certainty. From Paris, Athens, and London to Montreal and New York City, young people are challenging the current repressive historical conjuncture by rejecting its dominant premises and practices. They are fighting to create a future in which their voices are heard and the principles of justice and equality become key elements of a radicalized democratic and social project. At stake in their efforts is not only a protest against tuition hikes, austerity measures, joblessness, and cuts in public spending, but also the awakening of a revolutionary ideal in the service of a new society. In short, youth have dared to call for a different world and, in doing so, have exhibited great courage in taking up a wager about the future made from the standpoint of an embattled present. To understand the shared concerns of the youthful protesters and the global nature of the forces they are fighting, it is crucial to situate these diverse student protests within a broader analysis of global capital and the changing nature of its assaults on young people.

Unapologetic in its implementation of austerity measures that cause massive amounts of hardship and human suffering, neoliberal capitalism consolidates class power on the backs of young people, workers, and others marginalized by class, race, and ethnicity.[2] Such a disposition is evident in the fact that neoliberalism's only imperatives are to increase the profits of a ruling elite and foster investment in global power structures unmoored from any form of accountable, democratic governance. The devastating fallout of neoliberal capitalism's reorganization of society now becomes its most embraced mode of legitimation. Collective misfortune is no longer interpreted as a sign of failing governance, but attributed to the character flaws of individuals and defined chiefly as a matter of personal responsibility. Within

this now widely accepted ideological framework, government-provided social protections are viewed as pathological. Matters of life and death are removed from traditional modes of democratic governance and made subject to the sovereignty of the market. In this new age of biocapital, or what Eric Cazdyn calls bioeconomics, “all ideals are at the mercy of a larger economic logic”[3]—one that unapologetically generates policies that “trample over millions of people if necessary.”[4]

Neoliberalism’s defining ideologies, values, and policies harness all institutions and social practices to the demands of corporations and the needs of the warfare state, while waging an ongoing assault on democratic public spheres, public goods, and any viable notion of equality and social justice. At the same time, fraud and corruption run rampant through the financial sectors of many advanced industrial countries, burning everything in their path.[5] As corporate power is consolidated into fewer and fewer hands, ideological and structural reforms are implemented to transfer more wealth and income into the hands of a ruling financial and corporate elite. This concentration of power is all the more alarming since both Canada and the United States have experienced unprecedented growth in wealth concentration and income inequality since the 1970s. In Canada, as Bruce Campbell notes, “The richest Canadian 1% has almost doubled its share of the national income pie—from 7% to almost 14%—over the last three decades.”[6] The United States holds the shameful honor of being “perched at the very top of the global premier league of inequality,”[7] with 1 percent of Americans holding 40 percent of all wealth and 24 percent of all income.[8] A dire consequence of growing equality is that more and more young people are facing joblessness and poverty and are being written out of a future that might offer them a decent life. What many young people have learned the hard way in both countries is that the impacts of inequality cannot be adequately captured with empirical measures based in the Gross National Product or median incomes. Inequality has a lived quality in which there is “a fatal attraction between poverty and vulnerability, corruption and the accumulation of dangers, as well as humiliation and the denial of dignity.”[9]

Nowhere is the precariousness that defines the current state of young people more obvious than in the consequences they face daily as the welfare state is being dismantled, individual rights effaced, political freedoms criminalized, and social rights all but obliterated. Zygmunt Bauman argues that today’s youth have become “outcasts and outlaws of a novel kind, cast in a condition of liminal drift, with no way of knowing whether it is transitory or permanent.”[10] Increasingly unemployed, pushed into poverty, deprived of the most basic social provisions, denied access to decent health care, faced with diminished educational opportunities, and subject to the discipline of a growing punishing state, young people across the globe face a bleak future marked by uncertainty, vulnerability, insecurity, and the burden of mounting debt.[11] Youth are now condemned to unskilled or temporary jobs, commodified social bonds, and personal commitments that carry a short expiration date. Identities are now temporary, shifting endlessly amid a glut of information provided by celebrity culture and the corporate flattening of all major cultural apparatuses. Instead of being viewed as a crucial social investment, many youth, especially protesting students and minorities of race and class, have become the objects of law and order, caught in an expanding web of surveillance, criminalization, and a governing-through-crime mode of statecraft.[12]

Living out their youth in a present whose future promises only to preserve and expand those spaces that have become sites of "terminal exclusion"—extending from bad schools to bulging detention centers and prisons— young people in North America and Europe have exhibited a growing recognition that the real marker of their generation is an ever-expanding mode of precarity.[13] Increasingly relegated to such "zones of social abandonment" and stripped of their dignity as students and workers, student protesters in both the United States and Canada have recognized that "the current mode of production and reproduction has become a mode of *production for elimination,* a reproduction of populations that are not likely to be productively used or exploited but are always already superfluous."[14] By some estimates, "Nearly 75 million young people around the world are out of work, an increase of four million since the economic crisis of 2008."[15] Youth unemployment rates in Europe are staggering, reaching as high as 50 percent in both Spain and Greece and over 35 percent in Ireland. In the United States, 53 percent of college graduates are either unemployed or underemployed.[16] Regardless of its diminished promise of social and economic mobility, higher education now subsidizes institutional budgets with exorbitant tuition rate hikes that effectively prevent working-class and many middle-class youth from even getting an education.

It is precisely against this background of growing uncertainty, despair, diminishing expectations, and the crushing policies of neoliberal austerity that young people in the Canadian province of Quebec organized a protest movement that may be one of the most "powerful challenges to neoliberalism on the continent."[17] Thousands of university students raised their voices in unprecedented opposition against the ideology, modes of governance, and policies of the neoliberal state. The initial cause of the protest movement began in response to an increase in tuition fees announced by the provincial government in March 2011. *The tuition hike was "part of the government's effort to advance neoliberalism in Quebec by introducing new fees for public services and raising existing ones."* **[18]** The government's proposal included raising tuition by $325 per year over five years with the increased fees going into effect in September 2012. The hike amounted to a 75% increase over five years, rising from $2,319 to $3,793 by 2017. Many critics noted that, even with the increase, tuition fees in the province would be among the lowest in Canada. Regardless, in February 2012, after the government refused to negotiate with organizations representing student interests, the student leaders called for a strike. Thousands of students boycotted their classes, shutting down many of the province's colleges and universities. Developing into a massive student strike— involving more than *300,000 students* and rallying many additional supporters for a mass demonstration on March 22, 2012—the popular uprising transformed from its initial focus on tuition fee structures into a major broad-based movement with tens of thousands of supporters marching nightly in the streets of Quebec cities and in solidarity demonstrations across Canada.[19] As the strike progressed and expanded its base of support, over a quarter of a million joined the demonstrations on a number of occasions and an estimated half million people marched in Montreal on May 25, 2012. By July 2012, the Quebec protest movement had emerged as not only "the longest and largest student strike in the history of North America," but also "the biggest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history."[20] Activating new forms of dissent and solidarity, the students had responded to neoliberal austerity measures by initiating an opposition movement that ranks as one of the most powerful collectively organized challenges

to neoliberal ideology, policy, and governance that has occurred globally in some time.

The issues addressed in the early stage of the protests included a rejection of the province's call for a tuition increase, a sustained critique of the under-funding of post-secondary education, a critical interrogation of the perils facing a generation forced to live on credit and tied to the servitude of debt, and the opening up of a new conversation about the meaning and purpose of an educational system—in particular, the kind of education that is free and removed from corporate influences and whose mission is defined around issues of justice, equality, and support for the broader public good. In developing their critique, the protesters resurrected "the ideal of free post-secondary education—recommended in the 1960s by a famous state-commissioned inquiry, but long since snuffed out among the economic elite."[21] They made clear the political and moral fault lines between those who believe that education is a commodity purchased by "consumers" for self-advancement and those who would protect it as a right funded by the state for the collective good—and, in doing so, they "sparked a fundamental debate about the entire society's future."[22] As Martin Lukacs insists, one achievement of the Quebec protest movement has been "to clarify for a broad swath of society that a tuition hike is not a matter of isolated accounting, but the goal of a neoliberal austerity agenda the world over."[23] By expanding their critique to encompass a broader perspective on neoliberal austerity measures, students were then able to address the fee hikes as part of the growing burden of suffocating debt, government funding priorities that favor the financial and corporate elite, the ruinous transfer of public funds into the reserves of the military-industrial complex, and the imposition of corporate culture and modes of governance on all aspects of daily life.

In the case of Quebec, the hidden order of politics at the center of neoliberal austerity measures and the government's misplaced priorities is difficult to miss. It helps explain why Quebec provincial is spending in 2006-2007 provided $437 million for funding private schools, especially when, as Erika Shaker points out, such funds "would pay for a fee freeze at Quebec universities and have money left over for bursaries for low-income students [while] the remainder could be redirected towards public schools."[24] Shaker suggests that this transfer of funds "demonstrate[s] that when public money is used to facilitate private access, it's the public infrastructure and the people accessing it who pay the price."[25] The defunding of the social state and higher education and the increasing attack on the social contract are also evident in the Canadian state's willingness in the latter half of the 1990s "to reduce by 50% the federal transfers to the provinces for post-secondary education [which has amounted] to a loss of income of $800 million per year for Quebec."[26] Federal funds that could be used for investing in higher education have instead been reallocated in keeping with the conservative government's tough-on-crime agenda and squandered on prison construction and an expanding Canadian military budget. Commentators in the national newspapers bleat about the putative naiveté or selfishness of Quebec youth while remaining conspicuously mute about the increased militarization of the culture, even as Canada attempts to extricate itself from a disastrous and costly war in Afghanistan. The current neoliberal governments at the federal and provincial levels express little or no concern about providing students with quality higher education or supporting investment in universities, libraries, health care, and a jobs creation

program for young people. Misplaced priorities that shut down economic, educational, and political opportunities suggest that Canada has become a society that is waging a war on its children, even as government policies increasingly reveal the savagery of a system that considers profits more important than the lives of its citizens.

Predictably, the Quebec government along with a number of high-profile mainstream journalists deployed a massive smear campaign against the students, labelling them as "self-seeking brats, whining about modest tuition increases and seeking mayhem for its own sake."[27] It is impossible to determine if the bellicose assault against the protesters in the mainstream media along with the support of a large portion of the Quebec's business community encouraged the Charest government to resort to repressive measures. However, it did just that by passing Bill 78 on May 18—and proceeding to implement anti-protest legislation that gave sweeping powers to the police and was designed to suppress peaceful protests and shut down student opposition, while violating the most basic principles of free speech, association, and assembly.[28] Representing the issues raised by the students "as a criminal rather than political issue,"[29] Law 12 was a desperate attempt to portray the protest movement as an act of criminality and students as figures of lawlessness, despite the general peacefulness of the student demonstrations. In the service of legitimating an alarmist set of regulations and substituting an emotional discourse for a reasoned and thoughtful attempt at dialogue, Law 12 provided a green light for police violence, making clear that the state would employ increasing levels of force against students and others in the face of its retreat from addressing major social and economic problems.

But the government's decision to take up a defensive posture on behalf of rich elites and corporate power backfired. The passage of Bill 78 signified a major turning point for the Quebec protest movement. Rather than succeed in creating a climate of fear in order to intimidate students, faculty, and other sympathizers, the law outraged both civil libertarians and ordinary citizens and became a catalyst for attracting a much wider following of non-student supporters. Inspired by the pots and pans movement which developed in Chile the '70s, the "casseroles" demonstrations in Montreal and other cities functioned as a mode of collective performance and a loud but peaceful way to express public outrage and anger at the Charest government. In addition, crowds of supporters embraced the red square as a symbol of resistance to a future of debt (being "squarely in the red"), pinning it on their clothing and waving red flags from their balconies, offering up a powerful symbolic image of defiance as a way to demonstrate their anger over a generation of young people trapped in a ruinous system of usurious credit and loans.

What began as a student strike, then, has morphed into a social strike in which the assault on education could be addressed as part of a wider attack on the social state, the environment, unemployed workers, the land rights of indigenous peoples, and young people. The changing nature of both the debate and politics that informed it was evident in the writings of the movement.[30] The three-pronged action plan of CLASSÉ—the Coalition large de l'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante, the largest student association and the most vocal in supporting direct action and rejecting the regime of neoliberal capitalism —and the "Manifesto

for a Maple Spring" situated the Quebec movement in a broader historical context of social resistance, illuminating a shared opposition to "the laws of an unjust global economy that is mortgaging the future of all of us [and mortgaging] its youth as nothing more than an exploitable resource."[31] In CLASSÉ's *Share Our Future Manifesto*, the call for a social strike is presented passionately through a broad political narrative that is as imaginative as it is daring in its call to imagine new communal bonds, treat human beings with dignity, build democratic social relations, and construct a new vision of the future. One gets a glimpse of this daring embrace of a revolutionary ideal in the following words from the *Manifesto*:

Our strike is not directed against the people. We are the people. Our strike goes beyond the $1625 tuition-fee hike. If, by throwing our educational institutions into the marketplace, our most basic rights are being taken from us, we can say the same for hospitals, Hydro-Québec, our forests, and the soil beneath our feet. …This is the meaning of our vision, and the essence of our strike: it is a shared, collective action whose scope lies well beyond student interests. We are daring to call for a different world, one far removed from the blind submission our present commodity-based system requires. Individuals, nature, our public services, these are being seen as commodities: the same tiny elite is busy selling everything that belongs to us. And yet we know that public services are not useless expenditures, nor are they consumer goods.[32]

In Alain Badiou's terms, these documents demonstrate a strategy for changing a temporary event into a political organization capable of mobilizing a united idea in the service of an historical awakening.[33] The Quebec protest movement is clearly channelling more than the defanged spirit of revolt that Slavoj Žižek warned might dilute the Occupy Wall Street movement. Not only does it symbolize "the awakening of democratic values," but also the birth of a revolutionary idea grounded in the reality of burgeoning collective organizations and a "minimal positive program of socio-political change."[34]

By connecting their specific grievances to a much broader set of social problems, student activists have been able to highlight the darker registers of finance capital that increasingly closes off any possibility for a better life for themselves and everyone else in the future. In this instance, what is being implicated by the students calling for higher educational reforms, as Randy Boyagoda points out, is actually "a profound crisis of faith in the socioeconomic frameworks that have structured and advanced societies across North America and Europe since World War II [as well as] a rejection of the premise of the postwar liberal state: that large-scale institutions and elected leaders are capable of creating opportunities for individual citizens to flourish."[35] The Quebec movement has indeed extended a disquieting narrative about the future of young people entering adult life saddled with debt to include the troubling reality of a broader social system that increasingly places its political allegiances, social investments, and economic support in the service of rich and powerful financial institutions while eviscerating the social state and the public treasury. In offering the public a new language through which to challenge neoliberal prerogatives, the Quebec movement has made clear that the financial and corporate interests at work in the drive to raise tuition and push thousands of students into bankruptcy are also responsible for growing inequality, privatizing

public services, raising and creating new user fees for health care, corporatizing education and other public spheres, eliminating public sector jobs, closing factories, exploiting natural resources for financial gain, extending the retirement age, curbing the power of trade unions while slashing their benefits, promoting tax cuts that benefit the rich, and criminalizing social problems in a way that deepens economic injustice, racial discrimination, and the ongoing war being waged on youth.

As the Quebec student movement gains in strength and develops into a broad popular uprising intent on shutting down the government and reconfiguring the lines of political and economic power, the government has resorted to more violence. Thousands of students have been arrested, one young person lost an eye, and there have been numerous reports of excessive force used on peaceful demonstrators. Such violence appears as a replay of the attacks by the police on students occupying university campuses in the United States. In both instances, the emerging specter of a police state canceled out the fictive portrayal of young people as insignificant whiners and self-indulgent brats manufactured by the conservative media, pundits, and government officials. Quite to the contrary, students are making themselves increasingly visible as the harbingers of a social movement willing and capable of challenging the neoliberal nightmare. Protesting students in Quebec have gone far beyond the limited tactic of mass mobilizations, opting instead for a permanent presence and media profile through ongoing demonstrations, study groups, media outreach, community engagement, policy interventions, and performance art. What is unique about the Quebec movement is how organized it has been—a reflection of how students prepared for the demonstrations before they actually took place by networking and mobilizing small groups to talk to students, faculty, staff, union representatives, and workers.

By engaging in a social strike, the Quebec protesters have reopened history, articulated a call for collective and shared struggles, and made visible those groups who are increasingly ignored or viewed as disposable—"people, who are present in the world but absent from its meaning and decisions about its future."[36] Thinking otherwise in order to act beyond the boundaries of the given has been a characteristic of the Quebec student movement from its inception. And while the Quebec resistance shares the spirit of direct democracy evident in the Occupy movement, it has extended its critique of neoliberalism and its embrace of the principles of participatory democracy beyond the boundaries of the nation state, singular political issues, and temporary political organizations. It has connected its democratic project to other student movements in Chile, England, and the United States as well as to a growing worldwide resistance to global capitalism. It has raised important questions about the role of the university in society and what relationship will exist in the future between corporate power and all aspects of public and political life. It has provided an overarching discourse in which it can discern and address a number of related political and economic issues that produce mass suffering and human hardships. Most importantly, the Quebec resistance movement has developed a series of strategies and tactics emerging from a revolutionary ideal that signals the awakening of history with an idea of both what a radical democracy might look like and how crucial free, accessible higher education will be to such a struggle. The organizers have recognized that being faithful to this ideal demands tactics that focus on more than temporary

disruptions, isolated events, and slogans: it necessitates a new kind of politics in which people become unified around both a collective sense of injustice and the hope of building a new society. It does not simply criticize the dominant order, but also points to alternatives designed to overthrow it. With the Quebec movement, a revolutionary idea has been born and now waits for the conditions through which it can become a more powerful, inspiring political and moral force.

Notes

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Susan Buck-Morss, Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History

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HEGEL AND THE SAINT-DOMINGUE REVOLUTION – 'PERFECT TOGETHER?':

I. Introduction

As Susan Buck-Morss herself has stated, the article "Hegel and Haiti" was something of "an intellectual event when it appeared in *Critical Inquiry* in summer 2000."1 She is being modest. The article created a critically effervescent discussion as it burst onto the academic scene regarding Hegel's relation to the Saint-Domingue Revolution (SDR). With the article, Hegel and Haiti became, so to speak, engaged and wedded, not anomalous, in thought. What Buck-Morss had intellectually brought together, nothing intellectually could put asunder or render incongruent. For the next twelve years, the discussion never became defervescent. It irrepressibly carried on with the publication of her small monograph entitled *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (HHUH) in 2009.

In short, since the article's inception, it expanded and continued primarily through critical encomiums and reviews of the monograph in many intellectual journals and blogospheres of art, cultural anthropology, literary theory, political theory, post-colonial studies, as well as studies on the African diaspora. It should be noted, however, that her monograph and the effervescent discussion it spawned were buoyed by the recent work of historians on the SDR such as John Garrigus, David Geggus, Carolyn Fick, Joan Dayan, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Madison Smartt Bell, Laurent Du Bois, and Jeremy Popkin.2 Their work, individually and combined, over the past 25 years, sustained and enhanced the recent attention to and relevance of the SDR. It also allowed for an intellectual public of non-philosophers to find plausible at least, obvious at most, that the SDR was the significant world-historical event in the Age of Revolution. Once this matter was accepted, then even the detail that Hegel took notice of it could not be far-fetched to North Atlantic scholars.

Buck-Morss' thesis is manifold and consists of the following six claims. First, Hegel was inspired by the events of the SDR while he was in the early Jena phases of working through his dialectical conception of lordship and servitude. Second, he came to know about the SDR came from the leading political magazine of his time, *Minerva*, which covered since 1792 the events of the SDR and ran a yearlong continuing series on the SDR from autumn 1804 to winter 1805, detailing the prior 10 years of the SDR. Third, Hegel's chapter in his 1806 *Phenomenology of Spirit* (PhS), "Lordship & Servitude," was an allusion to, albeit never a direct representation or endorsement of, real plantation bondsmen engaged in triumphant revolt against real plantation

overlords within the confines of the SDR. Fourth, even this allusion inexplicably yet unreasonably gave way later to Hegel's racially derogatory claims that blacks generally are prone to be without historical relevance. Fifth, since then, this allusion has given way to the outright reticence of Hegel-scholars who, for the most part, believe Hegel's relation to the SDR and to blacks generally does not have any resonance for his philosophy at all. Finally, sixth, a conception of universal history, first proffered by Hegel, needs to be reconstituted, but on a basis other than that proffered by him. It would take the SDR as an impetus in the construction of such a history rather than as an item having fallen into oblivion.

For the aforementioned historians of the Caribbean, Buck-Morss' claims are a matter of jot and tittle. Nothing about the SDR for them rides on her claims, despite the fact that their work on the SDR is of great magnitude to hers. In contrast, for theoreticians of the Caribbean, her claims have been a matter of utmost importance and a source of their exuberant critique of Hegel in three ways. First, they rightly modify their conviction that Hegel's Eurocentrism, his support of colonialism, and his contention of anti-black racism was maintained not in ignorance, but in cognizance, of the SDR and its success. Second, they expand the intellectual audience beyond current Haitian and African scholars who already knew about Hegel's familiarity with the SDR. Third, they offer grounds for repudiating the later Hegel's general premise that blacks do **not** have history in the "true sense of the word." In short, Buck-Morss' claims become grist to the theoreticians' mill as they argue, contrary to Hegel in their minds, for the humanity, rationality, and historical character of blacks. The edge to her arguments and the thrust of her claims sharpen and propel their belief that Hegel could not and would not offer a genuine assessment of spirit's world-historical character in the Caribbean, his surreptitious cognizance of the SDR and its plausibility as the signal event that established basic structures of freedom notwithstanding.

Yet the reticence of Hegel-scholars towards Hegel's own cognizance of the SDR is reflective of their indifference to the SDR and consistent with their presumption that the SDR represents an insignificant blip on Hegel's philosophical "radar screen." This presumption may be driven by their continued acknowledgement that, for Hegel, only the French Revolution (FR) took center stage for his philosophy; that race and racial chauvinism were impertinent to it; and that blacks could not be delineated in it as people thinking and acting under the idea of freedom. The edge and thrust of Buck-Morss' arguments and claims are thus blunted and thwarted by this presumption and indifference.

In the remainder of this essay, I shall examine Buck-Morss' arguments and claims with two points in mind. *First*, her interpretation of the relation of Hegel and the SDR *should not* be foiled by an inured reticence concerning Hegel's Eurocentrism, his backing of colonialism, and his allegation about the unhistorical status of blacks. She is on point here. However, her interpretation relies too heavily on what Hegel has said or not said rather than on what his philosophy is warranted to say or not. Hence, *secondly*, it *forecloses reasons*, Hegel's secret cognizance of the SDR and his derogatory comments on blacks notwithstanding, that *Hegel's philosophy or idealism is entitled to proffer on behalf of the world-historical character of the SDR as the fulfillment of the idea of freedom through African ethno-racial lines.* That is to say,

her interpretation *impedes what is actually evidentiary from his idealism to support the historical status of the SDR as a "spiritual" accomplishment in full and to delineate that accomplishment's African ethno-racial cultivation in terms of spirit's self-development.* In bringing together Hegel and Haiti, she takes what Hegel says, but does not measure its validity in light of what Hegel's philosophy (or idealism) is warranted to defend or criticize. In short, she wrongfully believes that his secret cognizance about the SDR and his derogation of matters African are in sync with what his philosophy is entitled to say about the SDR and such matters.

With these two points in mind, I shall engage in a reconstruction. I seek to clothe the SDR in arguments, sustained by Hegel's idealism, that grant it a more advantageous meaning than previously pondered by Hegel himself. For example, (1) if Hegel's comments about blacks are racially derogatory, his philosophical thesis on "natural spirit" needs to be addressed to explain his racialism. (2) If Hegel's secret awareness of the SDR is to be discussed, his philosophical thesis about political revolutions ought to be on the table to clarify the differences and similarities between the SDR and the FR. (3) If Hegel's chapter "Lordship & Servitude" in his PhS is inspired by the SDR, his philosophical thesis about the structure of the chapter and the relation between the chapter and the rest of the PhS ought to be front and center to account for why the SDR *cannot* be such a model. Finally (4), if Hegel's conception of universal history is to be reconstituted, his philosophical thesis that "concrete universality" is expressed in terms of "spirit's self-determination in time" must be elucidated to show that history in the "true sense of the word" does not cote black peoples. These four items are not given consideration in HHUH. They will be considered here, hopefully with some clarity and concision.

II. "History in the True Sense"

Buck-Morss' book is a response to what is arguably Hegel's best known claim about non-white people – Africans "do not have history in the true sense of the word." Her examination of Hegel and the SDR is her attempt to reject his claim. She seeks (a) to show that "Haiti indeed stands at the vanguard of the history of modernity" (HHUH, 137-38); (b) to criticize what she calls "Eurocentric models of history" as well as the so-called postmodern "plurality of alternative modernities" or models of history (HHUH, ix); and (c) to resurrect what she calls "universal history worthy of the name," which is distinct from Hegel's, since his does not offer "the conceptual ordering of [that] which sheds light on the political present" (HHUH, x.) This entails, as she nicely puts it, "changing the compass heading of particular historical data" (HHUH, x) in order to "free the facts from embedded histories and simultaneously expand the porosity of a global social field" (HHUH, 149.)

It seems that her conception of "universal history" is similar to Hegel's conception of "history in the true sense of the word," but without, what she calls, his "exclusionary conceptual frame" (HHUH, 110) and his negligence of the political present. However, "universal history" is, for Hegel, the complete historical survey of the world in general. This is *not* what Hegel has in mind when he speaks about history in its "true sense." As stated previously, history's "true sense" is rather "spirit's self-determination in time" under the auspice of freedom or the "Idea of freedom" in spirit's self-conscious development. More importantly, it expresses history's

normative, not empirical or existential, dimension.

For Hegel, it serves as a benchmark for assessing whether, how, and to what extent a people have or have not framed their own cognitive and practical orientations under the Idea of freedom. History in the true sense then would be construed in terms of the incremental and ongoing satisfaction of that benchmark, thereby making history's movement purposive. Furthermore satisfying this normative benchmark distinguishes people that are "world-historical" from those that are not and allows the former to be reflexively aware on how and why they have met that benchmark.

It is therefore important to understand Hegel's aforementioned claim about Africans in this context. In the book, *Guns, Germs & Steel*, for example, Jared Diamond has argued that "history followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among peoples' environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves." In effect, Diamond is contending the movement of history, say, for Africans would be in line with persistently long-term impact of environmental factors and material duration – geographic, climatic, and demographic constraints – which vary among and for different peoples. Hegel's position, in contrast, would stake the claim that the movement of history, say, for Africans would be in accord with the degree to which they *increasingly* orient their own knowing and acting toward explanations both in accordance with and for the sake of the norm of freedom. So if Africans are *without* history in the "true sense," it is *not* due to the influence of environmental factors or to any empirically independent fact of the matter. It would be due to the degree to which they *decreasingly* orient their own cognitive and practical enactments towards that norm *and increasingly* towards explanations more tropistic, naturalized, or causal than not.

Admittedly all this is quite abbreviated, sounds vague, and does not seem to take our understanding cogently very far. Yet this view takes Hegel's claim about Africans in a direction far from that of the longstanding orthodox version – that Africans without history in the "true sense" are not part of universal history, without humanity, without capacity to develop their own potential, without reason. Critics of Hegel hold that he promulgates the orthodox version. By holding this view, however, they distort what the course of history in the "true sense" would be for Africans from Hegel's philosophical position. Be mindful that, for Hegel, this course over time would be that wherein (1) a people knew and lived through their orientations that only one was free, to (2) a people who knew and lived through their orientations some were free, to (3) a people who knew and lived through their orientations that all are free in an ongoing manner. Under the orthodox view, Africans are permanently, ontologically, or naturally at, say, stage 1, if not lower, in this course of self-development or history in the "true sense," incapable of further self-development beyond that stage.

Contrary to the orthodox view, if Africans are at stage 1 in the course of self-development, they are stalled only "for the time being" due to either a temporary reliance on warrants as natural responses to nature's imperatives or a provisional impediment to their expansion of freedom not yet overcome, given the caliber of their reasons in that historical stretch of time. Hegel's

position affirms that Africans are rational by virtue of their mastery of nature. It holds that they would be in line with being both "free from and free in the natural world." It would support the idea that Africans do engage in enactments, incrementally downplaying the cognitive and ethical appropriateness of their warrants as natural responses to nature's imperatives while simultaneously upgrading the caliber of their warrants from such responses to those freely proffered and undertaken for the sake of coming to grips with such imperatives *and* taking themselves as agents. This idea puts Africans directly on the course of history in the "true sense." To grasp it, however, requires understanding Hegel's notion of "natural spirit" and the racialism attached to it.

III. Hegel's Racialism

Buck-Morss points out that it was not uncommon to portray enslaved Africans or blacks "as an undifferentiated mass" (HHUH, p.124). Even Hegel referred to Africans as an "undifferentiated and concentrated unity" in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (LPWH). The designation entailed the total absence of diversity among blacks, the full-scale racialization of blacks. Indeed it is manifest in referring to each and every black person as 'Negro.' For Hegel, it was also evidence for denying their possession of history. Despite this view's commonplace, however, it is erroneous to contend that this designation defines Hegel's philosophical position on blacks. In truth, the designation compromises it, because differentiation and diversity are characteristic of Hegel's philosophical position on races. If Hegel and Haiti are to be 'perfect together,' his position on races is essential. It relies on his notion of "natural spirit," about which Buck-Morss raises nary a word.

"Natural spirit" is Hegel's nascent non-dualism between, on the one hand, the *sentience* and, on the other, the *impetus* or movement of spirit. So spirit is sentient (not immaterial) whose movement reflects (a) an **e***ver-decreasing reliance* of cognitive and ethical enactments on explanations based on nature *and* (b) an *ever-increasing and, ultimately, free and full ongoing reliance* of them on the reflective approval of its own reason-giving and reason-sharing warrants. This impetus is neither a natural response to natural stimuli nor steps in the natural maturation of a sentient being toward its natural end. It does speak to *that and how* spirit is gradually differentiated from nature's imperatives as sources of justification. But it also points to the *degree and extent* spirit is so differentiated, from which Hegel's racialism emerges.

Hegel characterizes races as "natural spirits (*Natürgeister*)" in his *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* (PSS). They are movements of spirit discernible in natural and geographical limits, limits that mark the degree in which a race's development is minimal or not. They are groups of sentient, human beings, the variety of which is manifest geographically and the identities of which are differentially conveyed less by some particular sentient feature(s) that marks them definitively than by particular accomplishments conveyed in their distinctive conventions and socialized emotional temperaments. Regardless of their sentience, races are portrayed by the degree and extent each racial group develops, i.e., "spiritually" distances its accomplishments (habits, emotional demeanors) as responses from nature's imperatives. These accomplishments are differentiated and diversified *across and within* races.

Hegel's philosophical position does lead him to the belief that racial groups develop differently, unevenly, and in different degrees over time. Nowhere does Hegel argue for or embrace the equality of races. But we should not confuse Hegel's views on the comparative levels of development with the levels of development themselves. The developmental stage of any given race must be variable. A racial hierarchy may be rigid. By virtue of races' accomplishments, however, the stages of development cannot be and, hence, the hierarchy cannot be constantly in stasis. A race's development cannot be fixed. For example, if dark pigmentation, a certain physiognomy, and a geographical location in equatorial Africa were physiologically and geographically hard and fast, they would not be evidence of a fixed and unalterable boundary to a race's enactments and its capabilities to advance with reason its enactments even further, under the auspice of freedom, from nature's imperatives as an explanatory source.

Hegel has an argument for this position. It is found in his discussion of what he calls "peoples," "nations," or "national spirits (*Nationgeister*)." Today we would call them "ethnicities," i.e., culturally organized groups within races, each minimally bearing some political end grounded in the cultivated relevance of their habits and dispositions. Hegel's introduction of "peoples" seems to some to be his move away from racial differentiation (difference and diversity *across* races) to ethnic differentiation (difference and diversity *within* races.) The consequence of this alleged shift would be to regard all non-whites races incapable of differentiating and diversifying themselves ethnically and to remain "undifferentiated masses" racially. Hegel also contends in PSS that "the philosophy of history has the world-historical significance of peoples as its subject matter." For some, like Robert Bernasconi, this means that ethnic differentiation (national spirit) displaces racial differentiation (natural spirit) at the level of history. The consequence would be to disqualify all non-white races from being historical agents or subjects.

But these two consequences would not be correct to draw. Immediately following the aforementioned statement, Hegel maintains that "if we take 'world history' in its broadest sense, such significance will be the highest development achieved by the original disposition of the national character, the most spiritual form achieved by the natural spirit dwelling within nations." Thus natural spirits (races) are not displaced; they are still operative in terms of "peoples." Races and ethnicities, natural and national spirits, overlap each other. A race, under Hegel's position, would then be what Linda Martín Alcoff and David Goldberg have called an "ethno-race," albeit for different reasons. Ethnicities, belonging to the same racial group, cultivate the degree and extent to which each incrementally advances, under the auspice of freedom and in the face of conflicts, the rationality of its habits of heart, mind, and body further from nature's imperatives and closer to expressions of comportment freely undertaken and socially acknowledged. Since the achievements obtained by a "people" in the movement of spirit vary in each racial group, there is variability in stages of development. Stages of development would vary *within* different ethnicities of a racial group and *across* the ethnicities of different racial groups.

Hegel never laid out this thesis with respect to Africans. But nothing from his idealism would preclude it. Furthermore his idealism would not warrant Africans from being so precluded;

otherwise Africans would be an anomaly not to spirit, but to natural spirit. As an ethnicized race, black peoples would be neither naturally precluded in full from that gradual "movement" of historically expressing their cultivated differences from nature as an explanatory source nor would they be historically precluded in full by the degree and extent they carry out this cultivation.

Now this conclusion stems from attending to natural spirit. By so attending, Hegel's position is not committed to a full-throated racialism. Otherwise racial variety would be set beforehand by the invariability of each race's so-called racial essence, a view wrongly attributed to Hegel by both K. Anthony Appiah and Paul Gilroy. In fact, Hegel's racialism is invoked rather weakly, since racial variety is an outcome reliant on the variability of reasons for ethnicities to adopt attitudes and demeanors they call their own in the face of struggles with others and even with themselves. Indeed it is rather thin, since these adopted manners would be shared, altered, contested, and even eliminated over the course of time such that any acquired sedimentation in ethno-racial membership would be ever periodically amended or would lead eventually to something "post-ethnoracial." Although prominent Hegel-scholars have given recently excellent interpretations of natural spirit, they have discounted or misinterpreted its connection to Hegel's racialism.3 Critics of Hegel, on the other hand, attend to his racialism but, with the lone exception of Michael Hoffheimer, flout altogether natural spirit and its connection to his racialism. It is not surprising then that critics speak against Hegel's racialism as the occasion for blacks' expulsion from history, never realizing that it is, through natural spirit, the initial occasion for their entry into it.

Due to natural spirit, the cultivated and differentiated habits and dispositions amongst black ethnic populations, like all other ethno-racial populations, are never given. They are rather always accomplished and always open incrementally to further development over time as self-ascriptions acknowledged by themselves and other populations. The givenness or "naturalness" of habits and dispositions is "overcome" or strongly affected by people's reasons for holding them, revising them, opposing them, purging them, all of which are reasons socially mediated, less likely or no longer reactions to natural imperatives, and oriented toward the free and reflective endorsement by one and thereby all.

Hegel's philosophical position interprets this process as the way ethno-racial members constitute themselves as agents over historical time. Indeed considerable effort is required to delineate this process more extensively and to include more material than presented so far. Still, in short, Hegel's position affirms the thesis that the pace of this historical process among ethno-races does and will vary. But it also offers the view that the purpose of it shall not. The purpose is to reveal the historical scope in which ethno-racial members think and act according to and for the sake of freedom's growth through the caliber of their reasons.

There are number of points to heed here. Textually in Hegel, the differences among, say, the ethno-racial paces of this process are taken to serve the comparison for the ascendancy or detraction of ethno-races and their relevance to history. This is a factor in the charge of racism against Hegel. However, philosophically for Hegel, they serve the comparison for how far the

caliber of reasons of ethno-racial groups contributes to the resolution of their own cognitive or practical problems with a concomitant expansion of freedom as their ongoing goal. Theirs is thus an outcome of natural spirit's role in the "true sense" of history. Hence, for the sake of history in the "true sense," ethno-racial differences are fluid, used for comparing at any particular period the degree of success of ethno-races achieve in expanding freedom historically through the quality of their reasons.

It is then quite likely, contrary to the orthodox view, for a black-ethnic population, with members thinking and acting in a manner where *none are free*, to give way to another black-ethnic population, with members thinking and acting in a manner where *one is and thereby all are free*. A black ethnic population can therefore be incorporated in the course of history in the "true sense" that Hegel's position articulates, despite his racially derogatory statements to the contrary.

IV. Hegel and the SDR

As Hegel himself says, Africans are "imbued with natural spirit." In that light, then, black ethnicities can be, left to their own devices, free from the imperatives of the natural world as an explanatory source of their attitudes or behaviors *and* free in taking up their attitudes and behaviors in that world. If this is the case, blacks as sentient beings are not naturally, but come to be "spiritually" free, not free by nature, but free by virtue of their own accomplishments across time and over struggles. This is a thesis Buck-Morss can neither buy nor adopt, since she never considers Africans in terms of natural spirit. The "spiritual" elucidation of Africans does not appear in her narrative, because she does not concede that Hegel's later account would underwrite the growing realization of freedom from nature and in the world. Indeed, for her and for most, Hegel's later account reveals his reticence or ignorance or racism (or all three), which undermines this view. That is why, for Buck-Morss, the SDR is the spur to ending Hegel's silence on Haiti, to negating his view of Africans as impertinent to history, and to circumventing his conception of history in the "true sense."

So if the "natural spirit" route for black ethno-racial populations is to have weight, it must be possible to specify and explain, along Hegelian lines, (a) how Africans, in the course of their self-development, were stalled at lower stages only pro tem, not permanently; (b) what was the provisional impediment to their self-development; and (c) and how and why they "overcame" it through the caliber of their reasons. Given the wheelhouse of Hegel's thought, the specification and explanation would come from an analysis of enslavement and revolution.

Generally many Hegel-scholars believe that Hegel takes struggle and revolution to be conducted for the sake of freedom. Some believe that he even makes them the tenet of his philosophy; that "*only* his philosophy is the philosophy of revolution." Hegel's conception of freedom for them enables political struggles and revolutions *to acquire legitimacy* through the removal of all forms of traditional political authority that hinder freedom *and* the replacement of these forms with political arrangements in support of individual freedom for all. If these are to occur legitimately, Hegel's philosophy of revolution is intended to address the problem of

the *political realization* of the idea of freedom, and many believe that he comes to address it through his lifelong embrace of the FR alone.

But there are two questions to keep in mind. First, could the SDR have philosophical significance in the jurisdiction of Hegel's thought? Second, if so, would it be in terms of his philosophy of revolution? To the first question, the answer is 'yes,' but not in the way Buck-Morss contends. Again, be mindful she believes the SDR, not the FR, as the spur to Hegel's philosophical considerations especially in the PhS. His philosophy of revolution would originate with the SDR clearly in his mind. This is not the same as contending that the SDR would be the struggle of a black ethno-racial population guided by the quality of their reasons toward the expansion of freedom for all, consistent with the principle of natural spirit and history's purpose in the "true sense."

To the second question, the answer is 'no,' as long as revolution is *not* that which ought to acquire political legitimacy. It is rather the outcome of revolution that may so. Hegel is clearly attuned to this matter. Hegel's so-called "philosophy of revolution" entails a *critique of the right to revolution,* hence a critique to a revolution's acquisition of political legitimacy. If the SDR is subject to Hegel's line of thought, it thus would be subject to this critique. It is unclear where Buck-Morss stands on this point, since she does not explicitly proffer a view on it, despite the rightful pre-eminence she gives to the SDR itself. Still the SDR, in accordance with Hegel's conception of revolution, would have to be consistent with this critique.

Hegel's critique pertains to the idea that the *right* to act under the idea of freedom *neither* can be *nor* include the *right* to revolution. The *capacity* for or the *act* of revolution are *not* the *right* to it. On this point, Hegel agrees with Kant that there can never be a right to revolution, but with a major difference. Kant regards revolutions as matters of the "state of nature." They are catastrophes spurred "naturally" by a sovereign when s/he violates the rights of the people *and* by people's belief that they have a right to rebellion for themselves against the sovereign for such violation. However, for Kant, both the sovereign and the people are wrong. The sovereign as a despot vacates the civil state to re-enter, rather than to exit, the "state of nature." The people are oriented toward acting under the idea of freedom *outside* of their obligation to enter and remain in the civil state.

Hegel, on the other hand, does not regard revolutions as steps back into the "state of nature." They are rather action-repertoires of violent resistance, which fail necessarily to be effective rationally in a normative sense. To be rationally effective in a normative sense is for a free person to have a justifying reason for an action or action-repertoire whose authority would rest on political arrangements enabling such a reason to be institutionally recognized. It is impossible, Hegel maintains, for revolutionary activity to be rationally effective in a normative sense. Albeit free, it cannot sustain a reason whose authority rests on political institutions incorporating it as a norm to be acknowledged. The "negative freedom," as Hegel puts it, exhibited in revolutionary activity is "the destruction of the whole subsisting social arrangement, the elimination of individuals who are objects of suspicion to any social arrangement, and the annihilation of any organization which tries to rise anew from the ruins."

No social/political arrangement of the modern world, for Hegel, would enable a reason for or a right to revolutionary activity even under the idea of freedom. Empirically a social/political arrangement would disable it for the sake of its own existence and possession of power. Normatively such an arrangement would disable it for the very sake of the right to act under that idea. Hegel thus criticizes the right to revolution, because the reason to engage in such free yet "destructive" activity must always be detached from the capacity of any social/political arrangement to incorporate it normatively for the sake of being recognized. *Hegel is not giving a critique of revolution; he is giving only a critique of the right thereto.*

Contrary to the analysis of Nick Nesbitt, for example, Hegel's philosophy then can embrace the SDR *without* endorsing a right to revolution for the SDR. The same would hold true for the FR. But what distinguishes the SDR from the FR in the Hegelian standpoint, since Hegel never compared them? Buck-Morss and noted historians of the SDR argue that the abolition of plantation slavery is, first and foremost, the SDR's distinguishing feature. Now they recognize that the FR was framed under banners such as "Live Freely or Die" and "Rather Death than Slavery." These banners were subsequently employed in and apropos to the SDR. But Buck-Morss and historians of the SDR also claim that the banners carried different senses for each revolution.

Such banners in the FR are a "metaphor," they say, for freedom from tyranny. They do not bear any direct reference to the "peculiar institution" against which enslaved African insurgents fought in the SDR. Since no French revolutionary was ever physically enslaved in the "peculiar institution," "freedom from slavery" never referred unequivocally to freedom from plantation slavery for them. It is right to construe the abolition of plantation slavery as the SDR's distinguishing feature. But it is less than clarifying to make the distinction between the FR and the SDR rest on the distinction between the metaphorical and the direct reference of, say, "freedom from slavery" or "death than slavery." A better formulation of the distinction between the FR and the SDR can be had and is forthcoming below.

In the FR, such banners represented the motivational impetus to the revolutionary act of abolishing slavery *as abolishing, in the face of physical death, (a) the despotic coercion of the sovereign*. Although French revolutionaries were able to act under the idea of freedom, they were unable, as members of a polity, to secure the right to act under this idea in the eyes of the sovereign. They thus risked death to undo the tyranny and to secure this right. In the SDR, however, such banners represented, first, the motivational impetus to the revolutionary act of abolishing slavery *as abolishing, in the face of physical death, (b) the social condition wherein one is under the despotic coercion of any other individual's will* along racial lines for the most part. They further represented ultimately the impetus of repudiating the despotic coercion of the sovereign as in the French case.

Enslaved African insurgents were willing to risk physical death (1) to end their enslavement, (2) to abolish enslavement, and (3) to stop and eliminate, in Orlando Patterson's words, "secular excommunication" or "social death." As a consequence, they (as well as the French revolutionaries) could not act as if they had a right to revolution. What right *entitles* one to the

high risk of physical death? Yet, without the right, there was still the will to engage in revolution freely, the will of enslaved Africans in the SDR to press Europeans to the point of not even putting the risk of their own death in abeyance for the sake of slavery's abolition. Unlike the FR, the SDR made known that the political realization of the idea of freedom alone was insufficient to undermine the normative support for despotic coercion as found in the "peculiar institution." Its resistance against colonial oppression and its eventual establishment of a civil state under a constitution, wherein all persons, as individuals, could rightfully act with recognition under the idea of freedom, became distinctly concomitant with SDR's abolition of slavery in order to act under the idea of freedom.

Admittedly there is nothing in Hegel's work to confirm explicitly that he endorsed this view of the SDR. Yet it is possible, I believe, to argue that this view can be fully in accord with Hegel's philosophical position. Buck-Morss and critics of Hegel, however, would seriously challenge this possibility. They are of the mind that Hegel does not believe blacks are capable of abolishing slavery. And they can quote Hegel himself to support their stance. "This condition [the lack of self-control as a distinguishing feature of the Negro] is capable of no development or culture, and as we have them [Negroes] at this day, such have they [Negroes] always been. The only essential connection between the Negroes and the Europeans is slavery.…We may conclude slavery to have been the occasion of the increase in human feeling among the Negroes." In short, Africans as "Negroes" are slaves to their passions, do not develop "spiritually" on their own, and are enslaved in the "peculiar institution" to mitigate, at least, their moral and psychological bondage to their passions.

But, as stated above, reliance on such a quotation is expressive of the orthodox stance regarding Hegel and blacks. Such reliance affirms the consequences of dismissing or discounting both Hegel's conception of "natural spirit" and his attribution of it to blacks. It is a reliance, however, that is disowned when Hegel's philosophical position is **not** taken to represent the orthodox stance. As I stated earlier, if it is not disowned, blacks are left to be regarded as anomalies not only to spirit, but to natural spirit as well. No "spiritual" accomplishment, pro tem or otherwise, could emerge from Africa's and its diaspora's racially black populace, leaving the SDR and its outcomes disavowed or silenced, as Sibylle Fischer has said, in Hegel's scheme.

Still there is enough evidence to infer that Hegel's position could endorse the view that the SDR's abolition of plantation slavery was conducted both in accord with acting under the idea of freedom and for the sake of politically realizing that idea for all as a "spiritual" achievement. The evidence comes from

Hegel's analysis of slavery. Hegel was familiar with the two prevailing opinions on slavery prior to and during the SDR. They were the opinion *defending* slavery and the opinion *criticizing* it. The former upheld it, because it took Africans to be *naturally* sub- or non-human, hence fit for enslavement and not fit for freedom. The latter condemned it, because it took slavery as contrary to *natural* right, hence contrary to the idea that all humans, including Africans, are free by nature. Hegel rejected both opinions.

Hegel rejected the former, because the defense of slavery required a conception of sub-humanity wholly subject to the imperatives of nature and hence totally without the "spiritual" impetus to break from those imperatives. He rejected the latter, because the rebuke of slavery was based on natural right and never reflected the rebuke as "spiritual" achievement stemming from significant risk to life in order to act under the idea of freedom. This point enables Hegel to claim that it is the responsibility of those who are themselves enslaved to risk life, in principle, to struggle to the death, in order to act for the sake of that achievement. For Hegel, those enslaved who do not take that risk for the sake of that achievement bear the onus of their enslavement, even if their enslavement, as Hegel states, "occurs in a world where, even as a wrong, slavery is still right."

Hegel's assertion appears ensorcelling on its face. It is not. He is asserting that those enslaved have a responsibility to fight against and abolish slavery, because the onus of their enslavement lies with them, despite the institutional endorsement of slavery. Furthermore this responsibility to fight against slavery, even to the point of death, does not establish their right to do so by revolutionary means because, despite slavery's wrongness, the political arrangement endorsing it is "still right." In effect, then, (a) those enslaved have a responsibility, under the idea of freedom, to abolish enslavement. Otherwise the onus of enslavement is hung around their necks. However, (b) this responsibility does not entail the right to revolution to undo the institutional arrangement endorsing it. There is nothing bewitching in Hegel's stance here, because (b) only precludes the right to engage, not the act of engaging, in revolution to abolish slavery under the idea of freedom, an act which (a) affirms.

Nonetheless Hegel's stance on slavery does generate confusion, as exemplified in two remarks made by Buck-Morss. She claims first that, for Hegel, "slaves were better off in the colonies than in their African homeland, where slavery was 'absolute'" (HHUH, pp. 67-68.) She further claims that Hegel endorsed the gradual rather than the speedy abolition of slavery or "gradualism" (HHUH, p. 68.) She supports the latter claim by citing Hegel. "Slavery is unjust in and for itself, for the essence of humanity is freedom. But humans must first become mature before they can be free. Thus it is more fitting and correct that slavery should be eliminated gradually than it should be done away with all at once." Let us examine her first claim.

As we are aware, Hegel remarks about Africa were given to distortion and exaggeration. Still he was versed in the existence and flourishing of institutions of servility on the African continent. Prior to the Atlantic slave trade, slavery took on a range of forms in Africa and was fully embraced by different kinds of African polities – civilizational, "agro-politan," and small settlements. In these polities, slavery was a response either to low population densities (satisfying the need for enlarging kin groups by kidnapping people from other villages), or to the desire to have servants and clients (satisfying the demand for punishing wrongdoers and debtors from their own village), or to the rules of war (satisfying the demands of the victors over the vanquished with captives from war.)

Yet, in the context of Hegel's philosophical position, it is unclear what Buck-Morss' comparison

in her first claim amounts to. If enslaved Africans "were better off in the colonies than in their homeland where slavery is 'absolute,' it is *not* because they ate, lived, slept better or worked less coercively under the conditions of slavery in the colonies than in the homeland. The comparison must be based on the degree and extent the idea of freedom is binding on the relevant enactments and practices of those in the colonies and in the African homelands. Thus the comparison between African homelands and the colonies has to be made in terms of the magnitude in which that idea is enriched or not in areas where enslavement still rules, is still "right." Buck-Morss mistakenly implies that Hegel makes and accepts this comparison independently of the relative development and efficacy of the idea of freedom. He does not, because the norm of abolishing slavery under the idea of freedom works more effectively in the colonies wherein *all* are in principle free (despite slavery's flourishing) than in the African homeland wherein *one* is or *some* are in principle free (because of slavery's flourishing.)

Regarding her second claim, Buck-Morss seems to contend that the gradualism embraced in Hegel's philosophical position is identical with the gradualism expressed in his alleged political view on the abolition of slavery. What is problematic with her contention is that the gradualism conveyed in his philosophy refers to the incremental movement of spirit. For all intents and purposes, this incremental movement is *not* identical to gradualism understood as one side of the political debate between abolitionists on the elimination of slavery. Indeed that incremental movement can and does include challenges to the idea that all are free, which places demands on those resistant to the idea and sets in motion struggles around the idea. Even if struggles were lengthy yet successful, it is highly doubtful that Hegel would construe philosophically the acquisition of freedom for all in such struggles as an outcome slowly obtained in small steps rather than sharply all at once. Indeed Pierre-Franklin Tavares, whose work Buck-Morss rightly acknowledges for first bringing Hegel and Haiti together on the intellectual scene, states that Hegel "boldly went beyond the gradualist program of the British, American, and French abolitionists," that Hegel endorsed the *immediate* elimination of slavery. Tavares may be correct, but this would not entail that the gradualism conveyed in Hegel's philosophy and the gradualism conveyed in one side of a political debate on the approach to slavery's abolition are in any way identical.

In any case, given what has been presented so far, Hegel's philosophical position does allow interpretations favorable to understanding the SDR as signaling the capability of blacks to abolish slavery under the idea of freedom and to realize politically the right for all to act under that idea. To be sure, this stands in opposition to Buck-Morss' view that Hegel's own ignorance of and bigotry toward blacks in his philosophy of history contributed to his "ultimate concession to slavery's continuance…and to the justification, nearly two centuries old, for the most complacent forms of Eurocentrism or cultural racism" (HHUH, p. 74.) Her view seems to cast Hegel and his philosophy as irredeemable. But, as we know, that is not the case for her. She believes she redeems Hegel and his philosophy by affirming there is for Hegel a strong, albeit unstated, relation between the SDR and "L&S" in his PhS. It is to this matter we now turn.

V. SDR and "Lordship & Servitude" ("L&S") in the *PhS*

Generally “L&S” has been employed as the basis for understanding the PhS as social theory, critical of slavery and expressive of freedom in the development of spirit through labor or through existential aspects of mutual recognition or through the mediation of both labor and recognition. It has also been that part of Hegel’s work which has served as a longstanding and fruitful philosophical source for examining the African-diasporic slave experience among other things pertaining to blacks and their history and so-called identity. To name a few, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Charles Johnson, Orlando Patterson, Paul Gilroy, C.L.R. James, and Pierre-Franklin Tavares are noted scholars and men of letters who have drawn insights from “L&S” for their inquiries into or expressions of such matters. It would not be out of sorts to place Buck-Morss among them for HHUH.

As I stated previously, Buck-Morss acknowledged Tavares’ work on Hegel and Haiti. His work appeared prior to HHUH, but did not influence it. Her acknowledgement then is, say, that of a “fellow traveler” rather than that of one admitting to an intellectual debt. Consequently their interpretations of and analyses on Hegel and the SDR sometimes dovetail and sometimes part ways. Both read the PhS as social theory and contend that Hegel was cognizant of the SDR. Furthermore both regard the SDR as the inspirational source for the “young” Hegel’s so-called “master-slave dialectic.” Hegel formulated the dialectic of lordship and servitude during the period of the SDR with the SDR in mind. Both believe his silence about the SDR was carried out to avoid harmful repercussions that would come his way if his defense of it were explicit and public. Finally both regard “L&S” as the *point d’appui* of the PhS.

Nevertheless, although both read the PhS as social theory, Tavares tends to read it as historicist in scope. He conjectures that “L&S” is the outcome of Hegel’s preoccupation with slavery, which extended to both then contemporary manifestations of slavery and contemporary discussions and critiques surrounding it as well as the outright resistances to it. He takes “L&S” not as a description of the SDR, but as an allegory for thinking about slavery and envisioning its overthrow for the sake of freedom through the SDR. “L&S”s allegorical form conceals both Hegel’s anti-slavery beliefs regarding the SDR from the authorities and his allegiances to Freemasonry, which fostered this kind of secrecy and silence. Here Hegel’s silence on the SDR serves to protect him.

Unlike Tavares, Buck-Morss tends to read the PhS as that which is guided by practical aims bearing emancipatory concerns. Instead of conjecture, she offers documentary evidence that Hegel was aware of the SDR. She believes that “L&S” in the PhS reflects practical aims, since it is informed by the insurgency of enslaved Africans, resisting masters and abolishing slavery, under the auspice of freedom. She also generates the suspicion that the “mature,” not the “young,” Hegel used his silence about the SDR to quash its world-historical significance rather than to dodge the political risks in publically supporting it, thereby walking away from the stance of his “youth.” Here Hegel’s silence on the SDR undergoes transformation – from a silence protective of him to a silence suppressive of non-white others.

But, despite their similarities and differences and contrary to their respective views, *the SDR is, at best, circumstantial and, at worst, inessential to “L&S” in the PhS.* There are a number of

reasons why using "L&S" as the "shape of consciousness" in the PhS to be informed by the SDR *neither* satisfactorily charts Hegel's own arguments *nor* satisfactorily charts the arguments needed to delineate the appropriate "shape of consciousness" for incorporating the SDR within the PhS.

First, there is a piece of evidence in the *PhS* to suggest "L&S" has nothing to do with slavery whatsoever. In §187 of *PhS* in "L&S," Hegel states the following. "It is only through staking one's life that freedom is won.… *The individual who has not risked life may well be regarded as a person, but he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness.*" The dialectic of "L&S" is played out among persons, and this would signify that the aforementioned dialectic *neither* needs the historical institution of slavery *nor* needs to be reflective of such an institution to be operative.

Second, history is *neither* epistemically *nor* ethically criteria for assessing the success or failure of "L&S." What is in play in "L&S" is whether what immediately matters for consciousness, rather than what is really independent of it, sets the standard for what counts as objective for knowledge and obligatory for action. *Third*, reciprocal recognition, a matter believed to be attained in "L&S" by the social theoretical reading of the PhS, is *never* reached in "L&S" and always serves as a promissory note to be reached much later in the PhS. *Finally*, staking or risking one's life in "L&S" does not carry for Hegel any emancipatory concerns, because executing this risk provides only the conundrums of the "lord" and deferring this risk provides only the conundrums of the "servant."

In effect, there is nothing in "L&S" either to reflect the conflict or the emancipatory effect engendered by the SDR or to guide the conflict or the emancipatory effect engendered thereby. The lord and the servant in "L&S" *cannot and do not* rely on an already extant life of spirit – existing cultural background, the laws or customs of their respective communities, historical traditions, some kind of Wittgensteinian rule-following, reciprocal recognition – to settle the threatening conflict prompted by self-presentation of the other. Hegel is working out and through the conditions in which the life of spirit can be presupposed and fully achieved self-consciously. In "L&S," however, spirit cannot be presupposed, because it is only emergent, not settled, in that dialectic.

Accordingly Hegel and Haiti cannot be brought together in "L&S," contrary to Buck-Morss' and Tavares' view. Furthermore Hegel's silence on the SDR, protective or otherwise, would not be the issue that "L&S" resolves. As we know, Buck-Morss denies, albeit wrongly, the possibility that the work of the "mature" Hegel brings Hegel and Haiti together. But neither does "L&S" in the PhS. Is there then another "shape of consciousness" of the PhS wherein the SDR can be presented as an appropriate and relevant factor to it such that the insight of bringing Hegel and Haiti together in thought can be maintained?

VI. Coda: SDR & "Self-Alienated Spirit (Culture)" in the PhS

If we are to remain with the PhS, Hegel and Haiti can be brought together in thought only by

turning toward the historically-oriented "shape of consciousness" – "*Spirit*" – or, more specifically, "*Self-Alienated Spirit—Culture*" (SASC). "Spirit" is a "shape of consciousness" encompassing a historical orientation whose narrative has been comprised solely of the "West," so to speak, from its ancient Greek and Roman to its European content and focus alone. Specifically it is that by which rules for what counts as objective, ethical, and, and desirable are (a) *presumed* to bind our enactments to an intersubjective authority without discord and (b) *achieved* by undoing and revising the prior presumption binding our enactments to a newly authorized and better justified intersubjective authority with increasing contention yet increasing reconciliation for the sake of freedom for all. This movement from the presumptive to the achieved stage of spirit is the "life of spirit," whose history Hegel seeks to capture.

But this movement is not smooth, because it also produces tensions. The life of spirit is the *source* of tension, even to the point of performative contradiction, in maintaining norms or rules for advancing the idea of freedom (freedom for one as freedom for all), but in conjunction with maintaining alternative rules which compromise or mitigate the advancement of this idea. This tension is what Hegel calls the life of spirit in its self-alienated form, i.e., spirit estranged from rules it produces and holds. In the PhS, he takes spirit's self-alienated character as a consequence of the Enlightenment, wherein the life of spirit is the genesis for norms or rules that may be duplicitous, deceitful, treacherous, hypocritical, faithless, and empty, *but nonetheless still useful.* For Hegel, it contributes to the topsy-turvy relationships exemplified by those (played out among the aristocracy, the monarch, and the commoner) thinking and acting under *the norm and acquisition of honor* and by those (played out again among the three) thinking and acting under *the norm and acquisition of wealth.*

Although I shall not go into any substantive detail about these matters found in the PhS, nearly all Hegel scholars believe and take for granted that the "life of spirit" and its self-alienated form comprise a history exclusively of so-called "Western" culture whose content and focus are considered necessary, sufficient, and essential to spirit's life and development. But this belief and assumption are incorrect.

The life of spirit in the PhS neither enables nor entitles its history to be so utterly deployed or employed, because its content is not restricted solely to "Western" norms and practices and its focus cannot be identified as specifically "Western." First of all, *the content is not constitutive, but illustrative of the life of spirit.* There are no irrefutable best practices to the life of spirit. Furthermore the focus is on its capacity to constantly undergo destabilizing cognitive and ethical setbacks whose possible resolutions are understood as spirit's own self-conscious yet historically conditioned achievements. It is this capacity defining the life of spirit which is open to historical narrative. The narrative does not necessarily embody a "local" claim particular to "Western" culture or white people. It also does not embody a universally anthropological claim extending the capacity automatically to all human groups. Rather it embodies a philosophical claim expressing conditions for the life of spirit to be at work at all.

When the life of spirit is characterized in this way, it is open to being rethought and illustrated by way of a "*Black Atlantic*" historical narrative. That is to say, in "Black Atlantic" history, the

conditions for the life of spirit can be operative. However, in taking this narrative path, the life of spirit in its self-alienating form can have a "Black Atlantic" history *wherein the tension produced is adopting rightly the idea of freedom in a culture where the utility sustaining slavery flourishes.* The SDR would be the response consisting of action-repertoires overthrowing those elements sustaining the tension, viz., *the utility of the "peculiar institution," the color line, and racially "chauvinized" freedom.* It would also be self-alienated itself. These elements contribute to the topsy-turvy relationships exemplified by those (played out among the French metropole, white commoners/colonists and free persons of color) thinking and acting under the *norm and acquisition of wealth* and by those (played out among white commoners/colonists, free persons of color, the monarch, and enslaved blacks, both *bossales* or African-born and *creoles* or SD-born of African descent) thinking and acting under the *norm of freedom.*

Although a fully detailed analysis of the SDR as a response to spirit's self-alienated form in "Black Atlantic" history cannot be presented here, it is important to keep the following points in mind.

In "L&S," the life of spirit is only emerging in the asymmetrical relationship between the lordly mode and the servile mode of self-consciousness, a relationship whose conditions *precede* the becoming of the life of spirit. In SASC, on the other hand, the topsy-turvy relationships are dependent on conditions *presuming* the life of spirit as extant. Buck-Morss is not acquainted with this point, and SASC does not rate a mention in her analyses.

White colonists in SD were ever organizing to monopolize political power in the colony and to sever the influence of the French metropole from supporting the rights and interests of free persons of color both prior and subsequent to the FR. They accepted slavery unconditionally because of its *utility* as wealth-producing.

Free persons of color were successful colonists and also unconditionally accepted the enslavement of Africans. They did so, because their acceptance of slavery was *advantageous and useful* to their campaign to receive from the French metropole what the French colony denied them – equal standing with white colonists politically.

So we have two ethno-racially distinct sets of free persons, one set bearing more political and economic advantage than the other and being confrontational against any campaign to distribute the advantages more evenly for the sake of the other. Yet both are indifferent, if not belligerent, to enslaved Africans, even though one of the sets, albeit politically distinct from them, is regarded as ethno-racially affiliated with them.

Furthermore white colonists' pursuit of wealth via slavery compromised their political patria to French royal decrees, which dampened colonists' absolute coercion over the enslaved. Their same pursuit later compromised their political patria to the French revolutionary decree concerning the "rights of man and citizen," a decree they vehemently proscribed in SD.

The advancement of freedom and equality among free persons of color came at the price of

their support for the continued maintenance of the “peculiar institution,” a support stemming from their original self-interest to gain French citizenship and power from that advancement.

However, the action-repertoires of enslaved bossales and creoles as successful African insurgents were impervious to spirit’s self-alienated form in the initial 1791 uprising in SD. The insurgents’ actions, plans for insurrection, and secrecy about those plans were steeped, sealed, and consolidated in their folk religion and folklore. When these are coupled with the capacity of many African insurgents to strategize and organize for warfare, the 1791 insurrection in SD was neither an expansion nor a duplication of the FR. The divinity of masters and overlords gave way to the divinity or divinities of those formerly enslaved in their destruction of plantations on the northern province of SD territory and their considerable, but not exaggerated, carnage of plantation owners and managers.

Although farfetched, vanquished colonists claimed that “philosophy was the ferocious blood mania, the invisible and perfidious arm that drove the insurgency of 100,000 enslaved Africans against them.” Some of them blamed the ideals of the Enlightenment for the African insurgency.

Regarding the first claim, if true, it would appear that African insurgents in the 1791 insurrection acted under the idea of freedom. *But they did not.* Rather they acted from vengeance. Vengeance was conducted in the insurgents’ course of action to undo the enslavement’s despotic coercion on them. The rightness of this act would turn *not* on the reflective subscription that anyone would regard it as beneficial to see it through. It would rather turn on the insurgents’ attachments to and dependencies on one another to see it through.

Regarding the second claim, if true, it would appear that African insurgents in the 1791 insurrection were committed to “universal emancipation based upon the Enlightenment idea of natural right.” *But they were not so committed.* Rather they would have understood their course of action and roles as shaped by (a) communally specific norms, (b) how each and every insurgent made those norms proprietary to them, and (c) how the adoption of those norms as their own was sustained by their attachments to and dependence on one another.

Hence nothing self-alienated would be at hand in their 1791 insurrection. But African insurgents’ non-participation in “self-alienated spirit” *ceases* once their insurrection and their status arising from it *converge* with the interests of the French metropole and the orientation of free people of color in SD. Without this convergence, the insurrection of August 1791 is *not* the start of the SDR, but simply a successful marronage, indeed the grandest. Although some prefer to link the SDR to marronage, such a linkage obscures rather than reveals the distinctive outcome of the SDR, viz., an African-based nation state, inclusive of all, in the Americas and the abolition of slavery, both of which were never achievements of marronage, but were achievements of the SDR under the idea of freedom.

For the sake of a “Black Atlantic” reconstruction of SASC, the SDR was the first “racial

revolution." Hence it cannot avoid, even philosophically, the role racial chauvinism played in it. It involved enslaved blacks and creoles as well as free persons of color (post-1791) increasingly acquiring freedom and the right to act freely over 13 years of conflict crossing eight thresholds: (a) the previously mentioned slave insurrection (1791); (b) the collapse of SD's colonial system and the immediate abolition of slavery in SD (1793); (c) the warfare against England and Spain on behalf of France (1793-1798) (d) the general acquisition of the right to act freely in SD for one and all from France (1794); (e) SD's attempted yet failed transformations from a plantation colony to a free society (1795-1800); (f) the constitutional maintenance of the right to act freely, under French sovereignty, in SD for one and all (1801); (g) the violent campaign against France's attempt to turn SD back into a plantation colony and forfeit SD's constitutional maintenance of the right to act freely for all its people (1802-1804); and (h) the constitutional emergence of both Haitian sovereignty and self-determination of one and all as Haitian people to think, act, and live rightly under the idea of freedom (1804).

From enslaved bossales and creoles to black insurgents against enslavement to guardians of emancipation and the right to act freely for one and all, there is a development and transformation of an ethno-racial people now responsible for the development and transformation of SD from an institutionalized plantation slave colony to an emergent and promising free society. All of this can be rendered consistent with both Hegel's PhS, under SASC, and his later philosophical position.

I have given a brief, albeit incomplete, presentation on how and why Hegel's "self-alienated spirit" in PhS is fully open to the "Black Atlantic" historical narrative, in which the SDR becomes the freely responsive overthrow of the normative framework that supported the performative contradictions of an "Enlightenment-oriented" culture involved in endorsing both the idea of freedom for one and all and the utility of slavery. This presentation critically devalues the thrust of Buck-Morss' employment of "L&S" to argue for the same result. Earlier I also provided an account using natural spirit, stemming from Hegel's later work, showing the development, along ethno-racial lines, of African-born and African-descended people initially coming to act and ultimately acting under the idea of freedom. This point rejected Buck-Morss' position that the work of the "mature" Hegel undermined any possibility of comprehending the SDR as relevant to his thought.

In any case, there has been no bowdlerization or sanitization of Hegel's philosophical position to establish the validity and viability of the relation of his position to blacks. There has been only the amplification of the "concrete universal," in which spirit freely gives itself "Black Atlantic" content, if I may paraphrase Hegel. Blacks may have come to this outcome relatively "late" or "delayed," metaphorically speaking, but never not at all.

Forty years ago, a young Angela Davis employed the currents of existential thought to provide a philosophical rendition on the reflections of Frederick Douglass. Her interpretation of Douglass was groundbreaking because, for the first time, it kicked down the door that, for better than a century, had blocked philosophical interest in and philosophical access to his thought. Philosophical work on Douglass' thought is now a commonplace, due to her

intellectual efforts. The same can be said of Susan Buck-Morss. Indeed it was Pierre-Franklin Tavares who earlier knocked on the door to let the combination in thought of Hegel and the SDR cross into what seemed to be a forbidden philosophical arena. But it was Buck-Morss who kicked down the door with her essay and monograph on Hegel and Haiti to push that combination in thought across the philosophical and broader intellectual threshold. Despite my disagreements with her on key points of that combination, I am able to express them here only as a result of walking into an intellectual space whose door she kicked down.

Notes

1. See Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), p. ix. Her monograph consists of two essays, each with its own introduction. The first is entitled "Hegel and Haiti," which first appeared in the summer of 2000 in the journal *Critical Inquiry*. The second is entitled "Universal History," whose first appearance is in the monograph but is a response to criticisms formulated initially to the first essay as a journal article. All quotations will be drawn from the monograph and cited in the text as HHUH.

2. John Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint Domingue* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); David Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Madison Smartt Bell, *All Souls Rising: A Novel of Haiti* (New York: Vintage Press, 1995); Laurent DuBois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Jeremy Popkin, *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). This is a representative, not an exhaustive, list.

3. For those noted scholars who discount this point, see Alfredo Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 234-83; Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 36-64.; and Michael Wolff, *Das Körper-Seele-Problem: Kommentar zu Hegel, Enzyklopädie (1830), §389* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1992), pp. 36-38; 69-71; & 170. For those noted scholars who misinterpret it, see Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Naturalism: Mind, Nature, and the Final Ends of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 64-68 & 81-82 n.55.

The Rise and Demise of Neo-Liberal University: The Collapsing Business Plan of American Higher Education

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The dominant business model for American higher education has collapsed, taking with it the financial integrity, academic quality, access, and independence that college and universities once enjoyed.

Since the end of World War II two business models have defined the operations of American higher education. The first was the Dewey model that lasted until the 1970s. The second, a corporate model, flourished until the economic crash in 2008. What the new business model for higher education will be is uncertain, but from the ashes of the status quo we see emerging one that returns to an era before World War II when only the affluent could afford college and access was limited to the privileged few.

Model I: The Dewey University

The first post-World War II business model began with the return of military veterans after 1945 and it lasted though the matriculation of the Baby Boomers from college in the 1970s. This was a model that produced an ever expanding number of colleges for a growing population seeking to secure a college degree. It was a model that coincided with the height of the Cold War where public funding for state schools was regarded as part of an important effort to achieve technological and political supremacy over communism. It also represented the expansion of more and more middle and working class students entering college. This was higher education's greatest moment. It was the democraticization of college, made possible by expansion of inexpensive public universities, generous grants and scholarships, and low interest loans.

Public institutions were key to this model. They were public in the sense that they received most if not all of their money either from tax dollars to subsidize tuition and costs or federal money in terms of research grants for faculty. The business model then was simply-public tax dollars, federal aid, and an expanding population of often first generation students attending public institutions at low tuition in state institutions. Let us call this the Dewey business model, named after John Dewey, whose theories on education emphasized the democratic functions of education, seeking to inculcate citizenship values though schools.

Model II: The Corporate University

Yet the Dewey model began to collapse in middle of the 1970s. Perhaps it was the retrenchment of the SUNY and CUNY systems in New York under Governor Hugh Carey in 1976 that began the end of the democratic university. What caused its retrenchment was the fiscal crisis of the 1970s.

The fiscal crisis of the 1970s was born of numerous problems. Inflationary pressures caused by Vietnam and the energy embargoes of the 1970s, and recessionary forces from relative declines in American economic productivity produced significant economic shocks, including to the public sector where many state and local governments edged toward bankruptcy.

Efforts to relieve declining corporate profits and productivity initiated efforts to restructure the economy, including cutting back on government services. The response, first in England under Margaret Thatcher and then in the United States under Ronald Reagan, was an effort to retrench the state by a package that included decreases in government expenditures for social welfare programs, cutbacks on business regulations, resistance to labor rights, and tax cuts. Collectively these proposals are referred to as Neo-liberalism and their aim was to restore profitability and autonomy to free markets with the belief that unfettered by the government that would restore productivity.

Neo-liberalism had a major impact on higher education. First beginning under President Carter and then more so under Ronald Reagan, the federal and state governments cut taxes and public expenditures. The combination of the two meant a halt to the Dewey business model as support for public institutions decreased and federal money dried up.

From a high in the 1960s and early 70s when states and the federal government provided generous funding to expand their public systems to educate the Baby Boomers, state universities now receive only a small percentage of their money from the government. As I pointed out in my 2005 Logos "The Corporate University in American Society" article in 1991, 74% of the funding for public universities came from states, in 2004; it was down to 64%, with state systems in Illinois, Michigan and Virginia down to 25%, 18%, and 8% respectively. Since then, the percentages have shrunk even more, rendering state universities public institutions more in name than in funding.

Higher education under Neo-liberalism needed a new business model and it found it in the corporate university. The corporate university is one where colleges increasingly use corporate structures and management styles to run the university. This includes abandoning the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) shared governance model where faculty had an equal voice in the running of the school, including over curriculum, selection of department chairs, deans, and presidents, and determination of many of the other policies affecting the academy. The corporate university replaced the shared governance model with one more typical of a business corporation.

For the corporate university, many decisions, including increasingly those affecting curriculum,

are determined by a top-down pyramid style of authority. University administration often composed not of typical academics but those with business or corporate backgrounds had pre-empted many of the decisions faculty used to make. Under a corporate model, the trustees, increasingly composed of more business leaders than before, select, often with minimal input from the faculty, the president who, in turn, again with minimal or no faculty voice, select the deans, department heads, and other administrative personnel.

The corporate university took control of the curriculum in several ways in order to generate revenue. The new business model found its most powerful income stream in profession education. Professional education, such as in public or business administration, or law school, became the cash cow of colleges and universities. This was especially true with MBA programs. Universities, including traditional ones that once only offered undergraduate programs, saw that there was an appetite for MBA programs. The number of these programs rapidly expanded with high-priced tuition. They were sold to applicants that the price would more than be made up in terms of future income earnings by graduates.

This business model thus used tuition from graduate professional programs to finance the rest of the university. Students either were able to secure government or market loans or those from their educational institution to finance their training. Further, the business model relied heavily upon attracting foreign students, returning older Baby Boom students in need of additional credentials, and recent graduates part of the Baby Boomlet seeking professional degrees as a short-circuit to advancement.

This model accelerated with the emergence of the Internet, on-line classes, and was especially perfected with the propriety for-profit schools. In the case of the expansion of on-line programs over the Web or internet, a specialist designs the curriculum for courses, sells it to the school, and then the university hires adjuncts to deliver the canned class. Here, the costs of offering a class are reduced, the potential size of the classes are maximized, and if and when the curriculum needs to be changed to reflect new market needs or preferences, it is simple to accomplish. Traditional schools, seeing this model flourish, began emulating it, expanding on-line programs, often with minimal investments in faculty.

A second way higher education became corporatized was in the increased funding streams from corporations. These funding streams became necessary as a result of decreased public support funding for higher education. One way schools have become more dependent upon private funding is simply by turning to corporate donors either to contribute directing to them, or by way of naming, that is, giving private corporations the right to donate in exchange for naming some part of a school after them. For example, in recent years many business schools have adopted famous names of companies in return for donations or sponsorships.

Overall, the new business model relied heavily upon the expansion of pricey professional programs sold to traditional and non-traditional students who financed their education with student loans. This model took off with the Internet, and was facilitated by a management structure and partnering that drew higher education into closer collaboration and dependence

upon corporate America.

The Collapse of the Corporate University

The corporate business model worked-until 2008-when it died along with the Neo-Liberal economic policies that had nourished it since the late 1970s. The global economic collapse produced even more pressures on the government to shrink educational expenditures. But the high and persistent unemployment also yielded something not previously seen-the decline of students seeking more education. The decline came for two major reasons. First, Baby Boomer were aging out into retirement, no longer needing educational training. With that, the Baby Boomlet had run its peak, with the American pool of potential students rapidly decreasingly. In effect, the demand for education had dropped.

Second, traditionally MBA and other professional degrees flourished in tough economic times as individuals used their unemployment as the opportunity to get retrained. But since 2008 that has not happened, in part because of the persistent high unemployment and rise of consumer debt.

Unlike previous post World War II recessions, the most recent one has dramatically wipe out the wealth of consumers-some $13 trillion in wealth was lost-and consumer debt has skyrocketed. Student loan debt has also ballooned and is now greater than personal consumer debt-$829 billion compared to $826 billion as of early 2012, with estimates that it will soon top $1 trillion. The average student loan debt for a graduate of the class of 2010 exceeds $25,000. In effect, potential students are tapped out-they have no money to finance further education, they see that companies are not hiring, and overall, find little incentive to debt finance for jobs that may not exist. The result? A crash in applications to graduate professional programs including MBA and law schools. From 2009 to 2010, MBA and law school applications declined by 10% for full time programs.

The corporate business model has crashed. Even such mainstream publications as the Economist in its August 4, 2012 issue noted the collapse of this old model. It was a bubble that burst much like the real estate one that burst in 2008. But in actually, it was a model waiting to burst. The corporate business model functioned as education Ponzi scheme. Higher education paid for programs by raked in dollars from rapidly expanding professional programs and selling degrees on the promise that the high tuition costs would be worth it to students. But as all Ponzi schemes go, they soon collapse and that is what higher education is now experiencing.

The Next Business Model?

But what is the next business model? In a foreseeable era of high unemployment, decreasing public funding for education, and persistent consumer debt, significant retrenchment will occur along a few models. For one, a few elite universities will continue to exist, serving elites who can afford to pay the privilege of attending them. This model negates the democratic function of higher education that existed since World War II.

Second, expect significant collapse and merger of weaker institutions as they seek to find ways to complete for a dwindling student population and resources. This model decreases access to higher education as the range of college and university choices decrease.

Third, while many for-profit institutions may not be able to withstand market pressures, look to see many traditional colleges and universities will have no choice but to emulate that management style. It may not be a viable business model but given economic pressures for the future, that may be the only one that exists, rewarding a few schools that are able to provide a curriculum that is cheap enough that students want to attend. In effect, the new business model is a hyper-extension of the current model. This may mean even more alliance with corporate America along with curriculum pressures that further de-emphasize traditional liberal arts studies in place of professional education. One sign of that already is the movement to take professional degrees such as MBAs and now offer BBAs instead.

Fourth, the education market is ripe for non-traditional suppliers. For example, media companies such as the Discovery Channel and Disney see delivering educational materials as an extension of their brand. They are able to combine the power of the television and media presence with textbooks and educational materials and deliver a package of services that few if any traditional let alone for-profit schools can. With an intense and loyal viewer-consumer, it makes sense of them to now leverage that relationship into one that taps into the student-education market. This neo-liberal solution simply opens up education to even more exploitation and profiteering. Look to see down the line one of the major media companies purchase a Walden or Capella University.

Likely business models for higher education are not good. They threaten to erode the strengths that American higher education enjoyed for years, while at the same time not articulating a plan that is financially sustainable.

Orwell and MacDonald: Like-Minded Traitors to Their Class

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The long-lasting relationship between George Orwell and Dwight Macdonald is at once intriguing and illuminating. On a personal level, one can see the strong personal affinity and similarities of temperament between them, but on the political level their political disagreements on an issue so fundamental as the Second World War were equally apparent, especially in the early wartime years. While both benefited intellectually from the exchange it was clear that Macdonald's position shifted closer to that of Orwell's but with sufficient detachment to make him a more convincing exponent of his British colleague's ideas to American audiences.

Partisan Review seems to have been Orwell's first contact with the American Left and Macdonald. Cyril Connelly's estranged wife, Jean Bakewell, had left London for New York and was having an affair with PR editor Clement Greenberg. She recommended Orwell, whom she had known in London as a London Correspondent for the magazine. It is possible that she inadvertently misrepresented his views, which had changed rapidly from opposition to war as it loomed in 1939, to support for the war after the Hitler-Stalin pact in August of that year. Others have credited Macdonald with the initiative and Greenberg did indeed seem to walk in his shadow.

In any case, Greenberg, whose anti-war views marched in step with Macdonald's, invited Orwell's *London Letter* at the end of 1940 and the first one appeared in the Spring of 1941, but afterwards it seems to be Philip Rahv who carried the organizational burden of corresponding with Orwell.

Ironically, in view of the close relationship that he and Orwell later maintained, it was Macdonald's uncompromising anti-war position and his attempts to secure ripostes to Orwell's pro-war letters in *Partisan Review* that finally led to Macdonald's break from the other editors, William Philips and Philip Rahv and his launch of *Politics*. However, his equally uncompromising idiosyncrasy immediately led him to invite Orwell to write for his new publication and indeed to hold him up as a model for the new publication.

Despite the growing personal empathy between Orwell and Macdonald, it was clear that on the question of the war that Orwell was much closer to the outlook of other *Partisan Review* editors. The duality of their relationship is perhaps summarized in Orwell's letter to Rahv in which he promises to keep sending political items to the *Partisan Review*, but would confine his contributions to *politics* to cultural subjects. (CW III p 71).

But despite the paucity of direct Orwell contributions to *politics,* it is clear that his influence on Macdonald grew, especially in the post-war years when the British writer's anti-totalitarian books and essays resonated strongly with the American's increasingly anarchist tendencies. Macdonald almost became Orwell's amanuensis in the USA, and teased from him in his correspondence some of the more definitive statements of Orwell's continuing socialist ideals.

Partisan Review

Partisan Review was originally the magazine of the John Reed Clubs, which gathered writers and workers in what could certainly be called a front organization for the Communist Party. In 1935, the clubs were wound up as a new line issued from Moscow and the magazine faltered and folded.

In December 1937, Rahv and Philips relaunched it, joined by Mary McCarthy, Dwight Macdonald, and his old friends, Frederick W. Dupee and George Morris. The board were making their break from the Communist Party, in both politics and cultural outlook.

The political genealogy of the people who made *Partisan Review* a powerhouse for left and liberal intellectual life in America was somewhat complex. It, and the New York intellectuals who surrounded it, drew on several streams. One was the older "Menshevik" tradition of social-democracy which was especially strong among Jews. However, it suffered from an image problem compared with the Communists and their Trotskyist offspring. The October revolution was romantic and stirring, and pulled at the heartstrings in a way that various forms of Fabianism or Menshevism could not. In the words of *1066 And All That*, the Bolsheviks were like the Cavaliers in the English Civil War, "Wrong but Wromantic."

Many of them joined the Communist Party, but throughout the thirties, members left in disillusion with the news from the Soviet Union, and many of them thought Trotsky could best explain and express their doubts about how to square the circle: how to reconcile the promise of October with the real horrors that were developing in the Socialist Motherland.

Some Trotskyists had joined, or rather infiltrated, the Socialist Party of the USA, which had in times past had some modest electoral success with its Social Democratic platform and its labor connections. By the time the Socialist Party had succeeded in shaking the infiltrators off, they had ruined its political future by driving away many of the labor activists and officials whose presence distinguished the party from the Leninist organizations. However, the expellees succeeded, in their own terms, since they took more people in the party than they went in with, and if the host died in this process of reproduction by fission, from their point of view it was a blow for the revolution.

The expellees formed the Socialist Workers Party, which was tied directly to Trotsky. But it seems to be inherent in such groups that, like amoebae, they split once they reach a certain size. The comrades who left to found the Workers Party took their anti-Stalinism a stage further than their mentor, Trotsky. He defended the Soviet Union, which after all he had done so much to create and shape, It was, he said, still a workers' state, albeit degenerated. Max

Shachtman, Irving Howe, Macdonald, and others thought this was being too kind. They retained their fierce revolutionary belief, but decided that the Soviet Union was past redemption and indefensible.

In this totally sectarian milieu, any deviation from "the line" was anathema, and so splits, expulsions and denunciations were, and have in fact remained, the currency of Trotskyist politics ever since – the precise nature of the Soviet Union being a favorite litmus test – but of course the nature of the Second World War then unfolding became another, with the orthodox Trotskyist position agreeing for once with the Communists that this was an imperialist war, to be opposed by workers everywhere. Of course, the Communist Party changed its collective opinion when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union.

That sectarian purity allowed Irving Howe, for example, after he had joined the board of *Partisan Review* to denounce in fairly typical polemical style the "uniformly pro-imperialist letters" from England, particularly the "preposterous statement – fit for the garbage pails," from George Orwell, that "to be anti-war in England today, is to be pro-Hitler."

Dwight Macdonald

In contrast to the archetypal New York intellectuals like Howe, who came from poor but aspiring Jewish families and who were steeped in politics almost from childhood, Dwight Macdonald came late to sectarian politics, was somewhat idiosyncratic in his exposition and practice of it while he was associated, and left earlier. In fact he was also a decade or so older than Howe's generation.

Rather than a product of tuition-free City College in New York, Macdonald was an alumnus of Philips and Yale, and the scion of two generations of lawyers. His background as a founder writer for *Fortune* was almost diametrically opposed to the intensely socialist education and experience of many of his new comrades and colleagues.

Like many intellectuals, he had become associated with the Communist Party in the mid thirties until events in the Soviet Union such as the Moscow Trials led to a growing dissatisfaction with the party line and an increasing interest in Trotsky and his analysis of the events back in the socialist motherland.

So Macdonald overtly joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1939, and did so with the fervor of a new-born convert – but with the critical faculties of someone who had grown up outside the movement. He was much less inclined to agree that two and two made five just because the Party and its leaders said so, not least because he had independent life and reputation outside.

Although *Partisan Review* certainly had overt political leanings, its strength was that it eschewed strict party lines and orthodoxies. It tended towards Trotsky's side in the great schism, but the exiled leader was not much more tolerant of dissent than his Communist opponents, and took Macdonald to task for allowing the magazine to stray too far from the class struggle and orthodoxy – and for having the temerity to disagree with him.

“Everyone has the right to be stupid, but Comrade Macdonald abuses the privilege,” declared Trotsky with his typical polemical flair. Indeed, one of his last works before he was assassinated in 1940 was a reply to Macdonald.(Whitfield p 20)

Certainly, Macdonald was temperamentally unsuited to the Party that he had joined. In full conspiratorial mode, members took party names and his was “James Joyce,” perhaps in deference to someone who attracts exegesis almost as complex as Trotsky. As Macdonald said of his membership, where he was penning internal polemics almost as soon as writing out the membership form, he was “either high minded, or arrogant, or naive, or just plain schitzy, maybe a bit of each.”

Indeed, Macdonald’s patrician self-confidence and gadfly independence in the face of attempts to rein him in do lead irresistibly to comparisons with P. G. Wodehouse’s Comrade Psmith (where the “P” is silent) – effective, supremely confident, but doubtless infuriating and exasperating for the comrades.

Why did they put up with each other? Macdonald’s journalistic skills, and avenues to the outside world were obviously useful even for somewhat claustrophobic and incestuous sectarian world of Trotsky’s followers. For his part, Macdonald revealed the attractions of Trotsky for many of the New York intellectuals, clearly still visible decades later in, for example, Irving Howe’s biography of the revolutionary (Leon Trotsky, 1978). Macdonald noted that Trotsky showed that that “intellectuals, too, could make history.”

Macdonald’s short sojourn with the SWP, and then the Workers Party as the Trotskyist factions split on points of theological nicety, placed him briefly in the mainstream of the “New York intellectuals” who frequently had shared such sectarian experiences.

However, few of them were as quick as he was to conclude that Trotskyism was “a variant of Stalinism” as the Old Man and his followers remained unrepentant about the inherent flaws in Bolshevik methodology. As Whitfield points out, for Macdonald, “extirpation of dissent was the most offensive aspect of Trotskyism,” especially when set in the context of how the Soviet Union developed.

Orwell and *Partisan Review*

Despite the generally Trotskyist ambience of *Partisan Review*, the people around the magazine were probably the closest group that Orwell could relate to in the United States, not least because of the literary and aesthetic tastes he shared with them.

Certainly his denunciation of the Soviet and Communist behavior in Spain gave them a common enemy in Stalin and his followers. Although Orwell, despite numerous posthumous academic attempts to co-opt him as one, was never a Trotskyist, his experiences in Catalonia had crystallized his growing anti-Soviet feelings, which he himself dated back to 1935.

On a political level, the Moscow Trials of alleged traitors, the stifling or outright suppression of

dissident artists, many of whom did not even know they were dissident until the Secret Police knocked on their doors, had left erstwhile admirers of the Soviet experiment the choices of repudiation, or rationalization.

Both Orwell and the *Partisan Review* editors went for repudiation of the developments in the Soviet Union, and its effect on socialism abroad, notably in Spain. Additionally, as intellectuals, they also broke with new Soviet cultural policy and its renunciation of the modernist movements of the previous decades.

It is perhaps significant that Clement Greenberg, who was to first invite Orwell as a contributor, was more interested in the literary and cultural aspects of the magazine. Typically, Orwell, Macdonald and others around *Partisan Review,* shared an appreciation for T.S. Eliot, by no means a leftist.

Indeed Eliot was denounced as "Anti-people, and fascist-minded," by more orthodox Communist Party critics. (Wald 94). But the *Partisan Review* circle had all escaped the tyranny of Socialist Realism which tried to judge aesthetic creation by its political orthodoxy, and Orwell, for example, met Eliot in a professional capacity, not least by having him as a frequent guest on his BBC Indian Service program. On the other side of the Atlantic, *Partisan Review* published two of the *Four Quartets*– a strange venue indeed for an Episcopalian monarchist who has posthumously had to contend with accusations of anti-Semitism!

Despite this affinity, there were at the beginning strong disagreements on the war, with Macdonald and Greenberg taking particularly strongly orthodox Marxist antiwar positions – and as suggested earlier, it is possible that their initial invitation to Orwell may have been based on outdated news of his previous positions.

Although before the war, Orwell had taken a similar "plague on all their houses," attitude as the American revolutionaries, he rapidly moved to a position of trying to combine a social revolution and defeating Hitler, and eventually to an even more sanguine position, that winning the war, with or without a revolution, and almost certainly without, was the most important thing.

Newsinger (op Cit 99) makes the point that the somewhat idiosyncratic response of *Partisan Review* to their disagreements about the War – namely not to mention it themselves – allowed Orwell's view in his *London Letters* to become the default position for the magazine, which certainly brought it closer to reality, and the views of the mainstream society.

Indeed, Orwell's political development in the early forties was in part spurred by the experiences that he shared with so many compatriots during a total war that left little or no social experience untouched. It was not just bombs, and the Home Guard, but the taxation, the rationing, the military and labor conscription, which at least blurred and on occasion transcended existing class differences and suggested that socialism and the nation state were compatible without descending to national socialism or communism.

In fact, the war was also a life and death issue personally for Orwell, who from his experiences in Spain knew that at least two possible outcomes: either a Nazi victory or a Communist takeover, would have him standing against a wall, with the ever present possibility that any wall he stood near in the meantime may be brought down by German bombers.

Understandably, living in a country faced with annihilation, it was difficult for Orwell to treat the war as if it were some Marxist version of the Athanasian creed, simply a marker for true belief. “The issue was between having a war and letting Germany dominate Europe up to the Urals,” he reprimanded Macdonald.

Indeed Macdonald’s purist attitude to the war, hoping that the fascists would be defeated but denying the moral validity of British or American capitalist attempts to do so, is a part of a long lasting idealistic tradition in the American left, seen most recently in attitudes to possible intervention in the Balkans or Rwanda. Macdonald eventually grew out of this habit of magnanimously bearing the suffering of others until a champion with the correct politics could be identified. Much of the American left didn’t.

Personal Politics

Even though *Partisan Review* was certainly an ecumenical operation, it is interesting to see how the epistolary relationship between Macdonald and Orwell developed despite such profound political disagreements. There were clearly other factors than a theoretical convergence that kept them corresponding although that is almost certainly one of the results of their exchanges.

The intimacy of the surviving correspondence implies a much more extensive now missing communication, whether from the letters about mundane details such as loans, shoes and book purchases, or the developing literary and political affinities. In the days before readily available transatlantic phone calls, and in the absence of a physical meeting, the degree of rapport between the two, even allowing for Macdonald’s clubbable personality, suggests that there were many other letters now lost.

Macdonald’s predication of the need for his new magazine *politics*, in which he sought to emulate Orwell, while justifying it by Partisan Review’s failure to tackle Orwell’s politics was the dialectic stretched beyond rational synthesis.

However, it is clear that Macdonald agreed with Orwell’s overall world view, while disagreeing with its particular manifestation in support for the “imperialist war.” One has to have experienced the cultish world of unforgiving far-left politics to appreciate how rare such subtleties were.

Their relationship was also explicable in terms of shared temperament. Michael Wreszin probably had it right when he concluded that “Dwight loved Orwell… for the enemies he had made.” (108 A Rebel in Defense of Tradition) They shared an idiosyncratic intellectual viewpoint, in each case based upon a formidable intellect, and similar class origins.

As Sumner says, Macdonald saw in Orwell, “A fellow exile from the cloister of class privilege and private schools, a writer whose work combined empathy for the suffering of the dispossessed (which he witnessed at close range, on the streets of Paris and London and among the POUMist forces in Spain) with a plain writing style purged of ideological cant and hyperbole.” (21 Sumner)

In fact, despite his criticisms, it was precisely Orwell’s empiricism, his contact with reality that attracted Macdonald, and maybe even made him somewhat envious, albeit not to the extent of say, paralleling the *Road to Wigan Pier* with a similar expedition to the Appalachian mines!

Orwell and Macdonald both came from elite positions in their related Anglo-Saxon societies that assumed their members had authority by birth, background and education. Their easy self-assurance even when the vicissitudes of family life and business cycles had eroded the economic basis for their self-assurance suggests that this was a caste as much as a class position. That assurance allowed them the idiosyncrasy to adopt positions that increasingly paralleled each other’s despite the pressure from others to hew to rigid lines.

Orwell’s seemingly consciously adopted persona of a crusty Tory, nostalgically assuming that the world is going to hell in a hand basket, certainly became more attractive than it already was to Macdonald, who was an overt Anglophile, who commented to a British editor in 1958 “I prefer your country morally and culturally to my own.” (Discrimination 387)

From Jonathan Swift to William Cobbett and right up to the present, British radicals have often used a fictional former golden age to make odious comparisons with the benighted present. Some modern critics fail to see how this aspect of Orwell could in reality be quite radical. Indeed, even the Levellers of the English Revolutionary period saw their demands as a restoration of ancient liberties rather than as innovation.

It is not surprising that Macdonald imagined (149 Wreszin) that Orwell shares his “private enthusiasm” for Doctor Johnson, and it would have been a fitting presumption since the Good Doctor was the epitome of the curmudgeonly Tory critic of his own age. Yale Alumnus Macdonald certainly fitted the bill from an American standpoint.

Perhaps equally indicative was Macdonald’s comment about the British on Lord Melbourne’s insouciant acceptance of the prime ministership, almost on a dare, “only a race as much at home in politics as a fish is in water could be so offhand about it.”

His anarchist comrade George Woodcock in his 1946 essay for *Politics*, described Orwell as a “rare survivor in the atomic age” referring to his “old fashioned pragmatism,” “his radical honesty and frankness, his respect for such excellent bourgeois mottoes as ‘fair play” and “don’t kick a man when he’s down.” In fact, he has pinpointed exactly the persona of the crusty Tory radical that Orwell was happy to present.

It is instructive that for some left critics of Orwell, notably Scott Lucas, his “decency” is the occasion for a sneer and an insult. In contrast, for most British workers, it is a *sine qua non*

political principle As Orwell knew, Woodcock's description is of precisely the virtues that the British working class considers its own, and why they have reacted so well when they are displayed, as they often have been by a whole British political spectrum.

James Maxton, Michael Foot, former editor of *Tribune* and later leader of the Labour Party, all had these qualities. This is what put them and their left politics in the mainstream of the British political tradition, because unlike the purer American ideologues, these virtues appealed to the British working class and won their votes, along with those of many of the middle classes as well.

Politics

In 1943, when their disagreements about the war were at their sharpest, Macdonald's draft prospectus for his new magazine, *politics*, designed to remedy the failings that he saw in *Partisan Review*, pledged "to try to do for (the) USA scene what Orwell does for London." At a time when Orwell was not the eminence he later gained in Britain itself, Macdonald had already recognized his special skills and indeed made a sterling effort towards his goal of emulation.

In fact, the clear influence that Orwell had on Macdonald's politics belies his relatively minute direct contributions to *politics* itself. Macdonald later told an Anarchist journal that Orwell was "a liblab (tho' of the finest quality in my opinion), I'm a radical; he supported the late war, I didn't; he has hopes for the Labor Party. I haven't."(Sumner 23) Even the term liblab, a Macdonald neologism in its American sense, was a British term referring to the period at the turn of the 19th Century when Labor candidates for parliament stood on a Liberal Party ticket.

On the other hand, although he later recommended Macdonald's magazine, Orwell could not agree with the "policy of this paper, which is antiwar, not from a pacifist angle, but I admire its combination of highbrow political analysis with intelligent literary criticism." (CW III 202) Interestingly he likens it to the British *New Leader* – which was the journal of the Independent Labour Party – an organization that, as we shall see later, had figured largely in Orwell's own political development.

In fact the politics of *politics* moved closer to Orwell than any of the parties at its inception concerned could really imagine.

Orwell was from Britain, Macdonald was from America

When we compare Orwell's place in British politics and society with that of Macdonald and the New York intellectuals in the United States, we can perhaps see why so many more of the latter dropped any pretensions to socialism – and perhaps why, despite inauspicious beginnings, Macdonald and Orwell grew closer.

Sadly, in the U.S. with the demise of the Socialist Party, there really was no practical alternative role for socialists in effective daily political life, although many carried on trying.

Those, like Irving Howe, who kept the faith did so in their role as intellectuals, which is why almost the last strongholds of any kind of socialist belief in the USA are now in academia. In Britain, there clearly was an alternative, and editors and writers of left wing magazines naturally made the transition into parliament and the cabinet, as did union leaders and activists.

In contrast, many of the New York intellectuals were isolated within their own American society, although Macdonald's WASP upbringing, and his previous journalistic career probably connected him more closely to the wider society than was likely for his comrades.

Macdonald eventually realized that Orwell was rooted in a more homogeneous political and literary society, and that his views were shared by much broader sections of his society. Certainly, Orwell did not need Trotsky's inspiration to think that a different form of socialism from Stalin's was possible. In Britain, the Trotskyists were always a marginal growth in an already large and successful working class socialist movement with strong social roots in the unions and churches.

In particular, overlooked by many commentators on Orwell's politics is the important role of the Independent Labour Party, which had left the Labour Party, but still had a relatively widespread base, and indeed still had many close connections and sympathizers inside the Labour Party itself.

It held what it called a "Third Way" position between Leninism and Labour Party right's reformism, which is, of course, not to be confused with Tony Blair's and Bill Clinton's later appropriation of the title.

As an example, Newsinger, (p 89 Newsinger) says that "the claim that he (Orwell) became a *Tribune* socialist, as supporter of the Labour left is too simplistic. It neglects the extent to which Orwell conducted a dialogue with the revolutionary left."

However, this in its turn imposes a retrospective and anachronistic conflation of "revolutionary" with Leninist. The ILP believed that an elected Labour Party, could "suppress (counter-revolution) by ordinary legal power backed by a Labour organization," (Brown 182) and could effect the revolutionary change to socialism.

Indeed their claim to a distinctively "British Road to Socialism," backed by mass organizations, was later usurped by the Communist Party of Great Britain itself, even down to the name.

Reinforced by the shared experience of war, this is clearly the same political wellspring that Orwell was drawing on, when he declared, "England is the only European country where internal politics are conducted in a more or less humane and decent manner." He claimed, along with the ILP, that it "would be possible to abolish poverty without destroying liberty," and its people were "more capable than most people of making revolutionary changes without bloodshed." (See *The English People*, CW III) The emphasis of the ILP was just this, the abolition of poverty in the course of a massive makeover of society.

As if to prove their point, in the course of the Second World War, the British government had seized control of the economy and directed it towards the war effort to an extent far beyond anything that even Nazi Germany had managed. Draconian rationing and taxation had, unchallenged by the rich, brought about a serious leveling, indicating what was possible in peacetime.

Newsinger refers to Orwell's comments to the convergence of the parties as if it proves Orwell's dissatisfaction with Labour. In fact, to put it in context, he *celebrated* such convergence as an example of a distinctive and implicitly better way of doing things. Orwell goes on to explain, "Thus, no Conservative government will ever revert to what would have been called conservatism in the nineteenth century. No Socialist government will massacre the propertied class, nor even expropriate them without compensation." (Op cit 29)

Proper appreciation of the ILP connection erodes Newsinger's concept of Orwell as a "literary Trotskyist," It was the ILP that made the connections for him to go to Spain and join the militia of the POUM, which may indeed have leaned more to Trotsky – but was certainly roundly denounced by him.

Indeed, it was ILP leaders like Fenner Brockway who introduced him to Secker and Warburg for publication of *Homage to Catalonia,* and later *Animal Farm* when the more communist-inclined Victor Gollancz demurred at Orwell's political direction.

Showing the same humanistic approach that Orwell certainly shared, and in a way anticipating the theme of 1984, the ILP's leader, James Maxton MP, in his last major speech in 1945, repudiated statist versions of socialism, declaring, "We must not allow ourselves to become ants in an anthill." (*Maxton*, Gordon Brown, Mainstream Publishing p 302)

Their positions on the war were, also initially, reflected by Orwell and many ILP leaders, such as Maxton, continued to oppose the "imperialist" war with Germany without, however, ever subscribing to the Soviet embrace of their new Nazi ally. However, after several years of war, the ILP remnants had mostly either joined the Communist Party, or more often returned to the Labour Party, where many of its ex-members were in the first post-war Labour cabinet, and for years afterwards formed part of the left Caucus of the Party. There, they usually organized around *Tribune,* the independent paper for which Orwell wrote so much.

Like many others, Orwell left the ILP during the war, and although we are unsure whether or not he actually joined the Labour Party, he certainly canvassed for it in the May 1945 election that returned it, self declared socialist party, to power with a massive majority. Right up to his death, as we know in his attempts to correct American misapprehensions about the purpose of *1984*, he described himself a supporter of the Party and the government.

So Orwell was part of broad and generally relatively non-sectarian left, with strong social roots. He retained his old school and class connections and their contacts with decision-makers, and indeed through his Labour party connections added more as people connected with *Tribune* or the ILP joined both the wartime coalition cabinet and the post-war Labour government.

Macdonald himself recognized this social homogeneity when he eventually went to Britain after the war. “When I lived in London last winter, I noticed that I actually met trade union leaders and members of Parliament at parties and that intellectuals were part of the political life.” In contrast, he says, “A New York intellectual even in the politicalized thirties and forties had no contact with Congressmen or government officials or businessmen or labor leaders.” (386 Discrimination).

Macdonald certainly had no such broad-based non-sectarian left with access to power that Orwell could fall back on and it is hardly surprising that for a long period he was regarded as “apolitical”– since in the American context, his choice was between sectarian irrelevance or reconciliation with reaction.

A Writer’s Life

Having eschewed the organizational forms of sectarianism, Macdonald reverted to what he did best – thought-provoking journalism. It has been suggested that Orwell was more politically pure, in that, unlike Macdonald, he did not, until much later write for the mainstream press.

However, this may be more a symptom of artistic than political purity. Orwell self-consciously wanted to be a *writer*, not a reporter (a fairly plebeian occupation, certainly in Britain). Even though, as Macdonald said, he had a flair for sociological reporting, this was in terms of collecting material for larger projects.

For Orwell, writing reviews for literary journals was both a means of turning a crust and getting his name out. He never did a Comstock as far as we know, preferring the dubious alternatives of small holdings and country shop keeping to writing for the tabloids and commercial press. In fact, Macdonald obliged Orwell by finding him copies of George Gissing novels in New York. *New Grub Street’s* depiction of the struggling writer resonated strongly with Orwell.

However, the life of a Grub Street hack was not one of luxury or stability and one reason for Orwell’s extensive contacts with American intellectuals was of course the famous rationale for robbing banks – that is where the money was! Those dollar checks, as well as doing sterling patriotic duty by bringing in foreign exchange for the war efforts, kept Orwell solvent in the years before *Animal Farm* began to rescue him from shabby gentility. Indeed, it was its American publication that launched him from genteel poverty to such affluence that he had to form a company to avoid punitive double taxation of the royalties.

In Britain throughout the war, there was rationing, of clothes, food and even paper. There was the blitz, and absolute mobilization to a degree that was unprecedented for a capitalist society. Production was completely geared to the war effort, which is presumably why Orwell had to ask Macdonald to get him a pair of size twelve shoes in the US – and to send them separately since shoes were valuable commodities that could be pilfered in transit.

Macdonald seems to have kept Orwell supplied with literature from the US, including, of

course, his own worlds such as the one on Wallace. “One cannot buy magazines from abroad nowadays,” Orwell recorded baldly in 1944, even as he recommended *Politics* to *Tribune* readers. (III 202)

But what about the politics?

By the post-war period, Macdonald’s flirtation with Anarchism and Gandhi also converged towards, but never quite touched, Orwell’s growing fears about the powers of the state and his revulsion against tyranny. As always, Orwell was more empirical in his approach than Macdonald’s typically root and branch approach.

Despite the unpromisingly uncompromising start, Macdonald shed Marxist dogma faster than most of his comrades of the era, and reverted to what one may consider the native Anglo-American empiricism that, with more than a flavor of Psmithian idiosyncrasy and eccentricity, he shared with Orwell. At the end of the war, Macdonald was admitting that Orwell was right about it. Their shared attitudes lent themselves to a consistency that was difficult to match by some of their more expedient contemporaries. Both opposed the vindictiveness of post-war witch-hunts against alleged Nazis and Communists.

Orwell’s defense of P. G. Wodehouse and his distaste at the attacks on alleged collaborators in France, marched in harmony with Macdonald’s editorial in support of the first Bollingen Prize for poetry going Ezra Pound, which annoyed many Jewish intellectuals, for obvious reasons, but amusingly also irritated Pound himself who Macdonald playfully recorded, “Scrawled a note so vituperative and hot-tempered that I took a great personal liking to him.”(Wreszin 169)

Indeed that comment inadvertently reveals one of the differences between Macdonald and Orwell despite so many similarities: it is difficult to think of Orwell, despite the wry smile in many of his portraits, being quite so whimsical as Macdonald so often was, allowing his characteristic lightness of touch to detract sometimes from the seriousness of his message.

The incident also showed some finer tuning on Orwell’s part, compared with Macdonald’s delight in tweaking the feathers of orthodoxy. He felt the prize awarders should have repudiated Pound’s politics even if they did give him the award for his poetry. (*Partisan Review* May 1949 CW IV p 551

Macdonald went to the nub of the issue. “Orwell’s code was a simple one, based on truth and ‘decency’; he was important- and original- because he insisted on applying that code to his own socialist comrades as well as the class enemy.” (Macdonald, Discrimination, p 330)

He elaborated the reasons for this later in *Trotsky, Orwell and Socialism*, where he made the contrast between “the British empiricist versus the Russian-Jewish ideologue.” “Trotsky applied a consistent and taken-for-granted doctrine to each new situation, showing the greatest ingenuity in each application but never modifying the basic dogma. Orwell, a trueborn Englishman, had no talent for systematic thinking, and, indeed, tended to regard over-all ideologies as either absurd or harmful, or both: he was always ready to abandon on his most

cherished beliefs if he came to the conclusion that it no longer 'worked.'"

In fact, Whitfield describes Macdonald himself in very similar terms. The founder of *politics* and berater of liblabs was he says, "certainly no theorist, no purveyor of overarching visions, no schematic thinker….his remarkably engaging and lucid style denied to its author the indulgence granted to clumsier writers, who are often beneficiaries of the belief that behind impenetrable prose they must be thinking." (Whitfield 3)

Indeed the road that Macdonald had embarked on when he first criticized Trotsky's suppression of the Kronstadt uprising was paralleled by Orwell who noted "All the seeds of the evil were there from the start, and that things would not have been substantially different if Lenin or Trotsky had remained in control." (Catastrophic Gradualism, p35 IV)

Like Macdonald, Orwell continued to express his revulsion for the Soviet Union during the period in the Second World War when many saw it as expedient to soft-pedal their criticisms. While before the war, the Communist Party had the sympathy, if not always membership, of many intellectuals, once Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, followed as it was by a foolish declaration of war by Hitler on the United States, had made Soviet Union an ally, even non-Leftists widely regarded any criticism of the Soviet Union as unpatriotic.

Macdonald recounted for his readers Orwell's difficulties in having a book review that was even mildly critical of the Soviet Union published in the *Manchester Evening News*. And of course, it was not only communists but the US and British establishments who tried to thwart publication and distribution of Animal Farm.

Orwell and later Macdonald moved to the shared *faute de mieux* position that when faced with a choice between the capitalist USA and the Soviet Union, they would support the USA, pending a hoped for genuine socialist alternative.

While Orwell, Macdonald, and much of the British left, kept a sense of perspective about their anti-Sovietism, the antithesis became the thesis for some of the New York Intellectuals and many of their contemporary anti-Stalinists in New York mutated into millennialism of another kind – neo-conservatism, which dropped the socialist aspirations while maintaining the rabid anti-Sovietism.

Politics shortly became, almost in spite of its prospectus, a repository for a non-sectarian, communitarian version of socialism, heavily influenced by anarchist and left-libertarian ideas. What linked Orwell and Macdonald most strongly was a refusal to temper criticism of totalitarian behavior for sectarian or partisan reasons. Reasons of state, party lines, class morality, were all exposed to the same rigorous critical standards.

It is a token of the closeness of their relationship that Orwell seems to have owed more than an intellectual debt to Macdonald, who graciously told him not to worry about a previous loan. He tells him in reply to what seems to be a missing anxious letter from Orwell promising

repayment of the unspecified amount that may have been prompted by Macdonald's discussion of the magazine's financial position., "not to worry about the loans… all we meant to say was that, when repayment is convenient to you, it could be nice for us.. But we weren't thinking of getting anything at all back in less than a year, and we perfectly understand that what you can do on it depends on how well things work out as to climate etc. So please don't make any sacrifice, there's no hurry at all." (Wreszin p 179, 1949 July 19)

In fact, of course, there was. Orwell was hurrying to his grave. We can only conjecture that this loan was from before *Animal Farm's* publication helped assure Orwell's financial position, but as Gordon Bowker points out, by then Orwell was actually lending other people money.

Letters to Oceania?

However, perhaps more important than the financial support Orwell clearly derived from his American connection, the question is how did the ideas bubbling among American intellectuals add to Orwell's developing worldview?

One of the benefits of writing for these American magazines was, of course, that he could surmount the foreign exchange controls and Macdonald provided him with books and magazines–U-boats permitting. (p150 W), and his own essays, for example on Burnham, show that they provoked ideas in him. It is perhaps too simplistic to repudiate the influence of Burnham on the schema for *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is clear that ideas can be provoked by analyses that one disagrees with, and Burnham's views were sufficiently provocative for Orwell to think hard about them.

It is to the continuing correspondence and relationship between Orwell and Macdonald that we owe some of the most convincing exegesis of, for example, *Animal Farm,* and the particular British context of the ILP illuminates what he was saying.

When asked by Macdonald if the book was antirevolutionary, he distinguished his ideas of revolution from "that kind" of revolution, (violent conspiratorial revolution, led by unconsciously power-hungry people) can only lead to a change of masters." In effect he was continuing the ILP's line, "You can't have a revolution unless you make it for yourself; there is no such thing as a benevolent dictatorship." (Letter Orwell to Macdonald Dec 1946 cited Sumner 22)

In addition, Macdonald and Orwell shared many interests, some of which were highly significant in the development of Orwell's work. For example, both had an interest in Utopias, as shown by Macdonald's anticipation of M.L. Berneri's book on them in July 1949 (letter to Orwell, Wreszin 179). "A subject peculiarly close to my own current interests," says Macdonald, but of course even more so for Orwell, whose work was to become the archetypal obverse of the genre, a Dystopia.

Such works were of course in a solid literary, and even left literary tradition, from Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backwards*, William Morris's *News From Nowhere* on the positive side, to

Jack London's *Iron Heel* and Zamyatin's *We* on the darker side and Orwell at various times refers to them, along with Wells' *The Sleeper Awakes* and Huxley's *Brave New World*, (See Orwell's Prophesies of Fascism, p 45 CW ,).

One cannot help thinking that such interests may have seemed frivolous to the more dourly doctrinaire comrades on the harder left – but such literary explorations of alternative futures doubtless appealed the growing empiricism of Macdonald.

In one small matter, the correspondence was even more seminal for Orwell's dystopic vision. The British censors had deleted a paragraph from one of his London Letters for the Partisan Review about possible lynchings of downed German airmen, and had done so by retyping the letter as if nothing had happened. It was almost certainly an inspiration for Winston Smith in his cubicle rewriting history for his daily bread.

Nineteen Eighty-Four shows some the syncretic results of this correspondence and transatlantic acquaintanceship. While Airstrip One is indeed quintessentially English, – not even British – in its setting and flavor, and it has a Soviet style political ethos mediated through that setting, it is clearly part of an Anglo-American polity which, perhaps if death had not been looming, he would have drawn a more intellectually satisfactory and coherent way.

On the wider New York Intellectual circle, it is a tenable hypothesis that between the two, they managed to create a vocabulary that escaped sectarian catchwords and stilted dogmatic thinking. It allowed the great issues of the day, in particular geopolitical issues, to be examined in a principled humanistic way that applied equal moral yardsticks to all the actors. We may take this for granted now (indeed, after a decade of Fox TV, we may no longer take it so much for granted!), but it was not an easy task, as indeed shown by the immediate misappropriation of *Animal Farm* and ***1984*** by many on the right.

Macdonald was not only foremost among those who looked closely at what Orwell was saying when he was alive, he was of course one of those who carried the flame for him when he was dead. The old saying *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* is ambivalent in the case of Orwell. There are far too many people whose views he would certainly have repudiated when he was alive, from revolutionary Trotskyists to reactionary conservatives, who have declared his work good beyond all measure, and expropriated it to their own causes.

Almost from the beginning, Orwell had been revolted by the deadness of party-line prose, and developed his distinctive idiom. Possibly, one of the reasons why he has been so susceptible to adoption by so many distinctive political strands may be his studied avoidance of partisan tropes and clichés that would otherwise have labeled his writing as leaning to particular sects or parties.

In the sometimes content-light world of left wing polemics it is the way things are said as much as what is said the identifies the protagonists. In contrast, Macdonald, in the end, had moved from being a polemical opponent, to one of the best expositors of their shared message against tyrannies of whatever hue Macdonald may have worried less about the exactness of his

content, but he was equally interested in lively prose, and so it was perhaps not surprising that Macdonald discussed with Sonia Orwell the writing of his biography. Clearly, by then his political temperament, and his Anglophilic appreciation for the context of Orwell's life and work would have made him an interesting biographer. Certainly, *Trotsky, Orwell and Socialism*, his 1956 New Yorker essay lays out more clearly than some more recent exegesis the reality Orwell's relationship to the Left.

However, one cannot help but suspect that the very idiosyncrasy and sense of self-worth that Macdonald customarily displayed would have produced a work that was more illuminating about its author than its subject. The dialectic between the two would indeed give us some insights about both.

Reaching Out to Adrienne Rich: An Activist Poet's Tribute

By | 2012: vol. 11 issues 2-3

Dear Rosa Luxemburg,

It has been too long since I wrote you last, and now I am sorry to have to relay the sad news of the death of one of our greatest U.S. poets carrying your torch for freedom and egalitarian democracy. It was in the late 1980s or early 1990s that I began occasionally reaching out to Adrienne in personal correspondence, sending her a few poems that I hoped she might like, asking some questions about poetry and politics, and letting her know about some activist projects that I was involved in. At the time, I was working for Middlesex Interfaith Partners with the Homeless in Central New Jersey, with one of Adrienne's former poetry students; and was also organizing with a new national student activist group, Student Action Union. Adrienne answered my initial letters with a few kind notes about my poems, and with best wishes on our activist projects.

By then, Rosa, I knew that Adrienne, one of the few U.S. poets to have really played a springboard role in our era's major progressive movements, was becoming deeply influenced by your writings—by your unwavering commitment to a more just and compassionate political and economic climate, and by your civil-liberties-loving insistence that "freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently." After the Cold War's end, with America's mainstream press and politicians taking the pulse of world history and declaring socialism dead, Adrienne had written that she felt it was a good time to go back and read some of the earlier socialist thinkers, to see how those promising seeds, urging more democratic decision-making from the halls of government to the sweatshop streets, had been betrayed both from within and without.

In one of my early letters to Adrienne, I mentioned that I was a former student and good friend of Stephen Bronner, who had written *Socialism Unbound*, and edited a terrific English translation of your letters. In her book, *What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics,* Adrienne wrote: "I would find the words in Rosa Luxemburg….This was powerfully akin to the experience of writing poetry. Politics as an expression of … what's 'humanly possible.' " Throughout her literary life, Adrienne was always pushing to expand the boundaries of what might be considered humanly possible, knowing as William Blake knew, that what can be imagined can be made real, that more tasty democratic stews could be cooked with the right inventive mix of subjective and communal ingredients. Rosa, the admiration we shared for your democratic-left ideas helped cement a literary friendship for the next two decades, during which Adrienne was consistently generous in answering letters and in donating poems to

anthologies and journals I was helping to edit–*Changing America: Contemporary U.S. Poems of Protest,* published bilingually in France, *Logos: A Journal of Modern Society and Culture* published online, the "Beat Bush" issue of *Long Shot* literary magazine. We forwarded emails to each other with petitions to end the wars in Iraq, for civil and human rights, and to end the mutually disastrous Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. And, in recent years, she sent kind personal emails that lifted my spirits during difficult health struggles.

In your tradition, Rosa, Adrienne knew that freedom for all is inextricably linked with freedom for each, that each individual's thoughts are inevitably shaped in part by wider social winds, that the bicycle ride for free expression and the roaring train motoring to end world-hunger are different vehicles traveling along the same utopian trail, that a healthy society could never come into being through the dictatorial declarations of bureaucrats pretending to be doctors sitting behind sterile desks, that a cutting-edge critique of current events is raised in its intergalactic worth when it is connected to the loftiest of emancipatory dreams. Adrienne called "What if?": "the first revolutionary question, the question the dying forces don't know how to ask." She knew that building a new world from the moldy crust of the old would require fresh ways of putting language together, and she challenged herself to devise new poetic forms and devices with the same boiling urgency that she used to confront the icy status quo. She knew that old myths were in need of both deconstruction and reconstruction, and that "beauty that won't deny, is itself an eye." Adrienne found hope in poetry's gift for breaking stainless-steel silences, and in the breathtaking array of roles that poetry could play in supporting social movements, even as she did not view art as a substitute for making political change. In "Dreamwood," a poem whose title was meant to help connect the floorboard material world with the transformative power of imagination, she wrote that "poetry isn't revolution but a way of knowing why it must come." In memorable poems like "Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law" and "Twenty-One Love Poems," she developed multi-verse forms, like a quantum physicist playing around with the ten dimensions of space, capable of converting separated fragments into sustainable communities. And in "Atlas of the Difficult World," she mapped out our country's problems of far too much racism, sexism, nationalism, and war; too many apathetic suburbs and foreclosed farms; ecological nightmares threatening our thunderous days; city infrastructures homeless and crumbling, stampeding, unchecked power and powerlessness; too many politicians "trying to revive dead statues to lead us," too many kids dripping uninsured blood and hope. Addressing these third-rail tribulations, Adrienne insisted: "A patriot is not a weapon. A patriot is one who wrestles for the soul of her country."

Rosa, I can't remember whether, the last time I wrote you, I mentioned my own wrestling these past few years with chronic Lyme disease, which can be far more difficult to diagnose and treat, and far more debilitating, than most people realize if it isn't caught early because one doesn't see a tick or bulls-eye rash. As someone who well understood my struggles from her own experiences, Adrienne's best-wishes emails never failed to deliver coast-to-coast shots of clean energy directly to the spine. I had met Adrienne in person in the 1990s, during several New York-area poetry readings, and she was then walking frailly, with a wooden rheumatoid-arthritis cane. At the time, I couldn't remember reading about her having had a long-term illness and assumed that RA had struck her in recent years. It was only in late 2011, during our

email discussions about the growing and inspiring Occupy Wall Street movement–including its poetry collective with which I was working–that I learned she had been dealing with rheumatoid arthritis ever since her twenties. As someone who, in illness, has found it impossible to keep up with anywhere near my old poetic production, I was astonished to realize that Adrienne's incredible literary and activist legacy had been accomplished under such trying circumstances. No wonder she could so brilliantly map out the social challenges of our time—she had overcome her own challenges daily for five decades plus!

In a 2007 essay, "Poetry and Commitment," Adrienne had written: "poetry has the capacity…to remind us of something we are forbidden to see. A forgotten future, a still uncreated site whose moral architecture rests not on ownership and dispossession, the subjection of women, torture and bribes, outcast and tribe, but on the continuous redefining of freedom." We remember writers who have influenced our lives and world-views in different ways. Walt Whitman famously told poets to come that we would be able to find him, simply by looking at the grass under our boot-soles. Allen Ginsberg once told me that, while he was editing a new poem, he would picture friends and influences, living and dead, with their eyes looking over his shoulder, helping him to see first-draft lines in new ways; so that I'll forever picture Allen as one of those influential sets of editing eyes looking over my shoulder. With Adrienne, I will remember what she wrote about one of her own poetry influences, Muriel Rukeyser— "we reach her by recognizing our need for her, by going to libraries and taking out volume after volume, by going, finally, to the crossroads—of poetry, politics, science, sexuality—and meeting her there, where she waits, reaching for us"—and I will see Adrienne, reaching out, with visionary arms that proved strong enough to overcome autoimmune arthritis for over fifty years, now in death, still with her unique generosity, helping to coax and carry us, from a mixed earthly present filled with too much danger and decay, to a more humane future whose light-gray outlines are only barely visible today.

With love, best wishes, and a promise, Rosa, to try to write next time, without waiting so long, and with better news about the ever-changing shape of our planet,

Eliot Katz

April 2012

Eliot Katz *is the author of six poetry books, including* Unlocking the Exits; *and* Love, War, Fire, Wind: Looking Out from North America's Skull.

Ruth Fischer: Communist and Anti-Communist Between Europe and America, 1895-1961

By | 2012: vol. 11 issues 2-3

Ruth Fischer (1895-1961) was once ranking among Germany's and Europe's most prominent women. She was the co-founder of the Communist Party of Austria, became famous as the chair of the Communist Party of Germany in the Weimar Republic and, after 1945, was associated with the anti-communist crusade in the United States where she authored the best-selling book *Stalin and German Communism*. At the end of her life, she vainly hoped that the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev would move towards a democratic variant of communism. To complete these paradoxes, Ruth Fischer should also be mentioned as the sister of two other prominent Austrian-German communists: the composer Hanns Eisler (1898-1962), a disciple and friend of Arnold Schönberg, and the journalist Gerhart Eisler (1897-1968), whom his sister would denounce as Moscow's wire-puller and most dangerous communist agent in the United States. To explain why Ruth Fischer's political itinerary went to such extremes – astonishing even in the 'Age of Extremes', to quote Eric Hobsbawm – is the purpose of the following remarks.

From Vienna to Berlin: Ruth Fischer and the Emergence of Organized Communism

Elfriede Eisler came from a middle-class family. She was born in Leipzig on 11 December 1895. The family soon moved to Vienna, where her father held a position as senior lecturer in philosophy at the university. Since Rudolf Eisler (1873-1926), who was of Jewish origin, refused to be baptized he was never promoted to full professor. Elfriede's mother Maria (1876-1929), who had worked as a domestic servant until she married, was Protestant. The three children grew up in a liberal and agnostic household.[1]

After finishing high school in 1914, Elfriede Eisler studied pedagogy, economics and philosophy at the University of Vienna. In 1914, soon after the war had begun, Elfriede and her brothers, who both were waiting for conscription, founded a left-wing student group that expressed a strict opposition to the war. Another member of this circle was Gerhard Friedländer, a fellow-student whom Elfriede married in 1917. In December of the same year, her son Gerhard was born. In October 1918, she left university without finishing her studies. On 3 November 1918 a group of around forty including Elfriede, her husband and her brothers, founded the Communist Party of Austria.

After a failed attempt to gain exclusive leadership of the Austrian communists, she had left Vienna in late August 1919 for Germany. Since then she took the name Ruth Fischer. While her husband remained in Vienna, Fischer went with her son to Berlin. Divorced in 1922, she officially married a member of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), Gustav Golke, a year later to obtain German citizenship, but the marriage remained one of convenience. Soon after her arrival in Berlin she found a job at the women's office of the KPD. A few months later, Karl Radek, the Communist International's emissary to Germany, recommended that she should work for the Western European Secretariat of the Communist International (Comintern). While starting her work as a full-timer, Fischer went into active politics.

In December 1920, Ruth Fischer was among the KPD delegates at the conference that merged with the left wing of the Independent Social Democrats (USPD). Fischer's political activities made her eligible for the post of a chair of the party's district organization of Berlin-Brandenburg, the party's largest provincial branch. She found support from Arkadij Maslow, who would soon become Ruth Fischer's life long partner.

Maslow (1891-1941), born in the Ukraine under the name Isaak Chemerinskij, had abandoned a promising career as a concert pianist as well as his university studies in mathematics to devote his whole life to communist politics. From 1921, together with Ruth Fischer, he led the Berlin-Brandenburg district organization. In 1921, Maslow also became the foreign affairs editor of the party's central daily newspaper *Die Rote Fahne*. The left-wing faction around Fischer and Maslow became known as the 'Berlin Opposition'. In November and December of 1922, Fischer participated in the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern in Moscow where she met Lenin and Trotsky. In an unofficial meeting that was arranged between the German congress delegation and the Soviet party leadership she spoke, in her own words, "vehemently and brutally against the policy of the German Central Committee, attacked the New Economic Policy irreverently and criticized the Russian Communist Party without the servile attitude of deference toward Lenin that had already become habitual with all foreign Communist leaders."[2] Consequently, neither Fischer nor Maslow would obtain seats in the new KPD directorate, the *Zentrale*. Control over affairs passed into the hands of Heinrich Brandler, and August Thalheimer. Brandler in particular soon realized that the vast majority of German workers refused to be dragged into adventures without any purpose or sense. Throughout 1921-22 the moderate and the leftist tendency were both seeking support from the Comintern headquarters in Moscow.

During the summer of 1923, riots and strikes against the galloping inflation erupted all over Germany. Hundreds of thousands participated. There were serious differences within the KPD about how to deal with this situation.[3] The 'rightist' group around the party chair Heinrich Brandler stood by their view that Workers' Governments on the state and local level should be formed. However, the KPD leadership's attempt to join the left-social democratic governments in the states of Saxony and Thuringia came under a baptism of fire by the group around Fischer and Maslow. They saw Germany as mature enough for revolution and criticized sharply what they called the 'reformist passivity' of the circle around Brandler. In both states, Saxony and Thuringia, the KPD joined left-wing SPD governments, on October 10 and 16 respectively.

As early as 21 August the Russian party leadership decided to prepare for a revolution in Germany. The date for the uprising was set for 9 November.

With the support of German president Friedrich Ebert, the army stepped up their pressure against Saxony and Thuringia and issued a direct order banning the Proletarian Hundreds, giving those three days in which to give up their arms. The ultimatum was ignored. On 21 October the army entered Saxony. The KPD had to bring forward its plans for insurrection. It called a congress of factory councils in Chemnitz, Saxony on 21 October. This congress was supposed to call a general strike and give the signal for the 'German October Revolution'. But because the left SPD delegates disagreed, Brandler called off the uprising. He also saw that the Proletarian Hundreds were not well enough equipped with arms. This decision did not reach Hamburg in time. Here a communist insurrection was organized, but it remained isolated and was quickly put down. For a few months the KPD, together with the Nazi Party after its ill-fated Beer Hall Putsch in Munich, was outlawed, a decision that was revoked on 1 March 1924.

Ruth Fischer as Leader of German Communism

The end of the illusions for a 'German October Revolution' was a major setback for international communism. The reaction of the Comintern leadership was to condemn the KPD leaders. The new turn of the left was in part a spontaneous reaction of KPD members against the so-called 'betrayal by the rightists', i.e. the leadership around Brandler. But it was also determined by a regrouping of political forces in Moscow where Stalin, and no longer Fischer's ally Zinoviev, took over political control.

In April the KPD held its Ninth Congress in Frankfurt-Main. After tumultuous debates, the victory of the left was decisive: Fischer, Maslow, and Werner Scholem, another proponent of the left, constituted the new Political Secretariat. Among the new leadership were Ernst Thälmann, the leader of the defeated Hamburg uprising and now official chair of the party, and the historian Arthur Rosenberg. The radical jurist Karl Korsch became editor of *Die Internationale*, the party's theoretical journal. They were all supporters of Fischer and Maslow who were appointed as executive secretaries of the party.

Throughout 1924 a process of political consolidation in Germany followed the crisis. The parliamentary elections of 4 May were, however, still largely influenced by the recent turmoil. The KPD came in fourth place, polling around 3.7 million votes, 12.6 percent of the electorate, and sent sixty-two deputies to the parliament, among them Ruth Fischer.

In her inaugural speech Fischer called the parliament "a shadowy theater."[4] A few months later she described the parliamentarians as "puppets of the heavy industry."[5] The KPD was in staunch opposition to the government and the Dawes Plan, that had softened the burden of allied war reparations, stabilized the economy and brought increased foreign investments and loans to the German market. The party thus came into conflict with general public opinion. Consequently, the next elections that were held in December 1924 turned out unfavorably for the party: the number of votes for its candidates fell to 2.7 million (8.9 percent), giving the

party only 45 seats. Fischer retained her seat.

The political isolation of the Soviet Union and the temporary stabilization of capitalism in Europe, namely in Germany, strengthened the position of the Soviet party bureaucracy, particularly that of Stalin. It was Stalin who became the main proponent of the new slogan of 'socialism in a single country'. That slogan could well be seen as an ideological justification for the growing power of the state and party apparatus.

It was the Comintern chair Zinoviev, Fischer's supporter, who announced at the Fifth Comintern Congress that the great slogan of the coming period was the Bolshevization of the communist parties. The *Theses on Tactics* adopted by the congress defined Bolshevization as "the transfer to our sections of everything in Bolshevism that has been and is still of international significance." It was emphasized that every communist party "must be a centralized party, prohibiting factions, tendencies, or groupings. It must be a monolithic party cast in a single bloc."[6] Ruth Fischer called for a monolithic Comintern, according to the Russian party model from which all dissent should be banished. "This world congress should not allow the International to be transformed into an agglomeration of any kind of currents; it should forge ahead and embark upon the road that leads to a single Bolshevik world party."[7] The KPD delegation endorsed this policy and also the position of the congress that declared that "Fascism and Social Democracy are the left hand and right hand of modern capitalism."[8]

Nevertheless, Ruth Fischer gradually realized that she had to abandon the more extreme manifestations that were declared in the name of the party. In February 1925, the KPD leadership dismissed Korsch as editor of *Die Internationale*. On 27 May 1925, the leadership attempted to come closer to the SPD by addressing an Open Letter that proposed some kind of cooperation.[9] In July, the Tenth KPD Conference in Berlin would ratify the shift away from ultra-leftist orientation. Nonetheless, Fischer's leadership was seen in Moscow with growing skepticism. It was suspected that she and Maslow would no longer be able to keep the party affairs under control. The strong opposition that Dmitri Manuilsky, the ECCI emissary, had faced at the congress – he was loudly advised to "go back to Moscow" – was seen as proof for Fischer's dwindling leadership quality.[10]

The 'Manuilsky Affair' played a pivotal role at the meeting of the German Commission of the ECCI with the KPD leaders on 12 August in Moscow. Fischer and Maslow were told that the party needed trustworthy proletarian elements, such as Ernst Thälmann, Stalin's supporter. He was considered to represent a policy that should guarantee the rootedness of the KPD among the proletarian masses. An Open Letter of the ECCI that was published in September 1925 confirmed this statement. It emphasized that only under a proletarian leadership would the KPD be able to practice a Leninist policy that deserves its name. The letter stated that it "is not the left in the KPD that is bankrupt, but certain leaders of the left", that obviously meant Fischer and Maslow.[11]

Demonstrating the party discipline expected from every communist, the letter was signed by all KPD delegates in Moscow. That included Fischer who, in her own words written decades later,

"was driven to sign my own political death warrant and to confess my sins in public."[12] Much later she wrote "I have signed the' Open Letter' for the sake of preserving the iron unity in the Russian Politburo."[13] An extraordinary Party Conference that was held in Berlin on 31 October and 1 November confirmed the new situation. Fischer and Maslow were expelled from the party directorate.[14]

Thälmann's undisputed leadership documented, in its essence, Stalin's dominance over the German party after his victory over Zinoviev in the Soviet Union. The key positions in the party passed from intellectuals to men of impeccable proletarian origin.

At that time, Ruth Fischer was still in Moscow. According to an unofficial order given by Stalin, she was not allowed to leave the country but had to stay in the Comintern hotel 'Lux'. The Sixth ECCI Plenum confirmed the resolutions of the previous meetings and endorsed that the current leadership of the KPD could well be considered as guarantee for a Leninist policy. The dismissed leaders, and in particular Fischer and Maslow, were depicted as typical proponents of "anticommunism."[15] Ruth Fischer was able to return to Berlin only "after a stiff fight" for her passport in order to get out of Russia.[16] Shortly after her return, she could only register that she and Maslow were denounced as "renegades" and expelled from the KPD on 19 August 1926.[17]

Ostracized and Exiled

After her expulsion from the KPD, Ruth Fischer held her parliamentary mandate until the elections of 20 May 1928. Together with nine other parliamentary representatives, all were ex-members of the KPD, she formed the Group of Left Communists (*Gruppe Linker Kommunisten*). Among them were Arkadij Maslow, Werner Scholem, and Hugo Urbahns, another activist of the leftist tendency, and also Karl Korsch.

Around a year after political isolation, a new leftist-communist organization was founded in Berlin on 8-9 April 1928: the Leninbund. Among its founders were Ruth Fischer and Arkadij Maslow. Both did not remain in this party, which had approximately 6.000 members, for very long.[18] Its position can be summarized as follows: The Leninbund argued that the October Revolution had run its full course, and that the Soviet Union would be in a state of counter-revolution. The ruling bureaucracy had itself transformed into a new class based on the state capitalism of a nationalized economy.

Nevertheless, on 8 May 1928, the ECCI presidium offered to pardon all Leninbund members if they would "condemn immediately the activity of the Maslow-Fischer-Urbahns group as anti-proletarian and counterrevolutionary" and "retire immediately from the Bund and demand the dissolution of the organization."[19] Maslow and Fischer themselves accepted this proposition, withdrew from the Leninbund and asked to be readmitted to the KPD. Their application was turned down.

After their parliamentary mandate ended in May 1928, Fischer and Maslow had to look for jobs. While Maslow could earn a modest income by tutoring high school students in

mathematics, Fischer returned to her profession as a social worker. The magistrate of the city district of Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg employed her. Fischer collected a great amount of empirical facts about the living conditions of workers and their children. These conditions became extremely difficult during the years of the Great Depression since 1929. Ruth Fischer documented the rising difficulties for workers in a book that she jointly published with Franz Heimann, a pediatrician. The book, *Deutsche Kinderfibel* (German Children's Primer), came out just a few weeks before the Nazis gained power.

On 25 August 1933 Ruth Fischer appeared on the first list of persons whom the Nazis deprived of their German citizenship. On this date, Ruth Fischer had already left Germany. She managed to smuggle her 15-year-old son Gerhard out of Germany. Despite his Austrian passport, he had briefly been in the hands of an SS officer who tortured him. Through Austria, Gerhard went to England where he studied mathematics in Cambridge to become a professional researcher. Fischer and Maslow left Germany illegally. After a brief stay in Prague they went to Paris.[20]

From October 1934 until September 1939, Ruth Fischer worked as a municipal social worker in the city of St. Denis near Paris. She continued her social investigations on children from working-class families. Officially divorced since 1929, she received French citizenship through another marriage of convenience, this time with the shoemaker Edmond Pleuchot whom she married in 1935.[21]

Politically, Ruth Fischer came in temporary close contact with Leon Trotsky. Fischer and Maslow travelled frequently to Trotsky's home in Barbizon. Fischer became a good friend of Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, but the conversations with the father showed unchangeable political differences. Unlike Trotsky, Fischer insisted that no political reform could restore the role of the working class in the Soviet Union. Only another revolution would achieve that. Fischer and Maslow felt, as Trotsky argued, no solidarity with the Soviet Union. In return, Fischer said that Trotsky's interpretation of the Soviet regime as a degenerated workers' state would make critical communists incapable of understanding the character of Stalin's success and would even make Nazism and its consequences for the workers "un-understandable."[22]

In August 1936 the first Moscow trial accused Fischer and Maslow of terrorist activities against the Soviet Union. The main charge was forming a terrorist organization with the purpose of killing Stalin and other members of the Soviet party leadership. On 24 August 1936. The thirteen defendants, including Zinoviev, were executed.[23]

On 10 Mai 1940 the German army invaded France. Fischer and Maslow left Paris on 11 June, three days before the German army arrived. They lost all the possessions that they had taken with them from Germany. Under extremely difficult circumstances they managed to flee to Marseille. There they tried to get American visas, but without success. With false Danish passports that Varian Fry provided to them they had to cross the border to Spain illegally and went through Spain to Portugal and to Lisbon. But it was only Fischer who got a U.S. visa; Maslow's application was repeatedly denied. There was nothing else to do but to separate. In April 1941 Fischer boarded a ship to New York, arriving on the twenty-first. Maslow went to

Cuba, the only place where he could go. He was unable to obtain an entry visa to the U.S. On 21 November 1941, Maslow was found dead in Havana. According to an official investigation, he had suffered a heart attack. However, Ruth Fischer was and remained of the opinion that Stalin's secret police agents murdered Maslow.

Her assumption was correct: As we know now from a long-time overseen source, a truck car killed Maslow. The source are the memoirs of Guenther Reinhardt, an FBI officer, who had indirectly contacted Fischer and Maslow during their stay in Marseille, had tried to get them the necessary entrance visa for the United States. While in Fischer's case he was successful, he maintained contact with Maslow who had offered him to work for him after his arrival in the US.[24] The Soviet side may have known that offer, and, consequently, they, in all likelihood, may have prepared to execute Maslow.

Reportedly Maslow was killed while walking home. It was at night and it was raining. People in the neighborhood had heard a truck engine. There was, according to what heard Reinhardt in Havana from the people, a thud and a scream. The truck had already disappeared when Maslow was found in the street gutter. Even before people tried tor reach the police, an ambulance car pulled up and headed Maslow to a distant private hospital. When the ambulance arrived there, Maslow was already dead. As Ruth Fischer found out, the death certificate did not speak about the real reason of death, but mentioned a heart attack as death reason.[25]

Ruth Fischer suspected that a person who was familiar with her and Maslow's life circumstances could have reported to Moscow. She new that only two persons were informed about Maslow's contacts with the FBI: Guenther Reinhardt and an old friend of both, the German-American journalist and ex-communist Ludwig Lore. Ruth Fischer did not know that Lore was a long-time informer for the Soviet Military Secret Service.[26] Although Lore had officially broken with Moscow in 1937, the Soviets never tried to kill him, as they did in the case of all other defectors during this time: Walter Krivitsky, Alexander Orlov, Ignaz Reiss, Juliet Poyntz, to name but a few. Only Orlov survived.

That does not mean that Lore forwarded personally reports to Moscow even after his announced break. But since Maslow forwarded his letters not to Reinhardt, but to Lore, the information the Soviets took – if they took – must have come from these letters. It was ten years later that Ruth Fischer heard about Lore's contacts with the Soviets – when she read the memoirs of Hede Massing, once likewise a Soviet Agent and then a defector – Hede Massing, who had been Gerhart Eisler's first wife.[27]

A Witness against her Brother: Ruth Fischer in the United States

Until Maslow's sudden death, Ruth Fischer lived a quiet life in New York City where she found help from several friends. For a time she was employed as a social worker. After Maslow's death, she was ill for more than a year and confined to bed for about six months. Maslow had been the great love of her life, and since his passing she never wanted to live with another

man.

Ruth Fischer had to make a living and, therefore, she wrote a number of applications for research grants. In October 1942, Ruth Fischer received a one-year grant from the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars. For another year, she received support from the Institute of International Education.

In 1942 and 1943 Ruth Fischer visited her brother Hanns and his wife Lou Eisler in California.[28] But in 1944 she came to the conclusion that her brothers, especially Gerhart, were part of the Stalinist campaign against Arkadij Maslow and herself. On 27 April 1944 she addressed a letter to Gerhart, Hanns and Lou. It this letter she accused them of having reported every single fact about Maslow's life circumstances to the GPU apparatus in Moscow. "I believed for a moment that the Russian-German treaty 1939-1941 would really have separated you from the apparatus. […] For a moment I lived with the illusion that people with such a deep insight into the brutality of this system of terror and oppression would be unable to return [to it]." She would fight until the end and would inform the public about the network of conspiracy against herself. She would especially expose Gerhart's "15 years of treason" against her comrades in China, Germany, Spain, and the United States.[29]

With financial assistance from the American Federation of Labor, Ruth Fischer started to publish *The Network*, a mimeographed circular journal. The opening article in the first issue was entitled, "Who is who among the Free Germans in the United States." It tried to explain that "the hierarchy" of the German Communist Party, including its exile organization, had become "a division of the GPU", led by "Russian agents and tools." German communists would still profit from the prestige of the party founders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht who once had attracted "many of the best of the German working class."[30]

By the end of 1946 the U.S. House of Representatives had resurrected the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which it had originally set up in 1938. The Committee started its activities with what would become known as the Eisler-Fischer Affair. Since the mid-1920s, Gerhart Eisler had been a leading functionary in the KPD and in the Comintern. Between 1929 and 1931 he was a liaison between the Comintern and the Communist Parties in China, and then from 1933 to 1936 in the United States. During the Spanish Civil War he directed a German anti-Fascist radio station. In 1939 he was incarcerated in France for more than two years. In 1941 he returned to the United States. There he was instrumental in forming the Council for a Democratic Germany, although the official head was the protestant theology professor Paul Tillich. As early as 6 May 1944, Ruth Fischer informed the Office of Strategic Service (OSS) the predecessor of the CIA, about the activities of the Council.[31] Based on her information, the OSS collected a very detailed survey on political activities of foreign national groups in the United States. The survey explicitly stated that "Anti-Stalinists, of whom Ruth Fischer is the most notable" are most valuable informers. It also warned of communist and pro-communist activities among former German soldiers in POW camps.[32] However, an FBI memorandum of 29 May 1944 stated that Eisler "was not himself associated with the GPU as he is too well educated."[33]

At the same time Ruth Fischer's attack on her brother appeared in *The Network*. She exposed him as the man who directed, under the pseudonym Hans Berger, the international communist activities in the United States.[34] On 17 November 1944 FBI director J. Edgar Hoover wrote in a letter to D.A. Flinn, legal attaché of the American embassy in Portugal, that Eisler "has been identified as an agent of the Comintern" and his wife Brunhilde "likewise has a record of international Communist activity."[35] These investigations had no consequences as long as the United States and the Soviet Union were military allies to defeat Nazism. But the political climate in the U.S. changed drastically after the end of the war, as Soviet-American relations deteriorated.

It was in this new Cold War climate when Fischer described Gerhart Eisler as "head of the German Communists in the Western Hemisphere" and as "one of the key agents of the Communist apparatus here and one of the key figures in the American Communist Party."[36] She was now presented in the press as "a former Red who should know."[37] On 24 January 1947, an FBI special agent in her New York apartment interviewed Fischer. She gave him detailed information about Eisler's role in the KPD and the Comintern and his political background.[38] At the same time the American ex-communist Louis Budenz, former managing editor of the CP-newspaper *Daily Worker*, named Eisler as "Moscow's Number One Communist" in the United States.[39]

Under the pretext that Eisler had violated U.S. laws by misrepresenting his Communist Party affiliation on his immigration application, he was arrested on 4 February 1947 in New York. On 6 February he was asked to testify before the HUAC. J. Parnell Thomas, the Committee's chairman, explained to Eisler that it "considers the Communist Party of the United States to be a subversive organization, and the testimony or activities of any individual connected with the Communist Party of the United States is considered to be the purview of this Committee's authority." Eisler declared that he considered himself a political prisoner of the United States. Therefore he refused to be sworn in until he was allowed to make a few remarks on his behalf. The Committee refused and decided instead that Eisler should be cited for contempt and that he should be brought to the County Jail of Washington, D.C.[40]

Immediately after Eisler's interrogation, Ruth Fischer took the witness stand.[41] She became the key figure in the case against her brother whom she characterized as "head of the Comintern activities in this country; or, to put it better, as the head of a network of agents of the secret Russian state police."[42]

The chief investigator Robert E. Stripling asked Fischer to inform the Committee of her biography, particularly how she came to the communist movement, and also of her brother's communist activities. She told him that the relationship to her brother Gerhart became, after her expulsion form the KPD, more and more hostile" to the point where I am forced to testify against him today because I regard him as a most dangerous terrorist, both to the people of America […]."[43]

Fischer went as far as to claim that her brother had "a leading hand" in the murder of

Bukharin, of the German Communist Hugo Eberlein, and in transferring Communist inmates from Stalin's to Hitler's prison cells in 1940.[44] Eisler denied this vehemently and emphasized that he was, at the time of Maslow's death, in a French concentration camp, although he already lived in the United States. After his arrival in New York on 13 June 1941 he had been interned at Ellis Island, but was released in September.[45]

Richard Nixon, one of the Committee members, asked Ruth Fischer whether she still might have "some sympathy with the Marxist philosophy and the ends which Communism attempts to achieve" while she would not agree with Stalin's methods to achieve those ends. Ruth Fischer's answer was: "At this moment what we have to face is an empire of Stalin going into many countries. We have to fight his terrorist methods, and do everything in our power to hinder that movement."[46] Fischer ended by informing the Committee that her relationship with her brother Hanns was equally hostile and that there were "several thousands" of Communists in the U.S. who were controlled by Moscow.[47]

On 16 June Ruth Fischer testified in the Washington District Court that her brother had been sent to the U.S. in order to "revamp" the "idiotic Communist Party line" here.[48] She denounced him as "a most dangerous terrorist" and "the perfect terrorist type."[49] Two other ex-members of the American Communist Party stated that Eisler had called up American Communists to work for an "independent Negro Republic."[50] As "a man from Moscow", as Eisler was described, "he had lived in a world where honor, friendship, even family ties meant nothing."[51] The same could be said about Ruth Fischer long after she had left the world of Moscow and fought against her brother.

In September 1947 the HUAC interrogated Hanns Eisler. The interrogation efforts were the same: It was proven that he was an organized communist, that he had been a member of the KPD and that he had cooperated with communist organizations in both the Soviet Union and the US.[52] As a result of his close connection to Bertolt Brecht, the dramatist also had to appear before the Committee on 30 October 1947.[53] As early as 1944, Ruth Fischer had dubbed Brecht, whom she knew through the joint friend Karl Korsch from Berlin, a "Minstrel of the GPU." She denounced his play *Die Maßnahme* (The Disciplinary Measure), which Brecht had written in collaboration with Hanns Eisler and published in 1931, as an anticipation of the Stalinist purges.[54] Few, if any, events at that time were reported in the American press more cautiously and as detailed as Fischer's testimony. It was her judgment of *The Disciplinary Measure* that figured prominently in Brecht's appearance before the House Committee, where Robert E. Stripling quoted several passages from the play.[55]

Gerhart Eisler was sentenced to one to three years in prison, but soon released on bail. When his last legal appeal failed, he jumped bail and secretly boarded a Polish liner bound for London in May 1949. The crew only discovered him after the ship was at sea. Once in England, authorities allowed him to leave for East Germany. Brecht went to East Berlin, as well.

On 10 May 1949 Ruth Fischer testified before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization of the Senate Committee of the Judiciary. The chair of the Subcommittee was

the pro-fascist Senator Patrick McCarran who had been an outspoken left-liberal in his youth but later persistently expressed his vehement support for dictators like Franco. Fischer warned them not to underestimate the small American Communist Party, which she described as a direct tool of the Soviet embassy. Several thousand people, basically every American communist, were being trained in sabotage. With the help of American fellow travelers, thousands of foreign communists had come to the United States and been given "fat jobs," while in many cases ex-Communists would not be allowed to visit the country. Fischer proposed "a friendly cooperation with those who have learned from their personal experience that Stalinism is the most reactionary power in the world and want to fight it." Every effort should be made "to keep out – and if they slip in, to deport – the actual agents of a foreign power", while, contrariwise, ex-Communists who had broken "completely and definitely" with their former conviction, should be given the chance to freely enter the United States.[56]

Among those persons who had been given a U.S. visa that they then used for Communist subversion were, according to Fischer, Marie Vaillant-Coutourier, General Secretary of the communist-sponsored International Women's Federation, the physicist Irène Joliot-Curie, and Hermann Budzislawski, now a professor in Leipzig. Furthermore, "Heinrich and Thomas Mann are saints of the Communist family." Erika Mann was, "I must even say, an agent" for a pro-Communist Germany, and Alfred Kantorowicz was officially "a liaison officer" for the International Brigade in Spain, but was in fact a GPU agent.[57] McCarran said to Fischer, that "we are very grateful to you for coming before the committee."[58] It was the same McCarran who became, in September 1950 the chief sponsor of the 'Internal Security Act'. Under this act, which Congress passed over President Truman's veto, millions of Americans in and out of government would be subjected to loyalty clearance programs that included intensive investigations into their political and private lives reaching back to childhood.

In 1948 Fischer published her book *Stalin and German Communism* at Harvard University Press. It was the first full-fledged story of the Communist Party of Germany in English and provoked much attention. In some of her historical judgments, Fischer corrected her political mistakes from the 1920s, but she neglected her own role in the process when she wrote that only since the defeat of Ruth Fischer and her opposition, and up until 1948, anyone who was "accepted into the apparatus was admitted because his record showed a long period of subservience to Stalin's Russia."[59] The apparatus had effectively destroyed the KPD that Fischer "had helped to build up."[60]

Her book secured Fischer's material situation. The Widener Library offered her a permanent post as consultant and reviewer of recent literature on communism and the labor movement. She held this position until she moved to Paris in 1955. After her application for American citizenship was approved in 1947, Fischer remained a U.S. citizen until the end of her life.

In August 1949 she was one of the initiators of the Congress for Cultural Freedom but did not participate in the West Berlin opening session. She may not have wanted to risk coming so close to the Soviet-controlled territory of East Berlin. In 1967 it was revealed that the CIA largely sponsored the Association.

Another of Ruth Fischer's activities was her work for The Pond. This was the name of an American secret service that was created during World War II by military intelligence as a counterweight to the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the CIA. The Pond funcioned as a semiautonomous agency for the State Department and, before its dissolution around 1955, served as a contractor for the CIA with links to the FBI.[61]

The head of The Pond was Colonel John V. Grombach, a radio producer and author of books on sports history, who came in contact with Ruth Fischer around 1945. Under the code name Alice Miller, she worked for The Pond almost eight years. Under the cover of a reporter for the State Department, Fischer wrote numerous reports about the international communist movement and namely the inter-fractional struggles within Soviet communism.[62]

She did the same for the International Research Department (IRD) of the British secret service, although she may not have been formally affiliated with it. In 1948, the IRD supported her travel to Britain financially and brought her in contact with the BBC.[63] It also assigned her to write two studies, one on the limits of Soviet controls over foreign communist parties and the other on Soviet policy vis-à-vis Germany.[64]

In her published and unpublished comments on Soviet and world communism Fischer insisted that the Soviet empire was monolithic only on the surface, but characterized by deep internal contradictions. One of the main contradictions, according to Fischer, was the conflict between Muscovite and native communists, particularly when local communist leaders formed national governments. She characterized Tito's break with Stalin as the decisive turning point in the development of postwar European communism. One should "not summarize Tito's and Stalin's regimes under the term of totalitarian dictatorship by neglecting the fundamental differences." Tito's resistance embodied the revolt of an indigenous movement that enjoyed considerable support from the population since it represented national self-determination.[65] Stalin or his successors would have no alternative but to reorganize and to renew the communist movement. Tito's "national" revolt represented in its essence an international phenomenon.[66]

Around 1952, Ruth Fischer renounced her activities with the various secret services. An incident made clear that she had found very strange bedfellows in her fight against Soviet communism: Maria Reese, a former communist politican who later went over to the Nazis, needed, after 1945, letters of support that should testify that she never had really made peace with Hitler.[67] In this situation, she wrote to Ruth Fischer. As an addendum to one of her letters she included a declaration from her lawyer, Dr. Eberhard Taubert, who was well-known as an anti-communist writer and activist in West Germany.[68]

Through an article in *Der Spiegel*, which made also reference to her Brother Gerhart Eisler, Ruth Fischer realized that Taubert was the same SS officer who had, in 1933, arrested and tortured her son Gerhard in Berlin. Taubert had also worked, as the *Spiegel* article revealed, for the Nazi propaganda ministry and had co-authored the script for the anti-Semitic movie *Der ewige Jude*.[69] She broke off all relations with Reese and Taubert and reconsidered her work for anti-communist activities. Since that time the tone in which she wrote about Soviet politics

changed significantly.

After Stalin's death on 5 March 1953 Ruth Fischer anticipated that the new Soviet leadership would continue to control the international communist movement but would be forced to refrain from his openly terroristic methods. But it was Nikita Krushchev's so-called 'secret speech' at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February 1956 that, while not fundamentally changing Soviet society, had indeed wide-ranging effects. The speech was a factor in unrest in Poland and revolt in Hungary later in 1956. It was also the last turning point in Ruth Fischer's political evolution.

The Last Turn: Ruth Fischer Becomes a Communist Again

In 1954, Ruth Fischer asked the West German government for financial compensation. According to the German Federal Compensation Law she belonged to those persons who were victimized under the 'Third Reich'. That included individuals who were persecuted for political, racial, religious or ideological reasons. The West German Ministry of the Interior however, finally denied her application for a permanent financial 'compensation' in October 1954 on the grounds that Fischer had, during her time as a communist politician in the Weimar Republic, tried to undermine the "liberal-democratic constitution as defined by the Basic Law" of the Federal Republic of Germany.[70]

This judgment by the West German authorities evoked Fischer's deep doubts in a working liberal democracy where former Nazi bureaucrats, like any other civil servants, received high pension. Although she increasingly wished to live in Europe, she decided not to return to Germany. Likewise, she regarded Austria, at that time still under partial Soviet control, as an unsuitable place for life. When she left the United States for Paris in 1955, she remained employed by the Widener Library, at that time as an external reviewer of contemporary political literature. To upgrade her income, she traveled frequently to West Germany, where she received invitations, mostly by social democratic or trade union circles, to speak about current political affairs.

Since Stalin's death the tone in which Fischer delivered her speeches became much more moderate than in previous years. This was reflected in her new book *From Lenin to Mao: Communism in the Bandung Era* that she published in 1956. In this book, she even stated that "McCarthyism represents a specific American variant of Stalinism", without mentioning her own role in the anti-communist campaign of the late 1940s.[71]

After Nikita Krushchev's 'secret speech' at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (February 1956) Ruth Fischer came to the conclusion that the time of Stalinist show trials and organized terror was definitely over. She interpreted the internal development of the Soviet Union as a struggle between pro- and anti-Stalinists. While the former would still be retaining power positions in the propaganda apparatus, their influence in politics, economy, and the military would be dwindling. A retreat towards Stalinism would be irreversible, and Krushchev, despite his Stalinist past, would guarantee this irreversibility. Even the Soviet invasion in

Hungary would not lead to a relapse of Stalinist terror but would remain “a very short episode.”[72] She explained her new optimism in a small book that measured the transformation of Soviet society since Stalin.[73] From 1957 Fischer lectured at the Sorbonne on the politics of contemporary communism and predicted a Soviet move toward democracy.

In private conversation she went even further. Isaac Deutscher, whom Fischer met in London in late 1956, was astonished about her transformation. He wrote to his friend Heinrich Brandler: “I have seen Ruth Fischer several times recently. She expressed to me her regret over the attitude she had taken in previous years, admitted that she was wrong in many respects, and in general, spoke quite sensibly about the situations as if the conscience of an old communist had suddenly reawakened in her.” Deutscher concluded: “The renegade becomes a heretic again.”[74] One reason for Ruth Fischer to find a new political position was for personal reasons: After years of enmity Fischer wanted to re-establish contacts with her brothers who lived in East Berlin.

Ruth Fischer’s nephew Georg Eisler, Hanns Eisler’s son, who worked as a painter in Vienna, wrote her in 1958, at which time she asked him about the family after he had visited them in East Berlin. He could only say that he was unable to ask Gerhart and Hanns “under present conditions which are completely unsuitable to discuss the matter.”[75] Fischer considered the unique and specific problems of the GDR as part of a divided country and had, therefore, refrained from open criticism of Ulbricht’s policy, as she told Klaus Meschkat, a young student from West Berlin who visited her in Paris on 12 March 1961.[76] He was scheduled to visit her again the next day. When he called her to confirm the appointment, the secretary told him that Ruth Fischer had unexpectedly died after midnight, a few hours after Meschkat had left her.[77]

Her brothers Hanns and Gerhart were deeply moved when they received the information about Ruth Fischer’s death. “The Eislers die out,” was Gerhart’s only commentary. Ruth’s son confirmed that, during the last years of her life, his mother saw herself as a communist without party affiliation.[78] She was buried at Montparnasse cemetery. Only a handful of people attended the funeral service. Ruth Fischer seemed to be forgotten – but only a few hours after her death, her Paris apartment was checked and photographed by French secret service policemen.[79] This incident shows that those who once had adored the protagonist of anti-communism, although not believed by many communists, did not ignore her attempted return to the communist cause.

Notes

[1] For biographical introductions, see Peter Lübbe (ed.), *Ruth Fischer – Arkadij Maslow: Abtrünnig wider Willen. Aus Reden und Manuskripten des Exils*, (Munich: Oldenbourg 1990), pp. 1-48 (cited hereafter as: *Abtrünnig wider Willen*); Sabine Hering and Kurt Schilde (eds.), *Kampfname Ruth Fischer: Wandlungen einer deutschen Kommunistin* (Frankfurt-Main: Dipa,

1995), 7-75. See also Fischer's "Autobiographical Notes" [1944], published in: *Abtrünnig wider Willen*, 442-77. See now my forthcoming book: *Ruth Fischer: Ein Leben mit und gegen Kommunisten, 1895-1961* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2013).

[2] Fischer, "Autobiographical Notes," 454.

[3] For the KPD policy during the year 1923, see, e.g., Ben Fowkes, *Communism in Germany Under the Weimar Republic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 74-79, and Klaus Kinner, *Der deutsche Kommunismus: Selbstverständnis und Realität*, Vol. 1: *Die Weimarer Zeit* (Berlin: Karl Dietz, 1999), 42-50. Most valuable remains Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus: Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, 2 Vols. (Frankfurt-Main: E.V.A., 1969).

[4] *Verhandlungen des Reichstages: II. Wahlperiode 1924*, Vol. 381 (1924), 43-44.

[5] *Verhandlungen des Reichstages: III. Wahlperiode 1925*, Vol. 384 (1925), 827.

[6] *Thesen und Resolutionen des V. Weltkongresses der Komintern* (Hamburg: Carl Hoym, 1924), 25-26.

[7] *Protokoll: V. Kongress der Komintern*, Vol. 1 (Hamburg: Carl Hoym, n.d.), 193.

[8] *Thesen und Resolutionen des V. Weltkongresses der Komintern*, 18.

[9] The circular letter of 3 May 1925 can be found in the KPD Archives, now located at the Foundation for the Archives of the Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR under the Federal Archives of Germany, Berlin: SAPMO-BArch, File RY 1/I 2/3/65, 5-8.

[10] See *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitages der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Sektion der Kommunistischen Internationale), abgehalten in Berlin vom 12. bis 17. Juli 1925* (Berlin: V.I.V.A., 1925), esp. 515.

[11] The Open Letter was written on 20 August and published in *Die Rote Fahne*, 1 September 1925.

[12] Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University

Press, 1948), 451.

[13] Fischer, “Autobiographical Notes,” 460.

[14] The conference proceedings were published in *Die Rote Fahne*, 3 and 4 November 1925.

[15] See *Protokoll der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, 17. Februar bis 15. März 1926* (Hamburg and Berlin: Carl Hoym, 1926), 507.

[16] Fischer, “Autobiographical Notes,” 461.

[17] *Die Rote Fahne*, 20 August 1926.

[18] See Rüdiger Zimmermann, *Der Leninbund: Linke Kommunisten in der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1978), 102.

[19] *Die Rote Fahne*, 10 May 1928.

[20] See Fischer, “Autobiographical Notes,” 465-68.

[21] See Hering and Schilde, *Kampfname Ruth Fischer*, 64.

[22] Fischer, “Autobiographical Notes,” p. 469. See also her correspondence with Leon Trotsky in The Trotskii Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Folders Nos. 1011-1115 and 7790-7794.

[23] See *Prozessbericht über die Strafsache des trotzkistisch-sinowjewistischen terroristischen Zentrums* (Moscow: Meshdunarodnaja Kniga, 1936), 106-09.

[24] See Guenther Reinhardt, *Crime Without Punishment: The Secret Soviet Terror Against America* (New York: Hermitage House, 1953), 38, 40-47.

[25] For the death certificate, see Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ruth Fischer Papers, Folder No. 776: Dr. Roberto Santiesteban Pérez to Ruth Fischer, 25 November 1941, and ibid., Folder No. 1662.

[26] On Lore, see Yu. N. Kobyakov, “Bumazhnaya fabrika,” *Ocherki po istorii rossiiskoi vneyzhney razvedki*, Vol. 3 (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnoe otnozheniya, 2003), 191-99.

[27] See Ruth Fischer Papers, Folder No. 2306: Maslow’s letters to Lore, 18 August 1941. See also Hede Massing, *Die große Täuschung: Geschichte einer Sowjetagentin* (Freiburg/Br.: Walter, 1967), 215. First American edition: *This Deception* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1951).

[28] See Jürgen Schebera, *Hanns Eisler: Eine Biographie* (Mainz: Schott, 1998), 198-99.

[29] Fischer’s letter to Hanns, Gerhart, and Lou Eisler (in German), in: *Abtrünnig wider Willen*, 160-61.

[30] *The Network*, No. 5 (May 1944), 3.

[31] FOIA CIA Electronic Reading Room: Office of Strategic Services, Interoffice Memo, 6 May 1944: Ruth Fischer Comment on Council for a Democratic Germany (www.foia.cia.gov).

[32] Ibid.: Foreign National Groups in the United States: Memorandum of the Foreign Nationalities Branch to the Director of Strategic Services, 12 May 1944 (www.foia.cia.gov).

[33] Copies of the material that the FBI collected about Gerhart Eisler are now deposed in the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Tamiment Library, New York, Collection FBI, Freedom of Information/Privacy Acts Releases, Series/Contents: Gerhart Eisler. Cited hereafter as: Gerhart Eisler FBI File, here Box No. 1, Folder 1: Memorandum, Re: Gerhart Eisler alias Hans Berger, 29 May 1944.

[34] *The Network*, No. 5 (May 1944), 7.

[35] Gerhart Eisler FBI File, Box 1, Folder 5: J. Edgar Hoover to D.A. Flinn, Lisbon, letter of 17 November 1944. oover asked Flynn to observe

[36] Frederick Woltman, „Kremlin Agent in U.S. Identified,“ *World Telegram*, 17 October 1946.

[37] “Communists: The Brain,” *Time*, 28 October 1947.

[38] See the FBI report NY 100-12376 (Confidential) in Gerhart Eisler FBI File, Box. No. 2, Folder 5.

[39] See ”Ex-Editor of Daily Worker Names Director of U.S. Reds,” *Washington Post*, 18 October 1946.

[40] Text of the investigation in: *House Committee on Un-American Activities, 80th Congress, 1st Session* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), reprinted in: Eric Bentley (ed.), *Thirty Years of Treason: Excerpts from the Hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1938-1968* (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), 57-59.

[41] Text of the investigation in: *House Committee on Un-American Activities, 80th Congress, 1st Session*, pp. 29-35, 46-55, reprinted in: Bentley (ed.), *Thirty Years of Treason*, 59-73.

[42] Ibid., p. 67. The standard work on American and British counter espionage against Soviet secret activities mentions Gerhart Eisler only briefly in connection with his false passport that he used between 1933 and 1935. His brother was not mentioned at all. See John Earl Hines and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 81.

[43]Bentley (ed.), *Thirty Years of Treason*, 61.

[44] Ibid., 72.

[45] See Ronald Friedmann, *Ulbrichts Rundfunkmann: Eine Gerhart-Eisler-Biographie* (Berlin: Edition Ost, 2008), 156-57.

[46] Bentley (ed.), *Thirty Years of Treason*, 71.

[47] Ibid., 73.

[48] Ted Ayers, “Sister Says Eisler Hit Party Line of U.S. Commies as ‘Idiotic’,” *Washington Times Herald*, 17 July 1947.

[49] “Sister Testifies Again Today on Eisler Link to Communist Party,” *Washington Evening Star*, 17 July 1947.

[50] Ted Ayers, “Eisler Plotted Negro Republic in South, Ex-Communists Testify,” *Washington Times Herald*, 18 July 1947.

[51] “Communists: The Man from Moscow,” *Time*, 17 February 1947.

[52] See Bentley (ed.), *Thirty Years of Treason*, 73-109.

[53] See ibid., 207-25.

[54] Ruth Fischer, ”Bert Brecht: Minstrel of the GPU,” *Politics* (April 1944), 88-89.

[55] See Bentley (ed.), *Thirty Years of Treason*, 7-25 and 959-76.

[56] *Communist Activities among Aliens and National Groups: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization of the Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, 81st Session* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), 33.

[57] Ibid., 35.

[58] *Communist Activities*, 40.

[59] Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism*, 512.

[60] Ibid., 514.

[61] See Christian Salazar and Randy Hershaft, Before the CIA, There Was The Pond, Associated Press internet article, 29 July 2010. See also Mark Stout, “The Pond: Running Agents for State, War, and the CIA,” *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 48 (2004), No. 3, 69-82.

[62] Her sixty reports, which were officially addresses to the State Department, can be found in: Ruth Fischer Papers, Folder No. 2073. Duplicates of the reports are located in: The National Archives, College Park, Maryland, Record Group 263: Records of the CIA, Records of the Grombach Organization, Correspondence with Sources, Series 2, Box No. 03, Folder No. 17.

[63] See John Jenks, *British Propaganda and News Media in the Cold War* (Edinburgh:

Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 83-84, with reference to documents from the British National Archives, Kew, London, Public Record Office, 1110/55, PRO PR 1292/265/913 und PRO FO 1110/264, PR 788/80/913. I am indebted to Dr. Norman LaPorte for his reference to this book.

[64] See ibid., 84. Fischer's contact person was her friend Heinrich Hellmann. See her manuscripts: "The Communist Conspiracy Against Moscow," June 1950, 58 pp., Ruth Fischer Papers, Folder No. 2548, and "Godesberg: An Alternative Russian Policy in Germany," n d. [ca. 1950], 12 pp., Ruth Fischer Papers, Folder No. 2540.

[65] Fischer, "Tito contra Stalin […]," p. 56.

[66] Ruth Fischer, "Conspiracy inside Communism," *Life*, 8 May 1950.

[67] See Werner Abel, "Der Fall Maria Reese," Simone Barck and Ulla Plener (eds.), *Verrat: Die Arbeiterbewegung zwischen Trauma und Trauer* (Berlin: Karl Dietz, 2009), 204-37.

[68] See Ruth Fischer Papers, Folder No. 1857: Bescheinigung für Maria Reese vom 10. August 1951, also in: *Abtrünnig wider Willen*, 589-90. See also her correspondence with Maria Reese, ibid., Folder No. 727.

[69] "Bitte das Ohr auf," *Der Spiegel*, 3 October 1951.

[70] The decision is printed in: *Kampfname Ruth Fischer*, 289-9, here 291.

[71] Ruth Fischer, *Von Lenin zu Mao: Kommunismus in der Bandung-Ära* (Düsseldorf and Cologne: Eugen Diederichs, 1946), 85.

[72] Ruth Fischer Papers, Folder No. 1551: Letter to Karl Korsch, 6 December 1956.

[73] See Ruth Fischer, *Die Umformung der Sowjetgesellschaft* (Düsseldorf and Cologne: Eugen Diederichs, 1958).

[74] Isaac Deutscher to Heinrich Brandler, letter of 30 November 1956, in: Hermann Weber (ed.), *Unabhängige Kommunisten: Der Briefwechsel zwischen Heinrich Brandler und Isaac Deutscher 1949 bis 1981* (Berlin: Colloquium-Verlag, 1981), 157.

[75]*Abtrünnig wider Willen*, 323.

[76] Klaus Meschkat, “Das letzte Gespräch Ruth Fischers,” Ibid., 593.

[77] Ibid., 595.

[78] Interview with Dr. Gerard Friedlander, 28 July 1994, in: *Kampfname Ruth Fischer*, 87.

[79] See ibid., 88.

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Review of Britain's War Machine: Weapons, Resources and Experts in the Second World War by David Edgerton

By | 2012: vol. 11 issues 2-3

Myths are cherished most intensely in academic disciplines that perpetually protest too much that they despise them. One does well to recall that even in modern physics seasoned warriors such as Werner Heisenberg and Max Planck were moved to recall with mouth-agape astonishment their encounters with the infinitely wily obstructions, diligent deviousness and 'circling of the wagons' with which smug yet desperate opponents of the quantum revolution resisted it. There isn't much cause for back-patting in the sciences or in the social sciences about their publicly ballyhooed openness to new ideas or revelatory evidence that shake up received wisdoms, the kind accompanied by a wry smile or world-weary shrug indicating that this matter or that axiom brooks no challenge. Nobody, of course, likes to be shaken up, especially not those ensconced in comfortably fitting doctrines and institutions.

Mainstream journals (especially those demanding unanimous referee reports for publication) tend to operate to enforce peer group opinions, and have remarkably little to do with searching out data or controversial truths that depart from the editorial canon. One must always look elsewhere for cutting edge work that over decades will seep out from less orthodox venues and be absorbed tacitly into the orthodox scholarly universe, with no admission any resistance was ever mounted. So it goes, as Kurt Vonnegut used to sigh. The reason such resistances are mounted is because embraced myths uphold certain patterns of thought, and patterns of thought (ideologies, frameworks, models) acquire the backing of organized interests and organizations who take a mighty dim view of nay-sayers. Do not underestimate the inertial power of intellectual laziness either.

In the field of International Relations, which is the most ironically inward-looking of political science sub-disciplines, the moral specter of 'appeasement' possesses the status of Holy Scripture. Around the ritualized shame of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's Munich appeasement in 1938 revolve a host of intimately interconnected historical assumptions and lessons, which no IR specialist dared until very recently even to question, and then in the mildest of manners. The lessons that a rising postwar superpower like the US should draw from this appeasement tale were all too terribly obvious and convenient. Britain, out of pure cowardice or criminally stupid lack of preparedness, bowed to Adolf because it foolishly left itself no choice. After the hideous First World War's bloodbath, so the seamless story goes, Britain virtually disarmed itself, fell prey to pacifist movements, and 'gentlemanly amateurs', instead of trained technical experts or at least hard-nosed realists, ran the nation befuddledly into the ground.

As Britain's successor, the ultra-virile United States, nurturing a military-industrial complex and a self-servingly paranoid security apparatus, would make damned sure that this dire history would not repeat itself. Popular culture reflects and reinforces this version of 20th century events, which suits economic and political elites just fine. Well, the interwar era is indeed dire history but not in quite the way we have been jollied along to believe, for, as British historian David Edgerton, observes "interwar Britain was a military superpower both at sea and in the air, supporting the largest arms industry in the world." You'd never guess it from reading the American IR scholarly literature, let alone the press.

Edgerton, a noted historian of technology, is a leader of a revolution in British military historiography, stripping away cant and groundless denigration from depictions of the British state, especially since the interwar years. *Britain's War Machine* is, by my reckoning anyway, the third of his insolently myth-busting books on the plight of the sceptred little isle standing gallantly alone against Nazi might (about which Adam Tooze's *Wages of Destruction* also has iconoclastic things to say) after Dunkirk and up until Operation Barbarossa in June 1941. Dangerous it all doubtless was. But a 1940 cartoon – parodying an earlier hyper-patriotic newspaper cartoon – that Edgerton reprints sums up the blunt reality. A British soldier in June 1940 regards Hitler across the Channel and vows, "So our poor old empire is alone in the world. Aye, we are – the whole 500 million of us.' The immense resources of empire – manpower, industry, and money – drop out of *de rigueur* sentimental portraits of teensy-weensy Britain at bay. Edgerton first burst the myth of British wartime aerial inferiority – as others have since – in his *England and The Aeroplane* (1991) and then, among other key works, launched his major assault on received opinion about British preparedness with his 2007 book *Warfare State*. The latter book predictably made few waves in resistant or oblivious American IR circles, though some of his findings are beginning to register in journals without anyone bothering to cite a British historian. Academics are very crafty about who they cite, and citing a left wing historian won't help any of their careers in a devoutly right wing trade. Anyway, Edgerton's latest volume deepens the Warfare State's heterodox themes and research.

What does the new book argue and accomplish? Edgerton masterfully musters archival research to demonstrate that imperial Britain was an unsurpassed militarily technological power during the interwar years too. British elites in 1939 and 1940, Edgerton points out, were justifiably sanguine about the UK's ability to defeat Germany because of their nation's and the empire's superior industrial and economic strength. The estimate held true even after France shockingly fell. Only the United States could be said to rival British scientific and engineering talents, and their talents were adroitly applied to both inventive activities and in the management of production.

No amateurs need apply. The 'boffins' (slang for experts) were largely in charge or heeded in every realm that mattered during the total ruthless mobilization of this potent multi-national economy. IR experts to this day love to point at the apparently abysmally low level of Army personnel in both the UK and US at the start of the Second World War, as though it were an assured invitation to tyrants to attack. Yet both the UK and US were "island nations" whose elites pragmatically poured vast resources instead into world–leading Navies and Air Forces.

Armies were largely intended for colonial patrol duties and, anyway, from a veteran nucleus they could be rapidly expanded when needed. Alliance choices saw that mass land armies were accessed elsewhere: France for the UK, and then the Soviet Union for both the UK and US as the war unfolded. (The Soviets eventually inflicted more than 80% of *Wehrmacht* casualties against horrendous losses themselves.) The British never "envisaged fighting a Great power alone" – which was an accurate enough appraisal as events played out, Therefore, a strategy emphasizing technological power (naval and aerial) based on superior wealth and productive capacity was an entirely sensible one. "Ships may be dear, but to man them is far less costly than the upkeep of great armies," a Field Marshall, of all people, typically advised a Cabinet member in 1939.

Edgerton notes that Churchill afterward admitted that he exaggerated British military weakness throughout the 1930s in order to further fortify an already unsurpassed machine with yet more resources. The Pentagon and American arms dealers have taken the same venerable tack with alacrity ever since, with no imaginable comparable threat like the Axis anywhere in sight. A map of Britain's vast and profitable (and cheaply conducted) global trade illuminates the great resource pool this most modern and rich of European nations could and did tap, U-boats or not. British-owned and managed production facilities stretched around the world: factories, plantations, refineries, anything and everything. Yet in no way was domestic Britain bereft of productive might. Mighty military manufacturers like Vickers were intimately associated not only with the State but with engineering and other technical departments at outstanding Universities, which, contrary to many a wistful literary portrait, actually taught subjects other than Latin, Greek and alcoholism. What's more, Edgerton point out that research laboratories were a standard feature of behemoth manufacturers like Vickers, Imperial Chemical, Bristol, GEC, United Steel and Hawker-Siddeley.

Speaking of arms, there never ever was the widely lamented run-down of arms production in the 1930s. In fact massive increases in weapons spending surged and surged from 1935 onward, exactly as one might expect with a new Nazi regime looking like it would stick around. By 1939 defense expenditures accounted for half of all government spending. It didn't happen overnight. If a few highly publicized pacifists bemoaned militarization in the mid-1930s it is because there was an awful lot of it careening all around them. Until the Nazi-Soviet Pact the common wisdom among elites, especially of the Right, was to appease *and* rearm, in hope of driving Hitler against Stalin in the meantime. Churchill was an exception. Until the same moment the Left – vilified as pacifists in the standard account- almost unanimously opposed appeasement and, much less so, rearmament.

The book is strewn with wonderfully provocative details of both underplayed and obscured developments: radar, air defense, engine technology, (overestimated) bomber appraisals, gun-aiming mechanisms, and even the clever use of decoys. The commitment to defend faraway Poland, which surprised Hitler when war was declared after his invasion, actually was a sign of the relative strength of the Anglo-French alliance, which calculated a distinct advantage in an early engagement with Germany. The "phony war" period witnessed a vast success for the Royal Navy, which drove German shipping from the seas and instituted a strangling blockade,

exactly as authorities wanted to fight the war.

Even after the fall of France, Britain was by no means alone. Edgerton cites many media sources of the day acknowledging that happy reality. Churchill's famous speeches portraying Britain as the sole significant opponent against the Axis seems to have been shaped mostly for consumption by US audiences, whom he obviously wanted to sway. Over 40% of Bomber Command consisted of personnel from the Dominions and other volunteers – a figure that reflected the proportions in the rest of the armed services. And, contrary to innumerable 'echo chamber' accounts that lay the blame for defeat in France on sheer technological inferiority, "in the first half of 1940 the combined Anglo-French production of tanks was 1,412 and the Germans 558; between January and May 1940 Anglo-French aircraft production was twice the Germans." The Germans were astonished at the enviably sophisticated mechanized equipment that was abandoned by the British in retreat. Even so, Britain retained a large enough tank force to be able to dispatch a large number to the Middle East soon after.

As for the Battle of Britain and after, it was the RAF, not the Luftwaffe, that "was organized with Teutonic efficiency and regimentation." The British bombing offensive against Germany did not arise in retaliation but rather preceded German attacks, and was always part of the war-fighting strategy. Churchill, to his ambiguous credit, even noted that after Germany drove the Jews out (those who were not caught and killed), it "lowered its technical standards, our science is definitely ahead of theirs." So it was not Germany's actions but rather Japan's attack on British colonies and bases in December 1941 that upset the initial grand war-fighting plans. Yet of course the Japanese brought the US into the War as well. Britain was never alone or outgunned. Despite the U-boat threat, even at its fleeting apex in 1942, British trade – notwithstanding the loss of as many merchant seamen as Bomber Command lost crew – was never so seriously affected as to induce a restriction of activities. The essential role of the overlooked British scientific civil service, brilliantly illuminated in *Warfare State*, is reprised in a chapter here. *Britain's War Machine* is chock full of well-integrated and telling data that I cannot begin to convey in the limited space of a review. Lend-Lease, for another argumentative example, was a sign of strength rather than weakness, enabling wealthy Britain to purchase goods it needed and allocate its own personnel and materials to other essential wartime purposes.

After the war the colossal role of the empire in victory was downplayed. The systematically misleading figures bandied about in woeful finger-pointing accounts ever afterward were those for national production, excluding the Commonwealth, and even then were usually underestimated. A "full global picture", as Edgerton calls it, of the British war effort and attendant strategizing were rendered impossible. Regarding the often tongue-clucking tales of Britain's supposed postwar rush from warfare to welfare state, Edgerton notes that 'in welfare the 1940s taken as a whole were an era of disinvestment." The warfare state was as safe and sound as it was before the war. Edgerton's book smartly steamrollers almost every sacred cow in the international relations realm. It'll take at least another decade to catch up. The sorry picture of underprepared Britain just begging Hitler to pick it off exerted enormous propaganda appeal both for those anglers lobbying for their already well-funded arms rackets

and for those ‘realist’ scholars who felt vindicated in their pugnacious view of the globe. British reliance on defense (if that is the word) through naval and air power plus a slim high tech army is ironically enshrined in US policy today, though under vastly different conditions, and to very little avail. Pity.

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Review of Bloodlust: On the Roots of Violence from Cain and Abel to the Present by Russell Jacoby

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Doctors take a pint of blood from me twice each month. A crapshoot of parental genetics came up snake eyes, twice in a row, to give both my older brother and me a rare and tiresome condition. We must regularly undergo a medieval regime of bloodlettings, otherwise we will slowly rust-up inside due to an overabundance of iron. Russell Jacoby's book-length essay *Bloodlust* offered me a reason to reflect on the qualities of blood I share with my brother. Here I say blood as though its physical and metaphorical forms blend together seamlessly—a convention typical in the euro-American folkways of my youth. The cultural blood that I share with my brother provides an idiom, a way of speaking, about an uncanniness many readers probably recognize in their own sibling relations. Donald and I look enough alike to be taken for twins on occasion, we exhibit nuanced and obscure familial traits, we work in adjacent fields in Higher Education, and we express nearly identical preferences when purchasing our worldly possessions. As he pointed out after reading these words, we even share the same sense of humor. Aesthetically and experientially, in American Jurisprudence and in the eyes of our parents, we are alternate versions of one another—doppelgängers.

It follows perfectly with Jacoby's perspective in *Bloodlust* that, perhaps a result of sharing so much with my brother who I dearly cherish, he is the only human I have ever physically harmed with forethought and malice. In turn, he is the only person I can recall having ever similarly hurt me. If we were unrelated strangers on the street, one of us surely would have gone to jail for the things we did in our youth (or at least reform school). Our anecdotal experiences of brotherly violence, tempered with enduring love, are far from unique. An unprovoked punch to the face or attempted suffocation seems *de rigueur* in the experiences of brothers everywhere. If you stop to think about it, as Jacoby's essay encourages us to do, it is unnerving that brotherly hate can flow just as naturally as brotherly love.

Jacoby's essay suggests this everyday occurrence of brotherly violence can be taken as the root of human violence in general. The stunningly simple proposal is that if we take a hard look at the facts, we humans are far more likely to be victims of aggression from family members and neighbors close at hand than from strangers or outsiders. Conventional wisdom, reiterated in common sense cautions from mom, teaches us to fear strangers even though any homicide detective can confirm that outlanders are not usually the problem. This sensibility has yet to find its way into everyday thought. Fears are too often focused on rare figures like Osama Bin-Laden rather than the drunk-driver next door. Family members, neighbors, and fellow nationals are the authors of domestic violence, ethnic cleansing, and civil wars—events which Jacoby

describes as fratricidal in character and carried out with a marked bloodlust. He presents fratricidal tendencies not as an exception, but instead as a widespread human condition.

For all this conjecture about humanity in general, the subtitle warns readers that the roots of bloodlust will be found with Cain and Abel. It is then no surprise that the bulk of Jacoby's materials come from the Judeo-Christian and Latin worlds, with occasional forays farther afield. The first chapter focuses accordingly on historical examples of religious violence in Europe. The murders of Protestant converts by Catholic friends and relatives during the Spanish Inquisition and St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre show that objectively minor differences can build into fratricidal hatreds—to such an extent that the aggressors express pleasure in their gruesome doings. Jacoby nicely documents their pleasure with textual evidence. He continues to construct a thesis of the contemptibility of minor differences in the Nazi attempt to exterminate their Jewish neighbors, even as they "breathed and exhaled the same culture as non-Jews." The lesson Jacoby draws in these centuries-long cycles of religious violence is that "Minor differences between neighbors, not grand ideas about freedom of thought, spark civil strife."

In his second chapter, Jacoby builds on an observation made by Montaigne: Why do civil wars have a personal gruesomeness and rancor not seen in wars between sovereign nations? Why would members of the same cultural or national body treat each other harshly in the first place, let alone reserve a special vindictiveness for themselves? He points out that in the present era, most armed conflict takes place between ethnic and religious groups within the same nation-state. His examples of ethnic violence and religious civil war sometimes read like a review of the Clinton presidency (Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia), somewhat awkwardly bundled up with Thucydides' account of the savagery of the Peloponnesian War. He brings up the clichéd brother-against-brother narrative of the American civil war, but justly—first for its chilling body count (more Americans were killed than in all other wars combined from the revolution through Vietnam) and second as an example of how resentments from civil wars can simmer on long after the end of overt hostilities. Relatedness in civil war actually seems to multiply rather than dissipate acts of inhumanity, as in the Hutu-Tutsi genocide in Rwanda and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—which Jacoby casts as a latter-day reprise of the contests of Abraham's sons Isaac and Ishmael.

At this point midway through chapter two, Cain and Abel make their appearance along with Livy's description of Romulus and Remus (and even the quarrelsome brothers in Steinbeck's *East of Eden*). Compellingly, after both Cain and Romulus murder their brothers, they go on to build a city. This coincidence allows Jacoby to build a provocative proposal: What if fratricide sits at the foundations of social order? What if the killer of brothers is the one who goes on to build civilization? This is the precise opposite of what I learned long ago from Hobbes (that people leave behind the State of Nature and enter into a Common Weal to seek security from bandits and other foreign or outside threats to security and property). In this new model of the origin of society, violence is fraternal, and both the perpetrator and victim come from within.

With a postulation of the *sui-generis* origin of violence, chapter three examines the history of

anti-Semitism that sustains the Nazi attempt to eradicate Jews through genocide. Over the centuries, anti-Semitic thinkers were continuously flummoxed by their inability to distinguish Jews from non-Jews on an objective basis alone. In Germany by the 19th century, Jews and Gentiles are indistinguishable and overt differences could not be found. Filling this absence, old textual interpretations of Jews-as-Cain made by the likes of Augustine and Pope Innocent III, suggest—with no substantiation in reality—that Jews can be identified by bizarre traits. 'Trembling' and 'anxiety' and other contrived markers of Jews-as-Cain are recognizable as the source material of modern stereotypes. Since non-extant and vague "Jewish" traits are what genocide was supposed to eradicate, the Nazis had to emulate their peers of old and make recourse to overt marking of Jews (Starts of David, yellow ribbons, etc.). In Jacoby's telling, this history shows us a case where difference is manufactured because none could be found, and genocide was conducted in the name of eliminating traits that simply did not exist. He cautions that "No simple or single account can comprehend the history of Jews, anti-Semitism, or genocide" but surely Jacoby's perspective is an important piece of the overall tragedy: there were no minor differences in this case, only similarities.

In the closing chapter, *Fearful Symmetries,* we step into mythology and psychological theory of hatred of similarity—starting with the Biblical twins Esau and Jacob who fought even in the womb of Rebekah. Jacoby's theme is recognizable by now, that similarity breeds contempt, and he works to provides us with the psychology behind the phenomena of manufactured and feared differences. Among others, he targets the clash of civilizations thesis, in which Huntington (and Lewis before him) suggest that Islamic society is fundamentally different from the West. Details easily undo this proposal, for instance that Mohammed Atta of the 9/11 attacks was a western-educated urban planner with gripes against the aesthetics of modern design (i.e. he was not some nomadic tribesman steeped in the Koran). Jacoby encourages us to instead see assertions of difference, like those that purportedly separate the West and Islam, or Jews from other Germans, as being born of close interactions and mutual intelligibility.

For a psychology of how similarity and proximity can beget contempt and fear, Jacoby then digs into Freud's work on the "narcissism of minor differences"—reaching back into a 1918 work on taboo and the sexual dangers of women. This early work yields a surprise left-turn, a final twist for the last twenty-odd pages that I will not attempt to lay out here. In brief, Freud identifies a "dread of women" demonstrated in myriad cross-cultural prohibitions that separate men from the women around them. Jacoby uses this new direction to close his essay with a needling question: "Is misogyny the crux of fratricide?"

Jacoby's essay paints a picture of violence that is at times a-historical and at other times historically nuanced. He preemptively asserts in the preface that his identification of fratricide at the roots of violence is not universalist, and neither sociobiological nor based on DNA. I will grant him this, since nowhere else in the essay does biology rear its head. But then again, he never quite tells us why he chooses to paints with broad strokes, nor what it means. He is at his strongest in his careful historical constructions in chapters one and three—truly fascinating reads with good supporting evidence—and at his weakest when he reaches for generalizations and takes cases out of context. This latter tendency in the work has a real drawback, as when

he explicitly suggests that the assassinations of Mohandas Gandhi and Anwar el Sadat can somehow be stripped of the political contexts in which they happened and still retain their coherence as meaningful events—only because both men were killed by a fellow national. This detracts from the substance of the essay.

My own copy of the book is extensive in its marginalia. When Jacoby proffers a series of places in Africa where twins are feared or considered bad luck, I jotted other places where they could be considered providential (including my own kin-group). When he proposes that "Civil wars are generally more savage and bear more lasting consequences" than foreign wars, I think immediately of bloody wars fought over territorial acquisition and race. John Dower's *War Without Mercy* (1986) makes it difficult to see World War II in the Pacific as anything but a needlessly vicious race war on the part of both the Allies and the Japanese. The war remains politically touchy on all sides of the Pacific, from the issue of comfort women to the decision to drop the atomic bomb. If settler and frontier wars are "foreign wars" for Jacoby, then I would be interested to see how he approaches the scorched earth policies of the French colonial exit from Algeria, and genocidal settler violence against Native Americans in the Western U.S. or Aboriginal peoples of Australia. For a broader historical perspective on the savagery of foreign wars, the murals of Ramses III at Madinat Habu depict triumphantly, in carved stone for all eternity, the sordid bureaucratic counting of severed heads, penises, and hands of the foreign Sea People. The idea that civil wars are generally worse than other wars happens to fit well with a United Nations worldview in which wars between nations can be conducted honorably. Perhaps this is a fixed idea worth challenging.

As I hope the preceding paragraph makes exceptionally clear, I deeply enjoyed *Bloodlust*. I suspect other readers will also find it fruitfully provocative and engaging—which is the point of an essay after all, to try out an idea and open a conversation. His basic contrarian premise cannot be discarded: most violence is committed between kith and kin, not between people unknown to one another. Jacoby's treatment of this problematic phenomena is worth considering—even as I disagree with his interpretation of many examples, and would prefer not to use biblical tropes to talk about peoples and experiences outside the Abrahamic world. Although he succeeds at finding fratricidal violence everywhere, there is hope. He shows that genocide has historical origins, and that Nazi anti-Semitism in particular was built on a desperate and ill-founded search for differences where none existed. Freudian psychology might offer an explanation of brotherly bloodlust, but it might also take us in a direction towards brotherly love. Jacoby's essay holds the same tenor of disquieting truth that I felt upon hearing the following comment: school children everywhere learn that opposable thumbs make human accomplishment possible, but we might just as easily observe that thumbs are what you use when strangling someone else to death. Fratricidal bloodlust needs to be pointed out, since it is too regularly glossed over with a rosy narrative of love.

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Review of Just One Catch: A Biography of Joseph Heller by Tracy Daugherty

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In many ways, Joseph Heller's Catch-22 is the reason I majored in English as an undergraduate and, subsequently, attended graduate school to become an English professor. Put plainly, reading Catch-22 changed the course of my life more powerfully and definitively than nearly any other experience I've had before or since I first picked up the iconic paperback as a teenager. In his recent biography of Heller, Just One Catch, Tracy Daugherty makes it quite clear that for many Americans—and, indeed, American literature—Joseph Heller's first novel can be said to have had at least as profound an influence as it had on me. But, as Catch-22's status grew from bestselling novel, to the voice of a generation "besotted with the Kennedys" and, ultimately, into a towering achievement of American letters, Heller's zany account of an American bombardier in the Second World War cast such a long shadow that even the book's effervescent author wrestled to free himself from its influence (246).

In Daugherty's hands, the importance of Heller's first novel permeates every page of Just One Catch (not to mention the title). The book opens in medias res, with a fresh-faced Joseph Heller preparing to board a B-25 about to set off to bomb a bridge in Avignon. Two pages later, Daugherty describes a scene in which the man who would one day create Captain John Yossarian experiences what readers familiar with Heller's first novel will immediately recognize as virtually identical to a pivotal moment in Catch-22: "'The bombardier doesn't answer,' he heard someone shout. 'Help him, help the bombardier.' 'I'm the bombardier,' he said, 'and I'm all right,' but the very act of asserting what should have been obvious made him wonder if it was true" (3). The scene then shifts abruptly to a forty-something Heller touring Corsica so that he can write about it for a magazine that has courted him following his rise to literary celebrity as the bestselling author of Catch-22. In just three pages, Daugherty ensures that the reader will look for parallels between Joseph Heller's personal life and those of his fictional creations. Consequently, much of the book's lengthy first section, which focuses on Heller's childhood and adolescence on Coney Island, seems to derive more of its narrative power from the reader's attempts to see how life in a working-class Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn could influence "little Joey Heller" in ways that would eventually find articulation in Catch-22 and, to a much lesser extent, Heller's subsequent books than to Daugherty's picture-perfect evocations of early 20th Century New York (40).

By the time Daugherty's narrative reaches the publication of Catch-22 in 1961, the reader will have read more than half the book. As a result, the genesis, writing, publishing, and critical reception of each subsequent novel receives considerably less attention in Dougherty's account than Heller's most famous book. An unfortunate side-effect of the comparative brevity of Dougherty's discussions of Good As Gold, God Knows, Picture This, Closing Time, and A

Portrait of an Artist as an Old Man (he does devote somewhat more space to Heller's second novel, Something Happened) is that the amount of attention he pays to Catch-22 seems to reinforce the widespread critical disappointment in Heller's fiction after Catch, despite Daugherty's clear desire to refute such claims. That said, Dougherty's keen critical insight into Heller's fiction is on par with that of scholars such as Judith Ruderman and David Seed. His reading of Something Happened, in particular, is as valuable a contribution to Heller scholarship as any recent study I've seen. Thus, my only real complaint about what is, really, a very fine work of literary biography is that Dougherty's brief discussions of Heller's later works leave the reader wanting more.

As the history of an individual life, Just One Catch succeeds in painting a sympathetic portrait of Joseph Heller while refusing to gloss over the author's often irascible nature. Heller emerges from the pages of Dougherty's book as a life-loving neurotic, equally prone to gorging on gourmet meals and excessive nail-biting. A walking contradiction, Heller both courts the sort of fame one associates with Norman Mailer and resists it. He's a devoted family man with a marked impatience for the mundane habits of family life, an aloof extravert, and a misanthropic people lover. Still, despite the many superficial inconsistencies in his personality, Dougherty's Heller is a remarkably consistent man, unfailingly devoted to the creation of great novels and uncompromised by financial motivation, public expectation, or critical reception. Not surprisingly, it is here, in his writing life, that the shadow of Catch-22 is most apparent and, in some ways, most oppressive. With the unprecedented success of his debut novel among both critics and readers in the burgeoning paperback market, Heller found he could leave his job as a Madison Avenue advertising executive to devote himself to writing full-time, but the novel's astounding popularity forever condemned Heller to writing books that would be compared—almost always unfavorably—with what has become a cornerstone of American literature.

Unfortunately (and in spite of working on a handful of projects related to his first novel in the 1960s), Heller's literary vision prevented him from settling into a pattern of writing books that resembled Catch-22. Thus, while Heller enjoyed the attention his celebrity status provided him, his novel writing remained a sacrosanct realm where he would set about creating serious fiction that would "send ripples through American literature" (436). Thus, "[d]espite the image he sometimes peddled [in interviews] as a man unmotivated to write," Heller's "refusal to abandon [his novel writing] regardless of interruptions and the lure of more lucrative assignments reveal not only his ambition to be a serious artist but his inability to be anything else" (321). In other words, the very traits that helped make Catch-22 a classic essentially prevented Heller from repeating his previous success. With each subsequent novel, he was compelled, from the core of his being, to create fiction both as new and exciting as Catch-22 (which meant he could never repeat himself) and painstakingly true to his own exacting standards for "serious" art. The reading public, however, always "wanted another Catch-22" (407). Accordingly, Daugherty's account of Heller's life is the history of a writer whose "critical reputation declined" with the publication of each book after his first, but whose artistic vision sharpened as readers' dissatisfaction with his work increased (449). Ultimately, Dougherty's Heller resembles Heller's Yossarian; he's an idealist with such an adamantine devotion to his

core beliefs that no amount of (critical) hostility could swerve him from his path. The result, Daugherty would have us believe, is that Joseph Heller has left us with a body of fiction that will, to borrow one of Yossarian's most famous lines, "live forever or die trying." I'm inclined to agree.

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Review of Wall Street at War: The Secret Struggle for the Global Economy by Alexandra Ouroussoff

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The epigraph to Alexandra Ouroussoff's slim, revelatory, and important ethnographic study of Wall Street firms comes from an anonymous "Chief Financial Officer of one of the top five commodity extraction companies." Identified only as "Ron," he opens the book with the tough-guy grumble: "I wouldn't buy a book on risk if it was the last fucking book on the planet."

I write this review on a scorching summer day, during what may be the hottest year on record, in a still young decade already surpassing the last as the hottest on record. I awoke to news stories of drought and the decline of the world's coral reefs, all likely caused by changes to the earth's climate resulting from human resource extraction and consumption. The fate of national economies and individual life chances from La Paz to Lusaka are tied to this uncertain business of extracting commodities from the earth and hoping they'll fetch a good price. Clearly, Ron's decisions and those of his colleagues create a bewildering array of risks that they'll never be aware of, risks flung far into time and space.

The many informants whom Ouroussoff features in this book have a lot to say about risk, but almost nothing to say about this mostly invisible plenitude of risks—a point I'll return to at the end of this review. The risks Ouroussoff's CEOs and financial analysts are concerned with are financial risks to investors and corporations.

Ouroussoff's book is an illuminating account of changing conceptions of risk and profit at the upper reaches of capitalist power. It makes a worthy contribution to the anthropological tradition of empirically-based critiques of popular and professional economic thinking (Mauss 1990 [1923]; Sahlins 1974), a tradition enjoying a much needed contemporary resurgence (Hann and Hart 2011; Ho 2009; Graeber 2011).

Ouroussoff's provocative key claims are these: since the 1980s, a new conception of risk and profit has taken hold of global capitalism. This new "rationalist model," as she calls it, holds that risks can be systematically calculated, minimized, and, controlled—that contingency need not be a requirement of profit. This idea is imposed by ratings agencies (such as Standard & Poor's and Moody's) on corporations (such as that of our dismissive CFO, Ron). These corporations must acquiesce to the demands of the "rationalist model," and the credit analysts who impose it, in order to receive the agencies' imprimatur, and thus, capital. This conflict between ratings analysts and corporate executives is the "War" of Ouroussoff's title and has been a major cause of the recent global economic crisis.

The idea that the slide to crisis was greased by hubris about risk will, of course, be familiar to readers. US homebuyers in the years leading up to 2008 were routinely told that 'house prices always rise,' as though this manifest absurdity were some axiom of nature—just one instance of the naïve faith in profit without risk that swept the world's richer countries over the last few decades. But Ouroussoff's claim, based on 6 years of interviews with corporate executives and ratings analysts is different.

Analysts don't think that *all* contingency can be controlled and eliminated, just the contingencies that matter. Through analysis of these interviews, Ouroussoff shares her progressive discovery that the rationalist model is predicated on the notion that contingency can be domesticated and relegated to the lower reaches of the economy. Analysts believe that the best and most successful capitalists and corporations operate (and have always operated) in a separate, dominant domain in which risk can be known and quantified. Analysts, she writes:

> *imagine the global economy in terms of a hierarchy of companies divided into two spheres, separated by their relation to the degree of uncertainty they produce. At the top of the hierarchy are quality companies generating predictable uncertainty. At the base are those companies whose future is unknown. This image of a hierarchy of companies breaks with the conventional image of a multitude of competing companies operating on a level playing field. In this new image, the essential dynamic is not price competition but strategic activity designed to eliminate chance. This is a completely new representation of the capitalist economy which cannot be regarded merely as a further development of competitive market capitalism (43)*

Analysts in thrall to the rationalist model end up producing something like the very world they imagine already exists, compelling companies to consolidate so that they can write possible contingencies off their business plans and balance sheets (47, 125). This is an original argument for an imperative to monopoly in contemporary capitalism, very different from familiar neoclassical and Marxist accounts of the tendency to monopoly.

It is also an inversion of an influential account of a cause of the financial crisis in which ratings agencies were pressured to award undeserved investment-grade ratings to the very companies that pay them (see, Krugman 2010). Ouroussoff dispatches this account too breezily (11), regarding it as less significant than the new conception of risk and profit that dominates credit analysts. For Ouroussoff, the crucial arrow of cause and corruption doesn't run from corporations to ratings agencies, but in the other direction. Corporate executives may rankle against the imperative to eliminate contingency from their business plans, but they do so in silence, because they manipulate their numbers to meet analysts' requirements (79). As one "executive in the extractive industries" put it to Ouroussoff, "We used to lie 20 per cent of the time. Now it's 80 per cent" (24). Compromised by their own deceptions, executives don't

publically admit to the fact that the new rationalist model that has taken hold on Wall Street is distinct from historical notions of capitalist profit making, in which risk and competition are necessary for profit.

More striking is this: analysts don't perceive this distinction at all. "The rationalist framework is so successful in assimilating the conflict," Ouroussoff writes, "that it begins to look as if points of incompatibility not only do not occur, but cannot occur in principle" (71). So binding is the epistemological straightjacket of the rationalist model that, "analysts are barred from directing their attention to the foundational premises of their mode of thinking" (75) or to the very possibility that there might be any other mode of thinking. Here Ouroussoff begins to lose me. Can the hold that the rationalist model has over analysts really be so total? Is it really possible that analysts of major ratings agencies and executives of major Wall Street firms have such completely different worldviews about capitalism? Don't they golf together and go to business school reunions together? What do they talk about over cocktails while gawking at Occupy Wall Street protestors from above or while waiting to pick up their rental Bentleys at the airport on their way to Davos and the World Economic Forum?

My suggestions here are flippant, of course, but they have to be, because, despite the obvious quality of Ouroussoff's long-term research, and the level of trust she clearly developed with her informants, we're given little ethnographic detail about the world that Ouroussoff's informants inhabit. Let me say clearly that *Wall Street at War* is an extremely important contribution to our understanding of contemporary global capitalism; it deserves to be read widely and its central argument, to be taken very seriously. But as a work of ethnography, *Wall Street at War* ought to give the reader more. Ethnographers of knowledge from Evans-Pritchard (1937) to Latour and Woolgar (1979) have worked to show how worldviews are made up of a tangled network of social, material, and epistemological parts. But Ouroussoff gives us only a hint of the material and social factors that might help us comprehend the rise and seeming dominance of the rationalist model. A spare 133 pages, with only 12 citations in the bibliography, the book has ample space for this broader analysis.

Ouroussoff does hint at deeper historical forces in the book's final sentences, suggesting that the rise of the rational model is caused by a "transformation from one form of capital accumulation and expansion to another:"

> *From this standpoint the conflict between two concepts of productive capital, and perhaps even the crises we have recently been witnessing, are merely symptoms of a much deeper economic transformation towards a dynamic that privileges capital consolidation over and above market competition. The fact that investors' new-found dependency on accurate calculation serves to reorientate the conditions of capitalism's stability is not a choice of consciousness, but of history. How this history has come to give greater positive value to capital consolidation is a question we shall have to leave to historians (125).*

It is perhaps too early for the historians to weigh in. But another important recent work of economic anthropology does make some suggestions about the structural changes that may be at work here. Graeber observes that economic history seems to cycle between periods dominated by bullion and periods dominated by credit money. Coinciding with the start of the rationalist model's rise, at the end of the 1970s, the world embarked on a new era of credit money. Yet Graeber notes that, unlike earlier periods of credit money, which institutionalized protections for debtors, our still young age of credit money "began with the creation of global institutions like the IMF designed to protect not debtors, but creditors" (2011:18). Reading Ouroussoff through Graeber, we can speculate that contingency has become calculable for large investors only because of the creation of institutions designed to assure that risks are displaced elsewhere, to debtors, national economies, and natural ecologies. Risk, in this reading, is domesticated only by isolating certain economic actors—like the willfully oblivious Ron—from a world of proliferating risk.

These speculations have now taken me well beyond the scope of this review; I wish that Ouroussoff had taken on these social and historical questions somewhat more boldly in her book. But in revealing the conflicts and ideas dominating some of the higher reaches of the global economy, Ouroussoff makes a crucial contribution to any critical and informed thinking about the strange, transforming, and risky character of global capitalism.

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