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Constructing Neo-Conservatism

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Neo-conservatism has become both a code word for reactionary thinking in our time and a badge of unity for those in the Bush administration advocating a new imperialist foreign policy, an assault on the welfare state, and a return to “family values.” Its members are directly culpable for the disintegration of American prestige abroad, the erosion of a huge budget surplus, and the debasement of democracy at home. Enough inquiries have highlighted the support given to neo-conservative causes by various businesses and wealthy foundations like Heritage and the American Enterprise Institute. In general, however, the mainstream media has taken the intellectual pretensions of this mafia far too seriously and treated its members far too courteously. Its truly bizarre character deserves particular consideration. Thus, the need for what might be termed a montage of its principal intellectuals and activists.

Montage

Neo-conservatives wield extraordinary influence in all the branches and bureaucracies of the government. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz really require no introduction. These architects of the Iraqi war purposely misled the American public about the existence of weapons of mass destruction, a horrible pattern of torturing prisoners of war, the connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda, the celebrations that would greet the invading troops, and the ease of setting up a democracy in Iraq. But they were not alone. Whispering words of encouragement was the notorious Richard Perle: a former director of the Defense Policy Board, until his resignation amid accusations of conflict of interest, his nickname—“the Prince of Darkness”—reflects his advanced views on nuclear weapons. Advice was also forthcoming from Elliot Abrams: pardoned by George Bush in 1991 after being found guilty for lying to Congress during the Iran-Contra scandal, now in charge of Middle Eastern Affairs and an advisor to Condoleeza Rice at the National Security Council, Abrams remains an open admirer of the witch-hunts led by the disgraced Senator Joseph McCarthy. Of interest is also John Bolton, the undersecretary of state for disarmament, who has consistently opposed the idea of arms control, and our Bible-thumping Attorney General John Ashcroft, who is rumored to speak in tongues and whose face has graced the cover of the official journal of the National Rifle Association.

But others also deserve mention. Chairman of the Republican Party and also known as “Bush’s pit-bull,” Ed Gillespie, is a protégé of the arch-reactionary Dick Armey, former House majority leader. As for the current ideological leader of Republicans in the House of Representatives, Tom DeLay (R-Tex), a particular favorite of Enron and affectionately known as “the Hammer,” he once likened the Environmental Protection Agency to the Gestapo. In the Senate, meanwhile, Senator Rick Santorum (R-Pa) has opposed abolishing laws forbidding sodomy since this would obviously open the way to lifting laws on incest and the like. It is also

instructive to note that neo-conservatives helped defeat the re-election bid of former Senator Max Cleland (R-Ga.)—who lost three limbs in Vietnam—for apparently not being patriotic enough. Their influence, indeed, extends into the Oval Office: Vice President Dick Cheney and his assistant I. Lewis ("Scooter") Libby as well as Presidential Chief of Staff Karl Rove can be counted among their defenders.

Neo-conservatism also has its intellectuals. Journals like The Public Interest formerly edited by Irving Kristol—also known as "the Godfather"—and Commentary, formerly edited by Norman Podhoretz, framed the general outlook on issues ranging from the need for new censorship laws and the importance of reasserting the capitalist ethos to the lack of anti-communist vigor on the part of Albert Camus and George Orwell. Their wives, Gertrude Himmelfarb and Midge Decter (who has written a personal memoir of Rumsfeld) have become publicists concerned with defending Israel and organized religion while their offspring also carry on the tradition: John Podhoretz, as a syndicated columnist and William Kristol as editor of The Weekly Standard. Other neo-conservative intellectuals include the editor of The New Criterion, Hilton Kramer, who bemoans the decline of cultural standards and whose literary tastes are so straight that they creak. Then, too, there is our former czar in the war against drugs and the posturing, self-righteous author of The Book of Virtues, William J. Bennett, who has recently admitted to having somewhat of a gambling problem, and Dinesh D'Souza who has comforted us all by noting "the end of racism."

"Neo-conservatism" can be identified with a small network of intellectuals and friends. But that would be a mistake. It has grown into a movement with far broader appeal. Serious publications like The Wall Street Journal reach the "opinion-makers." Perhaps even more important, however, are the hack columnists like Steve Dunleavy, Michelle Caulkin and Maggie Gallagher, associated with The New York Post and other tabloids, who popularize neo-conservative ideas. Radio hosts like Bob Grant, Mike Savage, and Laura Schlessinger add more fuel to the fire by ranting against traitors, fundamentalists, and sexual perverts. Then, too, there are the television pundits—like Ann Coulter, Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly, and Pat Robertson—who gather around reactionary networks like Fox News. The pandering of these media thugs to the lowest ideological common denominator, their unwillingness to engage an argument, and their bullying arrogance perfectly express a neo-conservative sensibility that teeters on the edge of fascism.

A "no-nonsense" attitude informs the neo-conservative outlook: its advocates strike the tough-guy pose all the time. Their intimidating style tends to deflect attention away from their paucity of ideas and the ultimately contradictory interests they claim to represent. Identifying these ideas and interests remains important, however, both for understanding the current political landscape and contesting the contemporary forces of reaction. What is unique about neo-conservatism, as against more traditional forms of "conservatism," requires specification. That is especially the case since this new version of reactionary thought is far more lethal and vulgar than that of its establishmentarian predecessors.

Roots

Old-fashioned conservatism actually derives less from political than cultural assumptions. The pre-eminent conservative philosopher of our time, Michael Oakeshott, saw this philosophy as resting on a certain psychological "disposition" to favor the unadventurous and the already established over the new and the untried. To be sure, this "disposition" places conservatism in a somewhat ambivalent relationship to capitalism. It is obviously the established economic system, but it is also dynamic and contemptuous of parochial and provincial customs. Capitalism is fueled by technological progress and it is intent upon breaking down, what Marx termed, "the Chinese walls of tradition" and reducing all venerable relations to "the cash nexus." This rubs against the grain of those who fear, with Edmund Burke, that "the fine draperies of life" are being ripped asunder. But, then, it is incumbent for the worldly-wise conservative to face "reality." He or she is always ruefully willing to admit that the "old world" is being left behind. A dash of cultural pessimism serves as a tonic: it helps create nostalgia for times past.

Conservatism is predicated upon a resistance to change. Should reforms or innovations be introduced, however, they must be integrated into the texture of the old and the established as quickly and smoothly as possible. This desire enables conservatives to turn necessity into a virtue. Because any reform can become part of "our" heritage, at least in principle, conservatives can adapt to any change. He or she can even take credit for being flexible and highlighting the need for "deliberation" in negotiating the connection between past and future. Thus, even while "prejudice" and an elitist sensibility have always been important elements of traditional conservative thought, modern conservatives can now—though somewhat grudgingly—condemn all forms of "prejudice."

That their intellectual and political predecessors vociferously opposed the civil rights movements and the new social movements is irrelevant. Conservatives place themselves in the position of the "free rider" or the individual who, while refusing to take the initiative on any reform, will— graciously if somewhat skeptically—adapt to the changes brought about by others. Being stubborn flies in the face of the conservative disposition. Stability and continuity are its primary concerns. The crux of the matter is clear enough: "He who lives in comfort," wrote Bertolt Brecht, "lives comfortably."

Neo-conservatism begins with different premises. Certain members of its staunchest advocates like Perle and Wolfowitz originally met and became friends in seminars at the University of Chicago given by Albert Wohlstetter, the mathematician and senior staff member at the Rand Corporation. A few like Allan Bloom, author of The Closing of the American Mind, may have been influenced by the writings of the important political philosopher, Leo Strauss, at the University of Chicago. But neo-conservatism actually has little in common with his attempt to develop an intellectual "aristocracy" capable of preserving the classical tradition in a "mass democracy." No less than Plato, perhaps, neo-conservatives may think they are employing the "noble lie." But their form of lying is far more banal than the attempt of this great thinker to veil the lack of philosophical foundations for an ideal state. Neo-conservatives employ their mendacity no differently than any ordinary group of liars: to justify this interest or cover up that mistake.

Leo Strauss may have argued that political philosophy went into decline with Machiavelli and the erosion of a religious universe. Unlike his supposed followers, however, Strauss was unconcerned with the practical imperatives of "realism," let alone the cruder variety. The writings of neo-conservatives generally evidence little interest in the "conversation" between classical authors, textual exegesis, or intellectual nuance in general. The influence of conservative political philosophy on the neo-conservative mandarins is overrated. Those preoccupied with it, indeed, only lend an air of intellectualism to what is little more than a brutal reliance on power and propaganda.

Neo-conservatives lack the complacent "disposition," the elitist longeur, the respect for established hierarchies, the fear of change, and the staid preoccupation with stability of more traditional conservatives. Their "resentment" of "intellectuals" is reminiscent of the petty bourgeois. Neo-conservatives are unconcerned with strengthening the ties that should bind—using another telling phrase from Burke—"the dead, the living, and the yet unborn." They are revolutionaries or, better, "counter-revolutionaries" intent upon remaking America. Just as the avant-garde composer-hero of Doctor Faustus by Thomas Mann was obsessed with rolling back the most progressive achievement of modern music, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, so is the neo-conservative vanguard obsessed with rolling back the most progressive political achievements of the last century.

More important than the influence of elite conservative intellectuals is the simple anti-communism learned when many elder statesmen of the neo-conservative cause were youthful Trotskyites. There is a sense in which Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, and others remain defined by the communist dogmatism they sought to oppose. The virtue of the "party" or clique—their party or clique—needs no complex justification: it stands for the interests of the "revolution" or, in this instance, "democracy." Truth matters little, and morality—other than the morality of unquestioning allegiance to the given political project—matters less. Neo-conservatives share with Mao Zedong the belief that power only comes "from the barrel of a gun" and, like the commissars of old, that critics merely provide an "objective apology" for the "enemies of freedom."

Interestingly enough, the political outlook of future neo-conservatives in the 1960s was remarkably akin to that of the influential Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson (D-Wash). They too were vehemently anti-communist and strong on defense, accepting of the civil rights movement, and supportive of welfare state policies associated with the New Deal. They began, in short, neither as "know-nothing" populists nor advocates of the free market. Criticism of the social movements began with the emergence of black nationalism, concern over the growth of anti-Semitism, and left-wing criticism of Israel. Only during the Reagan administration, however, would it become necessary to choose "guns" over "butter." Support for social movements and the welfare state thus melted away until, finally, a genuinely radical stance congealed that was intent upon abolishing the most progressive achievements of the century in terms of state action, foreign policy, civil liberties, and cultural freedom.

Neo-conservatives are today engaged in an assault upon a tradition of social reform that

extends from Theodore Roosevelt's attack on trusts and the most blatantly onerous practices of corporations to the New Deal with its "socialist reliance" on "big government" and the complex of programs associated with the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson. Neo-conservatism also wishes to contest a democratic and cosmopolitan vision of foreign policy that extends from the beginnings of international law and the Enlightenment, to the critique of "secret diplomacy" by Marx, the support for international institutions by Woodrow Wilson and FDR, and the current struggle for human rights. In the eyes of neo-conservatives, moreover, the United States is a society always under siege. It has no room for the one who thinks differently: liberty is something each American supposedly possesses but none—other than the most righteous and most patriotic—should ever exercise.

Neo-conservatives insisted from the start on a muscular anti-communist foreign policy and a critique of détente, arms control, and the language of "idealism." But they have proven willing to use the language of human rights when necessary and cloak their policies in the rhetoric of democracy. Often the ploy worked: it undoubtedly helped seduce various high-minded liberals like Michael Ignatieff and Paul Berman into supporting the invasion of Iraq. Such ideals, however, have generally been valued only in the breach. Most neo-conservatives made their reputations as "realists." Foreign policy analysts like Robert Kagan have as little use for the "naïve" preoccupation with human rights as domestic policy analysts like Charles Murray have for the "do-gooders" seeking state intervention into the economy in order to aid working people and the poor.

Neo-conservatism is primarily concerned, however, with the erosion of America as a white, male, straight society: its representatives have targeted the attempts of what Norman Podhoretz termed an "adversary culture" of the 1960s to emancipate the individual from anachronistic religious and provincial customs. Their concern is with instituting a new respect for traditional political authority, capitalism, and the entire complex of concerns associated with "family values." These are perhaps best expressed in the television shows of the 1950s and early 1960s like Father Knows Best, Leave It To Beaver, My Three Sons, Ozzie and Harriet, and the rest. The "other" never made an appearance: women were in the kitchen, blacks doffed their caps, and homosexuality did not exist. Forgotten are the lives ruined and the talents squandered by this world of parochialism and prejudice.

The new architects of reaction understand that the trauma associated with 1968 transcends the humiliation created by a lost war, a vice-president who barely avoided going to jail on charges of bribery, and the resignation of a president who clearly was a "crook." Since that time the government and what President Eisenhower termed the "military-industrial complex" must count on public skepticism from its citizens with respect to its motives and policies. What in the 1950s had seemingly been a culture of contentment and passivity was transformed during the 1960s into a new culture that was critical of the "silent majority" and no longer complacent in its assumptions about what Daniel Bell termed "the end of ideology." New social movements called upon middle class citizens to look at history in a new way; they decried platitudes justifying the policies of elite interests; they demanded institutional accountability; and they sought a new appreciation for what Montesquieu termed "the spirit of the laws." All

this is still seen by neo-conservatives as undermining American power and the self-confidence of its citizens. Mobilizing against the legacy of the new social movements required both daring and vision.

Inspirations

It is hard to believe that the old man, now sick and senile, held his head so high when he entered the presidency during what was the equivalent of a coronation ceremony. His critics liked to make light of him during the 1980s. They snickered when he fell asleep at meetings, they joked about his intellect, and rolled their eyes at his policy proposals. While the left was laughing, however, Ronald Reagan was making a revolution by transforming the foreign policy, the domestic priorities, and the ideological agenda of the United States. His administration had little use for back-door diplomacy, arms control, and the old policy of "containment." President Reagan dared the Soviet Union to compete with his militarism, which it foolishly chose to do, heightened tensions with defense plans like the Star Wars project, intervened repeatedly in Latin America, and showed himself unconcerned with legal niceties when it came to scandals like Iran-Contra. The most influential contemporary neo-conservatives cut their teeth under Reagan and it is worth pointing out that, when push came to shove in the contested election of 2000, it was his former secretary of state, George Schultz, and his former chief of staff and secretary of the treasury, James Baker, who were calling the shots for George W. Bush

The Reagan administration insisted upon an outrageous military budget and, in conjunction with the introduction of new tax incentives for the rich and a general commitment to "supply side economics," it created huge deficits thereby setting the agenda for cutting the welfare state or, in the current parlance, "starving the beast." His presidency also began the assault on unions, community groups, and those whom the president termed "special interests." Women were thrown on the defensive with the attack on abortion and the practice of equality. The race card was played in launching a war against affirmative action and social programs directed toward the poor and people of color. Union membership also dwindled in the 1980s, or what is still characterized as the "Me Decade," and the "decade of greed." Platitudes abounded like "Just say no"; the slogan may not have had much of an impact on the war against drugs, but it was the first salvo in the fight for "family values." The buck stopped—and started—with Ronald Reagan. He secured the political foundations for the triumph of neo-conservative ideology by forging an alliance between two factions that had traditionally been at war within the reactionary camp.

One faction was comprised primarily of elites opposed from the standpoint of principle and interest to state intervention in the market. Its members basically cared little about the verities associated with "community" or "family values." They became the champions of "globalization" and a version of civil liberties intent upon liberating business from "regulation." The intellectual arguments of this reactionary camp derived from Milton Friedman, Friedrich von Hayek, Charles Murray, and Robert Nozick; its public face was best represented, however, by near forgotten politicians like Robert Taft and Barry Goldwater. Essentially, this faction of the neo-conservative constituency was reactionary in the sense that it embraced the old capitalist

belief in what C. B. MacPherson termed “possessive individualism” to challenge collectivist theories of society in general and “socialism” in particular.

The other faction within the camp of the reaction has its roots in the “know nothing” populism of the 19th century. Its members have always been prone to nationalist hysteria, traditional prejudices, and parochial values. These are the preachers of fire and brimstone, the Babbits, the Klansmen without hoods, those on the wrong side of the Scopes monkey trial who turned into adherents of “creationism,” and the residual supporters of McCarthyism. Out of this cauldron come the religious fundamentalists and Christian Zionists—the opponents of gay rights and abortion—looking backwards longingly to a small-town way of life that never existed.

Obsessed with tradition and conformity, fearful of radical change and any encounter with the “other,” these half-baked communitarians have no use for the new social movements and their concerns with identity. But that is not to say they necessarily oppose social legislation of benefit to working people. The neo-conservative base hates the intellectual and economic elites, or what is often referred to as the “eastern establishment,” and some of them even retain a positive image of the New Deal. Thus, while the elite defenders of the market contest anything smacking of socialism, this other faction composed of communitarian populists detests anything associated with liberalism.

Neo-conservatism is reducible neither to the advocacy of the free market nor right-wing populism and religious zealotry. It instead is predicated on the fusion of these contradictory attitudes into a single amalgam that can serve as a response to the two great political heirs of the Enlightenment: liberalism and socialism. Combining an unqualified commitment to the market with xenophobic and religious zealotry would give the neo-conservative movement its ideological specificity. The question was how to package the interest of elites in a free market with the provincial temperament of a parochial constituency. Or, to put it a different way, how it give “government back to the people” and simultaneously cut essential programs that serve the “people.” Selling this, indeed, was no easy task.

What sold best was a new image of “big government” working in favor of the “welfare cheat,” a tax system increasingly burdensome to everyday people, and a healthy dose of anti-communist nationalism peppered with racism. That savings and loan scandals costing trillions dwarfed the greatest ambitions of the welfare cheat would prove irrelevant. These scandals created only resignation about a “system” for which there was no alternative anyway. That social programs would become more affordable if different political priorities were set and tax codes were revised in a progressive fashion didn’t matter. Such programs would only create new layers of “bureaucracy,” waste, and abuse by those—with a wink— outside the white, religious, and male community. Everyone knew what Irving Kristol had in mind when he made the famous quip that a neo-conservative is really “a liberal who has been mugged by reality.”

Capitalism once again became equated with individual responsibility and the daring business entrepreneur. It was only the need to defend “our” way of life from enemies abroad that justified the myriad subsidies for the “military-industrial” complex. But this was seen as

unavoidable insofar as the United States remained enmeshed not merely in a cold war with the Soviet Union but indulged in hot wars with movements for national self-determination. The original context thus emerged wherein the interests of business elites in eliminating "external costs" and pursuing imperialist designs conflated with the interests of a parochial constituency bent upon recovering a sense of national pride and increasingly willing to identify the welfare state with the interests of the "other."

The victory of capitalism over communism created the need for nations to "compete" in what was becoming a genuinely global market: this meant "streamlining" production, "trimming the fat," "downsizing," and "outsourcing." But the old enemy against whom "our" way of life needed defense had now disappeared. Once again, or so it seemed, the capitalist values of elites and the provincial concerns of the base were ready to clash. The glue was missing. And then came 9/11. The legitimate outrage against a set of criminal terrorists directed by Osama bin Laden gave rise to yet another war and a new enemy: Saddam Hussein and Islamic fundamentalism. It didn't matter that Saddam was not a religious fundamentalist, or that weapons of mass destruction were missing, or even that he posed no genuine threat to the United States. Here was the "other" in a new guise, an unknown guise, which could easily be manipulated by a media fearful of being labeled "anti-American."

From the very beginning, however, major figures with roots in the regimes of Ronald Reagan and George Bush were wary of pursuing a unilateral approach to the problem of Iraq. Various military officials also saw the dangers in stretching American forces too thin. It was also clear to many that Islamic fundamentalism could not simply serve as a substitute for the communism of old. But their position did not carry the day: it avoided the material interests and political imperatives of the neo-conservative enterprise. Perle, Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld and others had been calling for the ousting of Saddam Hussein for more than a decade. More important, however, was how 9/11 helped create a new context for linking imperialist ambitions and the quest for American hegemony abroad with hyper-nationalism and an even more intense assault on the welfare state at home. This would reinvigorate the alliance between capitalist elites and "know nothing" populists along with the power of a neo-conservative clique.

Ambitions

Even before the fall of the Berlin Wall, neo-conservatives had been formulating policies whereby the United States might finally finish with the trauma induced by the Vietnam War. The events of 9/11 provided them the justification for, once again, exercising power in an uninhibited fashion. There is now no question but that plans for invading Iraq had already been formulated under the regime of George Bush by Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz. It has also become clear from the writings of Richard Clarke and others that, immediately upon hearing of the attack on 9/11, George W. Bush became interested in the prospects for invasion. Terrorists bent upon assuming "the worse the better," and long addicted to a romance associated with the "propaganda of the deed," would get what they wished though, as usual, others would have to pay the price.

Inspired by a particularly vulgar form of “realism,” which has traditionally seen the state as the basic unit of political analysis, neo-conservatives interpreted the actions of al Qaeda in terms of those enemies with which they were familiar, namely, fascism and communism. This enabled neo-conservative policy-makers to assume that the terrorists were sponsored by any number of “rogue” states that had to be dealt with forcefully rather than “appeased.” The obvious need for a response to al Qaeda, which was accorded protection by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, could thus be quickly transformed into the call for a more general confrontation with the “axis of evil”—Iran, Iraq, North Korea—and a new doctrine of the “pre-emptive strike.” That none of these states actually had anything to do with al Qaeda, again, made little difference. Objectivity no less than international law would give way before the right of the United States to intervene anywhere its leaders might feel its security interests threatened.

“National security” has always served as an excellent slogan for equating the imperialist ambitions of elites with the interests of ordinary citizens: Making such an identification has been turned into an art form by Israel and, for their part, neo-conservatives recognized that this little nation had much to teach. Israel had already engaged in pre-emptive strikes against Libya, Iraq, Lebanon, and other neighboring countries long before the articulation of the Bush doctrine. Then too, while constantly invoking its legitimacy as a state created by the United Nations, Israel has consistently flouted demands that it return to the borders of 1967 and a host of measures concerned with the human rights of the Palestinians. Neo-conservatives could also see the suicide bombings directed against Israeli civilians as anticipating the terror of 9/11 and the brutal, overwhelming, responses in the occupied territories as a lesson for how the United States should deal with its enemies. These tactics are indeed now being used by American forces in Iraq: collective punishment of entire towns for individual acts of terror, the demolition of houses, political assassinations, mass arrests, torture, and the use of overwhelming force in responding to demonstrations. Israel plays such an important role for neo-conservatives because its most reactionary political expressions serve as a positive image for what America can become.

There should be no mistake. Zionism has never dominated the neo-conservative worldview. Frank Gaffney, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Michael Novak and any number of leading neo-conservatives are not even Jewish. They also recognize that Israel offers no real economic benefits to America or American capitalism. Israel became important to neo-conservatives only after the Six Day War of 1967 when it emerged as a military power in its own right. The interest of American neo-conservatives in Israel has always been geo-political. The see it as the “outpost” for American foreign policy in a region that is, in the words of Wolfowitz, “swimming in oil.” Increasingly important for neo-conservatives, however, is the way Israel serves as an ally for the West in what Samuel Huntington has called the “clash of civilizations.” Indeed, many tend to forget about the influence of Christian Zionism and the institutional practitioners of what Edward Said termed “orientalism” upon neo-conservative elites and the formulation of American policy in the Middle East.

Neo-conservatives are engaged in a cultural war against the “adversary culture” at home and “anti-Western” values abroad. Religious media, financial support, and the benedictions of Pat

Robertson and other preachers for Ariel Sharon and Binjamin Netanyahu now suggest that even Jews are better allies than Arabs for the far right. Neo-conservatives concerned with the growing Latino threat to the Anglo-Protestant identity of the United States are watching carefully how the "wall of separation" being built by their erstwhile ally is helping preserve the Jewish character of the Israeli state from what Netanyahu has termed the rising "demographic threat" of Israeli Arab birthrates. Then, too, it seems the point is never for Israel to fit into the cultural context of the region but rather for the region to accept Israel as its military hegemon and as a western society. Not to think about the use of Arab stereotypes in the "clash of civilizations," and how Palestinian control over the holy sites in Jerusalem and elsewhere might threaten "Judaeo-Christian" civilization, is to underestimate the need for neo-conservatives to balance the geo-political interests of elites with the parochial prejudices and cultural interests of a mass constituency.

Neo-conservatives see the United States, like Israel, standing essentially alone in a war against terror that, like the occupation of Palestine, seemingly has no end in sight. Ungrateful former allies in Europe opposed to intervention in Iraq left "us" in the lurch: they are either too stupid or too malevolent to realize that "we" are fighting for "them." Critics at home are meanwhile too stupid or too malevolent to realize that the enemy is stealthily preparing for another attack or that Hezbollah, Hamas, Indonesian rebels, al Qaeda, the Islamic Brotherhood, and "the rest" are all working together. The West is "at risk" and dealing with that risk requires introducing into the United States what has already been introduced into Israel: an ideology cable of drawing—in the most radical fashion—the emotional distinction between "us" and "them."

Traditions

Neo-conservatism seems on the verge of crumbling. The Iraqi war has turned into a nightmare, many of its leading figures are on the ropes due to the scandal involving the torture of prisoners of war, and more establishmentarian conservatives in the business community are bemoaning the costs while, among the populist right, Pat Buchanan and others are openly voicing their criticisms. But there is a danger in being too sanguine. So long as neo-conservatism is contested merely in piece-meal terms, or with an eye on this or that outrageous excess, its advocates will continue to set the economic, political, and cultural agenda. It is not merely a matter of contesting this policy or that piece of legislation, especially given the current cultural climate, but of beginning the arduous process of fashioning a different vision for the United States. Here it is possible only to provide a few cursory remarks on the nature of such an undertaking.

With respect to the economy, first of all, mainstream critics have avoided dealing with the way in which the inherently dynamic system of capitalist production erodes the community values cherished by populism. The secular character of capitalism, its obsession with technological progress, its commercialism, and its contempt for the parochial and provincial tend to undermine the conservative insistence upon the importance of religious institutions, founding myths, and the received customs of the community. Neo-conservatism is incapable of resolving this tension. The left can intervene by asserting its traditional commitment to temper the whip

of the market, highlight the concern for “people over profits,” and recreate a sense of solidarity and purpose in American life. The current conflict is—after all—not between “big” government and “limited” government, but over what programs and priorities deserve primacy. The left has a tradition on which it can rely in framing the choices facing the American people when it comes to government spending: it is the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt, the New Deal, and the Poor Peoples’ Movement.

The same can be said when dealing with foreign policy: America was respected by the world, or the Western democracies, when it stood for policies the world could support. Talk about rejecting “appeasement” in a world war against terror is absurd when the rest of the “world” and, perhaps even more importantly, world public opinion understands the threat differently and is unwilling to support the self-serving and poorly formulated policy of a neo-conservative clique. Calling for “realism” in the struggle against authoritarianism, in the first instance, means recognizing the constraints on building democracy: the suspicions concerning western values generated by imperialism, the power of pre-modern institutions and customs, and the still fragile character of the state system in most of the world. Our current neo-conservative policy-makers, intent upon refashioning the world in line with their own visions of geo-political advantage, are zealots. They have little in common with the genuine “realists” of times past. Churchill and Roosevelt in the 1930s did not blatantly lie to the international community about the threat of fascism, conjure up stories about weapons of mass destruction that did not exist, bully and bribe small nations into joining a “coalition of the willing,” endorse corrupt collaborationist regimes lacking support from the populace, or employ violence without any sense of accountability: these were the tactics of their totalitarian enemies.

Then, too, there is the matter of civil liberties: the ultimate interest that “security” should protect. America gained respect in the world as a haven of freedom. It was the new contempt for religious fanaticism, the alliance between “throne and altar,” which differentiated the “old” from the “new” world. The neo-conservative call to constrain civil liberties in the name of “security” is, in fact, nothing more than the desire to shield their own incompetence and mendacity from public scrutiny. America has faced dangers in the past: it is always easy to make the current danger into the most dangerous. Civil liberties are easy to cherish under conditions of normalcy: but it is precisely under those conditions that they are meaningless. Civil liberties are not a luxury as neo-conservatives imply, but the foundation on which a free society remains free.

Neo-conservatives are provincials who fear what they don’t know. They fear criticism of established institutions. They fear the prospect of liberating the individual from outworn prejudices. They fear engaging the “other.” They fear the loss of privilege. And, ultimately, they fear freedom itself. Neo-conservatives are the closest relatives the fascists of times past can have in a society wherein fascism has been discredited. Confronting neo-conservatism thus involves more than simply judging a new philosophical outlook. It calls for making a decision about the type of politics that are acceptable, and those that are unacceptable, in a modern democracy.

Neo-cons And The Counter-enlightenment

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

Philip Green

My remarks are going to be a variation on Louis Hartz's *Liberal Tradition in America*, still to my mind the basic text on political culture in the United States, though it needs a lot of amendment, some of which I will offer here. If the pre-modern culture of Europe was the *Ancien Regime*, then modern culture, starting with the Enlightenment, or the 17th Century Revolution in England, comes as a rebellion against it. So in Germany after World War I, for example, both the socialist Liebknecht and the liberal Max Weber, running for the presidency as a Liberal, had roughly the same attitude toward conservative Catholicism in Germany: it was an accomplice of the class enemy, or it was the cultural enemy, depending on which of them you asked.

If Hartz is right about the United States, though, and an egalitarian liberal individualism is its foundation (as Tocqueville, of course, said long before Hartz), then in one of its forms at least rebellion quite logically comes as a version of anti-modern conservatism. (I'm talking about mass rebellion here, not the arcane rebellion of post-structuralist academics). And since the political institutions of liberalism are virtually unchallengeable-and have not really been challenged by the new conservatism-this comes mostly as a rebellion in the realm of culture. This is the real counter-culture; it renders comprehensible such factoids as that in the U.S. roughly eighty percent or more of respondents call themselves regular church-goers, whereas in Britain the comparable figure is below ten percent. One doesn't imagine that you could have anywhere in U.S. an experience comparable to the one I had walking through the old quarter in Amsterdam, where one abandoned church was a center for avant-garde art, and across the street from it were naked hookers in a storefront window.

So what I want to do to begin is describe this counter-Enlightenment, for that is what it is, with one pregnant addition. It certainly hasn't replaced classical American liberalism, but it contends for power with it; and now it has welded together its own anti-modernism with a political strategy imported by ex-Trotskyite and ex-Leninist intellectual savants. Together they now look not just to struggle with liberalism but to wipe it out-along with, of course, all variants to the Left of liberalism. This is where my theme of counter-Enlightenment meets the more specific theme of "neo-conservative strategies."

At the root of neo-conservatism is the naked power approach to politics, heralded by the ex-Trotskyite James Burnham in his influential book *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom*, shortly after WWII. Burnham and his followers at first produced a political theory and eventually a political practice of what are, supposedly, competing elitisms: the conservative elitism of say Mosca, Michels, and Pareto against the radical elitism of Lenin, Gramsci,

Marcuse, Althusser *et al*. In either case, the so-called "people" are, according to this theory's proponents, necessarily excluded from any real say in political life. The theory became practice especially in the work and activism of Irving Kristol, the godfather of neo-conservatism, who in the 1970s in an influential essay-perhaps the most influential essay written in the 20th century United States-addressed corporate leaders and foundation heads on the necessity of taking steps to defend capitalism against the Left by explicitly funding right-wing theorizing and activism. Note that in Kristol's politics, as in all neo-conservative political theory, "the people" existed only to be manipulated, by someone or other; this assumption has become the ideological underpinning of all neo-conservative activity since.

Most especially, from the standpoint that there is nothing to politics but the clash of elites, the denial by liberals that they are a controlling elite at all is itself inflammatory, and fuels the biggest lie of the late 20th century, the lie that undergirds contemporary neo-conservatism and pseudo-populism both: the lie of "liberal control of the media." From the neo-conservative standpoint, there must be some political elite in control of any important institution, and since they know *they* are not in control of network television or the national prestige newspapers, it must be liberals who are. What has happened now-the disaster that has happened-has been the conjunction of this political theory of naked elite power, with the counter-Enlightenment: the anti-modern, ideological fanaticism of the religious right.

To return now to the more traditional counter-Enlightenment, I'm going to contrast its cognitive map with that of liberal Enlightenment. The latter needs no elaboration by me, it's the former that requires description. The basis of this anti-modernism is a peculiar religiosity that can be described as follows: religion and science are not complementary (as with the modernized wing of the Catholic Church) but competitive; they describe the same phenomena, but science and reason get it wrong. This is only the beginning, though. This religiosity is not transcendental or abstract, but immanent, and its immanent truths (based on Biblical literalism) are not only empirical but more fundamentally are moral. Moreover, the two kinds of truth are not incommensurable, as ordinary philosophy has it, but are as one. There is no fact-value problem. Evil, therefore, in the religious sense-the most profound religious sense-consists of *error*. Evil is not mundane or institutional, as with Hannah Arendt, nor does it have historical causes, as with Erich Fromm on Nazism, nor is it one possible outcome of profound neurosis, as with Freud, nor is it an inexplicable mystery, as with many Christian theologians. Evil is religious error.

But if evil consists of error then conversely, and this is the crucial step in today's mass irrationalism, *error is evil*. To take an obvious contrast, Left critics have always worried about the social corruption of science, or the possibility of its being put to destructive uses, but this is an auto-critique on their part (think of J. Robert Oppenheimer on the H-bomb) which has as a goal the perfection or at least improvement of science and reason, not their destruction. Contrarily, where religion and other forms of knowledge are competitive, but only the former can define good and evil, then mistaken science or analysis or opinion of any kind-i.e., that which deviates from biblical literalism and moral rightness-becomes evil in and of itself; not just imperialistic, as post-structuralist critiques would have it, but *evil*.

The most important outcome of this position is that what the psychologist Anatol Rapoport called the confrontational style of debate (as we've been seeing in the Democratic primary, for example) is replaced by the confrontational style of the Fight. The method of debate is to acknowledge one's opponent's position in the strongest light so as to perfect one's own (this is Mill in *On Liberty*, of course). By contrast, the method of the Fight is simply to wipe out one's opponent, figuratively or often, literally.

In the context of a Fight, rational discussion is fruitless because there is no dialogue; from the standpoint of those engaged in it, the Fight is essentially one-sided. For example, the long run-up to the abolition of welfare by the Clinton administration consisted of years of dueling studies, hypothesizations, and so forth, about incentives, the poverty trap, the state of public opinion, etc. Some were better and some were worse methodologically, but they were all in the same ballpark (see Sanford Schram's critique, *Words on Welfare*, for an account of this debate). And of course the ballpark they were in was constructed in the 18th century by Jeremy Bentham, the father of welfare economics. Later amendments of his sometimes-nutty empiricism by more sociologically oriented critics such as Marx and Durkheim do not challenge the basis of his anti-religious modernism: that issues of policy can be discussed reasonably, by looking at the data. But this is not the way spokespersons for the ruling party in the U.S., which articulates both the neo-conservative and the counter-Enlightenment positions, approach issues now.

Two things are different at this moment in time. First, though all politicians lie, the current administration is historically unique in that its lies consist of proposing policies and legislative acts that secretly have the opposite intention from their announced goals in that ideological coherence and favors for friends are their only purpose. Therefore, they can't be analyzed as to their validity or accomplishment; I don't know of any other historical case of this kind. Second, and perhaps worse, careful and reputable scientific studies that contradict arguments made by the Bush administration or its supporters are simply suppressed or falsified: reasoned discussion is suppressed in deference to ideological correctness. (All of this documented in Eric Alterman and Mark Green's new book *The Book on Bush: How George W. Misleads America*). What is fascinating, perhaps startling, and certainly horrific, is that in the face of this assertive irrationalism, this know-nothingism, the neo-conservative right, that is, the intellectual right, has either fallen silent or joined the bandwagon. None of them speaks out against this Americanized version of Lysenkoism, or Aryan science. In the naked power struggle that these new Machiavellians call politics, any lie is better than none, and if the struggle is between good and evil, any lie is indeed absolutely necessary. We can think of no better example than Valerie Plame: what looks very much like treason is committed, by someone in the White House and by a stealth propagandist posing as a journalist, and no one in either wing of the conservative movement has a word of criticism to offer.

Here let me move back again to the religious counter-Enlightenment and speak of two current examples of contemporary irrationalism. The first is creationism. The importance of this phenomenon can hardly be over-emphasized. It sweeps throughout the blue states, where in many communities overwhelming majorities reject biological science *tout court*; and even some

of the red ones. The basis of creationism is either Biblical literalism or, worse, a wholly fraudulent "biology" known as Intelligent Design, masquerading as science in order to replace it. What this means is that an entire generation of Christian (as they call themselves) young people learns to value ideological lies over scientific investigation. The second example, of course, is the gay marriage hysteria. Here the materialism and rationalism of modern thought run entirely aground. What an economist would call perfect Pareto optimality-the apex of welfare economics, the pursuit of a happiness that harms no one and affects no one except those benefiting from it-is trumped by a thinking that the rationalist cannot even put a name to (except to denigrate it as, in Stuart Hall's useful phrase, a moral panic). Every negative comment about gay marriage rests itself on the same foundation, that our civilization is "at stake." No one is able to verbalize in the slightest how this might be so. Strengthening marriage symbolically apparently destroys it; more people undergoing the ritual of marriage apparently destroys it; two people affirming their commitment without benefit of a formal legal licensing process can be compared to looting, rioting, bestiality, and polyandry. I'm not sure whether to call this moral panic, intellectual degradation, moral madness, or simply evil let loose; but the result in any event is precisely that what cannot be verbalized, an ineffable something that has no content beyond its own appearance, surmounts and trumps the actual, the real, with its ineffability.

It is quite possible that, as various optimistic commentators have been saying, in the long run equality for gay persons is as unstoppable, in the formal legal sense at least, as it was for black persons in the formal legal sense; as it's become a cliché to point out, not forty years ago every word that's being said now about gay marriage was being said about interracial marriage. That moral panic, though-and even then it wasn't nearly as publicly hysterical-at least had a semi-rational basis, in that a real social hierarchy from which millions of white people benefited was on the way to being really overthrown in its last legal bastion. Today the descent into irrationality has no material social basis at all, only an emotional basis, an obsessive ideology, a fanaticism, posing as religion, that represents what Mill called the most monstrous doctrine of all: that I am injured if you behave in a way that offends me, even if your action has no material impact on me at all. He was right about that monstrousness. The debasing of rational thought by millions of people, and beyond that the acquiescence in or encouragement of that debasing by educated and knowledgeable persons who know the difference between hysteria and thought, chills the blood, and suggests that the lust for power has become unlimited. Together with the other aspects of the era I've mentioned, it bespeaks an urge to what I would call now proto-totalitarianism. It probably won't go further than that, because the material conditions are lacking, but the mere similarity is terrifying.

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The Committee’s Project: From Salt To Baghdad

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A legal *coup d’etat* brought the United States the most right-wing government in its history. However illegitimate the Bush Administration’s birth, though, its seizure of power marks the latest stage in a political process that is a quarter of a century old. Despite its 2000 resort to electoral fraud and legal trickery, the contemporary Right has been remarkably successful in undermining social welfare and militarizing the country. Still, it is an unstable coalition that is always under stress and occasionally shows signs of decomposition. These fractures offer new possibilities for progressive politics, but it’s important to be realistic. The Right’s constituents certainly differ in important respects, but its mass base of anti-statist populists and Christian zealots remain connected by similar roots and complementary programs. It shares a common origin in an attack on the civil rights, antiwar and associated social movements of the 1960s and 70s. Its resentment and insecurity continue to drive an often-contradictory project of free markets and moral restoration.

The third element of the modern Right has a different point of origin and a different focus of interest. Neo-conservativism initially took shape as a critique of post-Vietnam U.S. foreign policy and was then driven to the right on domestic issues by its virulent anti-communism. It is this tendency that has made the most persuasive arguments for the primacy of military strength in domestic and foreign affairs. The democratic upsurge of the 1960s and 70s and defeat in Vietnam notwithstanding, the neo-conservatives were able to convince the electorate that guns were more important than butter. Popular opinion had changed dramatically by the early years of the Reagan presidency, won over by the simplicity of the neo-conservative prescription for national renewal and the collapse of any credible alternative. From its original incarnation as the Committee on the Present Danger to its new version as the Project for a New American Century, neo-conservatism has taken its cue from Arthur Vandenberg’s famous advice to Harry Truman that he would have to “scare hell out of the American people” if he wanted to mount an aggressive global anticommunist foreign policy. For the last quarter of a century, its spokesmen have repeatedly claimed that liberal Democratic Presidents have left the United States dangerously vulnerable to internal corruption and dangerous foreign enemies. Even now, as its Iraqi gamble disintegrates and it drives the United States toward catastrophe, it continues to insist that building an unchallengeable military force can transform the world and organize an American century.

Post-World War II prosperity meant that anti-communism and militarism did not require an attack on social welfare, and Democratic Cold War liberals like Irving Kristol initially tended to defend the New Deal. But the Great Society was another thing altogether, and thinly disguised racist fears that economic redistribution could get in the way of an arms race drove the first

generation of neo-conservatives toward the GOP. Anticommunism had always pulled American politics to the right of course, and it wasn't long before Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, and Nathan Glazer were attacking economic redistribution, warning about affirmative action, and abandoning a Democratic Party that appeared too weak to discipline blacks at home and confront the Soviet Union abroad. Veterans of the "vital center," they worried that liberal weakness in the face of social disorder and wishful thinking about the international environment would make it difficult to divert limited resources toward a more aggressive foreign policy. Increasingly isolated in the Democratic Party, they were particularly alarmed by George McGovern's 1972 presidential candidacy. When some New York Jewish intellectuals added a reflexive defense of Israeli expansionism, a distinct ideological and political tendency organized around cutting social welfare and militarizing an anti-communist foreign policy appeared. It took the organizational form of the Committee on the Present Danger.

Originally formed in 1950 by a group of powerful Washington insiders, the first Committee on the Present Danger claimed to be a "citizen's lobby" that wanted to "alert the country" to the growing Soviet menace. Its insistent propaganda proved very helpful to those who wanted to establish the ideological foundations for a postwar anti-communist foreign policy. The central element was putting an end to post-war illusions that the United States could expand social welfare at home, since national "defense" would require a huge military build-up and a permanent struggle with an implacable foe. This bi-partisan consensus remained intact until the Johnson presidency. Defeat in Vietnam thoroughly discredited militarism and interventionism and another fear campaign promptly took shape. In 1976, the second Committee on the Present Danger warned that the United States was falling behind the Soviet Union in military matters and announced a new drive to reestablish "national defense" as the state's core activity. Its key elements were militarizing the struggle against Moscow, defending Israel, and blocking Third World redistributionist attacks on the developed states. As President Carter tried to move toward a more multilateral and cooperative international order by strengthening earlier Republican policies of detente and arms control, the Committee counterattacked. It claimed that the Soviet Union had effectively abandoned peaceful coexistence, was engaged in a massive rearmament campaign, and was seeking military supremacy and control of Middle Eastern oil. Insistent, urgent and increasingly radical attacks appeared in the pages of *Commentary*, all organized around false claims of American weakness, exposes of Soviet expansionism, assaults on detente and arms control, finger-pointing at black and Third World "anti-Semitism," defenses of anticommunist tyrants, criticism of Democratic post-Vietnam cowardice and defeatism, attacks on a parasitical black "underclass," and above all fears about the "Finlandization" of the United States.

Their attention to public opinion marked the neo-conservatives' growing sophistication. Earlier elements of the right hadn't bothered with appeals to the population, secure in the knowledge that established wealth and privilege would always carry the day. Defeat in Vietnam signaled a short-term change in the way Americans thought of themselves in the world, but it wasn't long before a distinctly conservative appeal based on militarism, stability, and nationalism appeared. Continuous attacks on alleged Democratic weakness and naïveté were mounted by a host of new right-wing "think tanks" and advocacy organizations, and as public opinion polls

registered increasing support for military spending, President Carter responded with a turn toward a more bellicose foreign policy toward the end of his term. The Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan were important catalysts, but a relentless ideological campaign had legitimized the view that the United States faced imminent peril and that military force is the prime determinant of a nation's international influence. All this proved too much for Carter. He could have fought and articulated a foreign policy of interdependence and internationalism, but he tried to compromise with a far more ideological and tenacious foe and ended up losing the struggle.

The Committee on the Present Danger's false claims about military vulnerability had put arms control and detente on trial, but it really came into its own with Reagan's election. Anticommunism and resistance to social justice have always gone together, and attacks on the welfare state cannot be understood apart from neo-conservative attacks on detente and arms control. Indeed, the sorry political history of the past twenty-five years began, not with a direct attack on the New Deal, but with the Committee on the Present Danger's warnings that Carter had disarmed the country, that detente was a trap, and that large increases in military spending were essential if the United States were to survive. In an environment of inflation, austerity and tight budgets, this required substantial attacks on social welfare and political democracy. Samuel Huntington's infamous 1975 essay on America's "democratic distemper" merely registered how much things had changed in so short a time. A reallocation of state priorities would end the country's "governability crisis," reduce demands on the state, restore traditional centers of authority and lead the way to an American renewal.

Reagan was just the man to make the argument. The Committee on the Present Danger's attacks on SALT II and its urgent warnings that a "window of vulnerability" had opened were as false as Kennedy's earlier claims about a Republican "missile gap" but it was always an ideological claim at bottom, and a lie endlessly repeated becomes truth if it's not exposed. As the neo-conservatives pushed a new anti-communist crusade abroad, they turned against the welfare state at home. If the social movements of the 1960s and 70s made the international struggle against the Soviet Union more difficult, they had to be contained. If notions of economic redistribution were becoming popular, they had to be defeated. If authority, patriotism and religion could strengthen state action abroad, so much the better. If the old alliance of mild social reform and militant anticommunism could no longer be maintained, good riddance particularly to black demands for economic justice.

And so we come to the Project for a New American Century, the heir to the Committee on the Present Danger and one of the most important voices of contemporary neo-conservatism. Founded in 1997, it developed the same sort of critique of Democratic weakness and vacillation as its predecessor but now the international context was different. Where the Committee made its living by inventing American weakness in face of an illusory Soviet threat, the Project adapted the first generation's aggressive militarism to an environment in which the United States stood unchallenged. Rearmament was no longer couched as a defensive necessity to save a beleaguered country; the collapse of the Soviet Union now gave Washington the chance to remake the entire world. But the basic approach was unchanged. Representing the

continuity between new and old, Chairman William Kristol, son of Irving, introduced the Project on its website. “The Project for the New American Century,” he announced, “is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to a few fundamental propositions: that American leadership is good both for America and for the world; that such leadership requires military strength, diplomatic energy and commitment to moral principle; and that too few political leaders today are making the case for global leadership. The Project for the New American Century intends, through issue briefs, research papers, advocacy journalism, conferences, and seminars, to explain what American world leadership entails,” he continued. “It will also strive to rally support for a vigorous and principled policy of American international involvement and to stimulate useful public debate on foreign and defense policy and America’s role in the world.”

This is not a trivial matter, since the entire analysis leads right to Baghdad. The leading lights of the Project for a New American Century, whose more aggressive name befits its more aggressive agenda, now sit at the very center of state power. Elliot Abrams, Gary Bauer, John Bolton, William Bennett, Jeb Bush, Dick Cheney, Frank Gaffney, Donald Kagan, Zalman Khalilzad, “Scooter” Libby, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz they’re all there, along with a sprinkling of old-timers like Midge Decter, Norman Podhoretz and Fred Ikle. The basic position is a simple one: a changed international environment means that the United States can and should do what it wants to remake the world. Since its goals are benevolent and beyond reproach, this boils down to the old doctrine that might makes right. Dramatic increases in military spending, confrontation with hostile regimes, and readiness to act unilaterally are the foundations of the neo-conservative approach, all of it taking shape in a happy era of unchallengeable American superiority.

It didn’t take long for these old ideas to become policy. As soon as its *coup* had been completed, the Bush Administration announced its intention to ignore the Kyoto Protocol, renounce arms control agreements, and oppose the International Criminal Court measures perfectly consistent with the Project’s claim that “the preservation of a decent world order depends chiefly on the exercise of American leadership.” The old policy proved infinitely adaptable to new conditions. Ensconced in power well before the events of September 11, Administration neo-conservatives were ready, willing and able to use national tragedy in service of an agenda that had been in place for years. They started out as aggressive triumphalists, but they knew that national catastrophe and the subsequent “war on terrorism” would allow them to apply Vandenberg’s advice to a changed international environment. If the Soviet Union was no longer useful, Al Qaeda would suffice.

Lest the connection to the Committee be lost, the Project had prepared a 90 page report that advocated “Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century.” Published in September 2000 and still available on its website, the report was written to affect the Presidential election and influence a new government. Like its predecessor, the Project issued its report at the end of a Democratic administration; like its predecessor, it promised a more muscular approach to force; and, like its predecessor, it demanded a reordering of spending priorities. If the Committee’s tone had been worried,

alarmist and defensive, the Project was calmer and more confident as it made the case for a vast new arms buildup in support of an aggressive foreign policy. If the Committee had warned that American survival depended on countering a gathering Soviet threat, the Project "has been concerned with the decline in the strength of America's defenses, and in the problems this would create for the exercise of American leadership around the globe and, ultimately, for the preservation of peace." Now is not the time, the report argued, to retreat from the country's "responsibility" to maintain world order. Military power is the most reliable pillar of stability and peace, it insisted, and once again the neo-conservatives were able to cloak themselves in the mantle of sober, mature responsibility in the name of breaking with illusion, vacillation and weakness.

This entire argument was in place before September 11. Indeed, the neo-conservatives seized power as old-fashioned realists who thought they were operating in a classical state system that was subject to traditional rules of action. Having spent years thinking about the future, their initial approach was directed more against China than anyone else. But however inept their thinking and ham-handed their action after September 11th, the old trade-off of guns for butter remained intact. "Maintaining U.S. preeminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests" required the abandonment of all illusions that a "peace dividend" was available to improve the quality of life at home. Now is the time, the Project's report repeatedly insists, to act decisively and reorganize the world. The original world view is unchanged. If anti-Soviet containment had yielded to a more explicitly aggressive foreign policy centered on East Asia, then massive spending to "modernize" American forces to fight multiple wars has become indispensable. American troops and other "assets" have to be stationed around the world; the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty must be renounced so the U.S. can build its long-desired interceptor system; the Army must be transformed into a devastating and flexible offensive power; the Air Force has to become a "global first-strike force"; and the Navy must be able to "dominate the open oceans."

Lest there be any doubt about the stakes involved or the sacrifices that will be demanded, the report made its priorities clear. "Keeping the American peace," it said, "requires the U.S. military to undertake a broad array of missions today and rise to very different challenges tomorrow, but there can be no retreat from these missions without compromising American leadership and the benevolent order it secures. This is the choice we face. It is not a choice between preeminence today and preeminence tomorrow. Global leadership is not something exercised at our leisure, when the mood strikes us or when our core national security interests are directly threatened; then it is already too late. Rather, it is a choice whether or not to maintain American military preeminence, to secure American geopolitical leadership, and to preserve the American peace." If Defense Secretary (and former General Motors Chairman) Charles Wilson had scandalized Eisenhower's America by declaring that "what's good for GM is good for the country," the Project was prepared to go one step further. What's good for America is now good for the world.

Long before Al Qaeda was a gleam in the Project's eyes, its Report was borrowing a page from

Orwell. It described an endless struggle for world supremacy fought on many fronts, a permanently militarized society, and an explicit renunciation of this country's proud history of social reform, democracy and equality. Remaking the world won't be cheap or easy; organizing a *Pax Americana* will require money, time and resources. The Project's Executive Director Gary Schmitt knows where they should come from. Maintaining a balanced budget is beyond debate, since it's out of the question to ask the owners of capital to pay for their empire. But that shouldn't be a problem, so long as the country is willing to come to its senses, gets its priorities straight, and reach the appropriate conclusions about who ought to foot the bill for all this. "During the 1950s," he observes, "the budget was balanced and large sums went to the military. What has changed, of course, is spending on domestic programs. Although the drop in defense spending is linked to the end of the Cold War, it is not the sole nor principal reason why the decline started in the mid-1980s and continues unabated. Rather, the DOD budget has been squeezed by the persistent increase in entitlements and other domestic programs. Over the past decade, and despite concerns raised by Congress and the President about the deficit, non-defense discretionary spending has grown by some 24 percent above the inflation rate." It's remarkable to hear that the under funded, stingy and mean-spirited American welfare state is responsible for dangerously "squeezing" a bloated, parasitical and insupportable military budget. Schmitt's remarkable statement should be taken for what it is: a manifesto of the Military-Industrial Complex against which Eisenhower warned the country nearly fifty years ago. It gives formal expression to a drive toward empire that is more formally acknowledged and explicitly embraced than at any time in recent memory. This drive coexists with indeed, it is made possible by an unprecedented concentration of wealth and power in a tiny section of the population, a political apparatus openly dedicated to serving property and money, and an increasingly explicit fusion of economic and political power that merits the ancient term "plutocracy."

Only when a permanent war economy is the order of the day is it possible to have one's cake and eat it too. If increased defense spending was indispensable at the end of the 1970s because of American weakness and vulnerability, it was indispensable on September 10 2001 because of American strength and invulnerability. It follows, of course, that it is even more indispensable since September 12 because of crisis, challenge and threat. It turns out that terrorism didn't "change everything" at all. The clock moves on, but the underlying politics of the present period have stood still. Militarism without end doesn't need an explicit set of rationales for its justification. Schmitt knows that the process has acquired a logic of its own. "Justifying such a budget increase requires moving beyond the idea that defense spending is tied simply to meeting specific threats. It means, instead, defending a large defense budget as a necessary but affordable means for taking advantage of the strategic opportunity the country has at hand. Finally, it means adoption by the United States of a grand strategy that is animated not by fear of some looming danger but, rather, pride in the confluence on the world stage of American power and principles at the close of the 20th century."

September 11th did little but change the terms of the equation without affecting any of its underlying premises. The Project's report named Iraq, North Korea and Iran the Administration's "axis of evil" as problem states before Bush's *coup* was consummated, and it's

well known that it was calling for an invasion of Iraq as early as 1997. Nothing has changed, but things are a lot clearer. It's no coincidence that the neo-conservatives came to power during the same period in which the state has organized the most conscious and aggressive assault on social welfare and economic equality in American history. Vandenberg was right. In the long run guns and butter were bound to clash, and the conditions that made it possible for mild social reform at home to coexist with counterrevolutionary policies abroad no longer exist. The economic expansion and generally redistributive effects of the postwar "Great Compression" featured a narrowing of class inequality and a long period of generally-shared prosperity that sustained the liberal Cold War consensus. Great swaths of the population were excluded of course, but the gains were sufficiently impressive that the country could have guns and butter at the same time. But those days have been gone for a long time. The United States is now the most unequal developed country on the planet, a trend that has been accelerating since the mid-1970s and shows no signs of slowing down. It's no accident that the tendency toward plutocracy coincides with the foreign policy trends we've been examining nor is it an accident that the country faces the choice to which the ancients pointed. Now as never before, the choice between empire and democracy has thrust itself to the center of national politics. Now as never before, militarism means inequality. Now as never before, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few means declining living standards for the many. Now as never before, plutocracy makes democracy a sham. Now as never before, an ideological apparatus built on lies deforms public life. Now as never before, Americans need to remember what democracy and freedom really mean.

How did militarism and inequality come to shape a country with a proud egalitarian tradition and a long history of social reform? Neo-conservatism originated in a series of critiques of foreign policy, the Great Society, and the social movements of the late 1960s and early 70s. A conscious program to militarize American society has been developing in fits and starts for the past twenty-five years, its momentum partly shaped by the need to win a wide measure of popular consent. Economic crisis, persistent poverty, runaway inflation, the political mobilization of business, the collapse of Keynesianism, a religious Great Awakening all played important parts in the story, but the independent power of ideology was enormous. Fear and insecurity have contributed mightily to the popularity of ideas that stand in bald contradiction to the most vibrant impulses of American democracy and to the interests of the vast majority of its people.

The Right came to power by stoking fears that the United States was in imminent danger from the Soviet Union, that racial privilege was under attack, that women were out of control, and that the country's "Judeo-Christian" heritage was under assault. It has offered a witches' brew of militarism, consumerism and moralism as an alternative. It continues to rely on the same bag of tricks, cynically using the threat of terrorism to advance a political program that accelerates a drive toward empire abroad and toward social disaster at home. But nothing is permanent, in love, war or politics. If the past quarter of a century teaches us anything, it is that the American people can be won over to a program of democratic renewal and social justice. Such a program need not be organized at the expense of a "war on terror" if the latter is organized on a rational, democratic, and multilateral basis. The extremist clique running the

country is demonstrably unable to do so. The neo-conservative vision of the world is deeply inaccurate and, for that reason, profoundly dangerous. Its spokesmen and organizers are driving the world toward disaster. It's time to expose them for the ignorant, brutal charlatans they are and reinvigorate American democracy as we do so.

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The Never Ending War On The Welfare State

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

Commenting on the administration's decision to create a new drug benefit for seniors, one highly-respected liberal columnist recently observed that "political considerations seemed to be pushing George W. Bush further and further into the New Deal way of life."[i] But Bush's obvious ploy to pick up senior votes should be cold comfort to anyone who cares about public provision. The right still intends to undo the welfare state. And there's a good chance it might succeed. For one thing, at least in social policy, the right's strategy is carefully crafted and brilliantly conceived. Moreover, American conservatives enjoy enormous political advantages that are no likely to go away soon. Finally, the left has not yet worked out a practical political response to retrenchment.

Strategy

The right's strategy consists of three interrelated and hard to defend against elements. First, conservatives are working overtime to impose a fiscal straightjacket on social policy. The welfare state depends on government's ability to raise revenues that can be spent on public purposes. The "Keynesian welfare state" that spread widely in the West after World War Two assumed a virtuous cycle in which public spending would stimulate the economy, leading to higher tax revenues, leading in turn to even more generous social spending. In this way, governments could commit themselves simultaneously to promoting economic growth and maintaining a variety of safety-net programs.

But using the economic troubles of the 1970s as political cover, conservatives set out in the 1980s to undo this accord. While the right claimed only to want to put the government's fiscal house in order, the Reagan administration's indifference to the deficits caused by its simultaneous embrace of tax cuts and military spending made clear that fiscal probity was not high on its agenda. To the contrary, some conservatives saw in the huge shortfall an opportunity to tighten the noose around federal spending. David Stockman, Reagan's first budget director, admitted as much at the time.[ii] More recently, Irving Kristol, a founding neoconservative, unashamedly confessed that the right cared little for the niceties of economic theory or "the accounting deficiencies of government." Rather, "political effectiveness…was the priority."[iii]

As soon as the federal budget came back into balance in the late 1990s, another Republican administration adopted the very same strategy. Immediately upon taking office, the Bush White House proposed simultaneously record tax cuts and a massive buildup of the military. Worse, even as economic forecasters warned of looming deficits in Medicare and Social Security, the

administration sought to lock in these regressive changes in the tax code in order to make it impossible even to imagine that the federal government might one day find the revenues needed to save these two safety net programs from draconian cuts. Just as the enormous federal budget deficits run up in the Reagan years handicapped liberal Democrats in the 1990s, Bush's record setting deficits will tie the hands of future, even decidedly more liberal, presidents.

This conservative about face on deficit spending poses an enormous challenge to the welfare state. By starving the federal government of resources, the right is able to argue for cuts in social spending in order to "save" the very same programs they hope to eviscerate. Liberals are boxed into a corner. If they focus on the deficits, the right responds by demanding even great tax cuts on the argument that the promised economic growth that they recklessly assume will be forthcoming will balance the budget. If liberals ignore the deficits and push for increased social spending, *they* are blamed for the fiscal mess. All the while, those on the right who remain true to old-style fiscal conservativism maintain a steady chorus condemning government spending in principle. And because the tax cuts are skewed so mightily to upper-income groups, they increase inequality, making life that much harder for people who depend on the benefit programs that the right wants to cut.

Explained this way, of course, its easy to see through the right's rhetoric. But the complexity of the strategy makes it hard for voters to grasp what's going on, particularly as the right denies all responsibility for the problem. And as usual, the media fail to connect the dots, leaving the public entirely in the dark about the long-term implications of this ground shift in welfare state politics.

The right's retrenchment strategy also targets the way social programs are designed and implemented. Conservatives want both to change the legal status of benefits from "rights" or "entitlements" to "privileges" and, wherever possible, to privatize welfare state functions.

The attack on entitlements is well underway. The historic 1996 welfare reform act, which replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families did far more than impose work obligations and push millions of people off the rolls. Even more ominously, it replaced the 1935 Social Security Act's open-ended entitlement to public assistance with a block grant: the federal and state governments are no longer required to help everyone who qualifies; people can and are denied benefits simply because Congress or the state legislatures fail to appropriate enough money to meet their needs. This is a direct and to this point successful challenge to the hard won idea that income security is a social "right" rather than charity to be doled out at the discretion of willing benefactors.

Privatizers intend an equally radical reversal of direction. In some cases, privatization means that government contracts with for-profit corporations and non-profit agencies to run programs previously administered by public agencies. After the 1996 welfare reform, a wide variety of for-profit firms jumped into this suddenly lucrative market, competing for state contracts to provide social services to welfare state clients. In other cases, such as public housing, clients

are given vouchers to purchase services on their own. In still other instances, tax credits are used to encourage people to save money on their own, whether for “Medical Savings Accounts” or individualized retirement plans.

There are very good reasons to be skeptical of efforts to turn social programs, particularly those that serve the most vulnerable, over to the private sector. For one, far from lowering costs, private provision often *increases* them, if only because of the administrative efficiencies that follow when implementation is farmed out to hundreds if not thousands of competing private providers. This notion flies in the face of the received wisdom that competition and privatization always save money, but the fact that the U.S., which relies so heavily on private insurers, spends twice as much on administrative costs as a proportion of total health care costs than does Canada, with its government-run, single-payer system, should put that notion to rest. [iv] Private providers expect a “fair rate of return” on their investment and pay their executives salaries that far outstrip anything paid to even the best paid public bureaucrats. Wall Street investment firms have poured millions of dollars into the campaign to privatize social security because they expect to make billions off of the fees that they will charge individuals to manage their accounts-fees that will far outstrip the administrative costs of the current public system.

Private corporations are also just as if not more likely to misspend money as public agencies. For example, after Maximus, a for-profit Wisconsin corporation responsible for serving welfare clients in Milwaukee, was charged with misusing public funds, an independent state audit determined that the company couldn’t account for nearly *three-fourths* of the expenditures it had claimed.[v]

But these complaints mean little to the right, as ongoing efforts to “reform” Medicare by offering public subsidies to for-profit HMO’s who take in more seniors as well as the decision to create a Medicare drug benefit that does nothing to cap the costs of pharmaceuticals show. In fact, as Bush’s and entirely duplicity campaign to pass the drug benefit bill indicates, the right is willing to spend even more at least in the short run if that will assure that control over the welfare state is transferred to the private sector.

Some suggest that privatization can be managed fairly and efficiently. Certainly it would be possible in principle for the government to insist that private providers watch what they spend and how they treat clients. But it’s proven quite hard to hold private corporations and agencies accountable to these sorts of standards. Private contractors almost always try to exercise as much discretion as possible in meeting government mandates; it’s one way they cut costs and increase profits. Given what we know about how large corporations treat their consumers and workers, it hard to believe that they will treat welfare clients and the elderly any better. It’s difficult for anyone who has tried to get Blue Cross or Aetna to correct a billing error to imagine that they will be more responsive once they’ve been given large chunks of the welfare state to administer.

Moreover, as the right pushes to means test more benefits and to more tightly supervise the

behavior of people who use public benefits, the problem will get worse. Imagine a future in which private corporations impose personal standards on people in need, denying benefits to those who don't meet some arbitrary ideological or behavioral test, in order to enhance their bottom lines. Handing over welfare state administration to "faith based" charities will not improve the situation. Not only are these institutions likely to discriminate among beneficiaries, they are also likely to demand a great deal of behavioral and even ideological conformity in return for help. Given the right's eagerness to impose a conservative Christian view of the world on people's behavior, this could get quite ugly.

In the end, of course, that, and not money, may be the point. The right wants privatization because it challenges the notion that recipients are citizens with rights and, as such, should be treated with equal treatment and equal respect whether or not they have jobs or read the Bible.

As the third element in it's retrenchment strategy, the right has mounted a carefully conceived ideological offensive against the very idea of public provision. Here too, conservatives typically hide their true intent. Rather than directly challenge the notion that, as members of a political community, people have a valid claim on that community's resources in times of need, the right has sought to portray public provision as a violation of core American values, including personal responsibility, property rights, and limited government.

Two themes are regularly repeated as if they were intuitively obvious and unassailable. First, any effort to redistribute income or wealth is an inherently "unfair" taking of property; people have only a right to what they've earned or saved (or, apparently, inherited). Never mind that private property depends upon public institutions for its very existence, or that the poor often pay a greater, not lesser, percentage of their income in taxes. Or that government always redistributes in some fashion – that it is impossible to imagine spending and benefit programs, whatever their objective, that reward people in precise proportion to their "contribution." Or that their contribution could be measured in a variety of ways, including service to the community or to family or to nation. The right insists that any public claim on private property is inherently suspect.

Second, the right insists that government almost never does a better job than the private sector. Though legion, examples of private sector inefficiency and waste are, they argue, exceptions to the rule while examples of public sector malfeasance illustrate the norm. Sophisticated theoretical reasons are offered for this claim but these models always idealize the free-market and demonize bureaucrats and legislators. They never admit the myriad market failures that everyone but the most ideological laissez-faire economists recognize, or the long list of things that government has done well, from public health to the creation of the internet. "Big" government simply cannot get it right.

To support these theoretical arguments, the right resorts to a series of false claims and mythical ideas for which there is little if any empirical evidence. Social spending, we are told, is always at odds with job creation while the tax system punishes work and investment and

rewards sloth. Public assistance is so generous that it allows those who don't want to work to live a life of leisure, all the while encouraging child bearing by women who wouldn't (or shouldn't) otherwise have kids. These programs, in turn, are the root source of the government's budgetary problems. Finally, the welfare state has largely benefited racial minorities at the expense of the majority white population.

Power

Conservatives are also winning their war against welfare because the balance of political power has turned so sharply against the left. Though obvious, this points bears repeating, if only because the media still seem to take seriously the idea that America is run by "liberal elites."

Capital's power in Washington and the states capitols has grown significantly since the 1960s because corporations have poured billions of dollars into political campaigns and lobbying, fighting for and winning a broad pro-business agenda. While cuts in public assistance are not at the top of this list, tax cuts are, as are cutbacks in any public benefits that might shelter workers from the discipline of labor markets. Wherever we find "independent" organizations like the Concord Coalition and "non-partisan" studies arguing for "fiscal responsibility," we're likely to find corporate funding and corporate friendly scholars on the payroll. And even though a mountain of research contradicts every one of the right's myths, these fantasies remain alive and well, spread by this network of well-funded conservative propagandists comfortably housed in think tanks and showcased by friendly media mega-corporations.

Cutting the welfare state also dovetails nicely with the New Right's political agenda. While other issues matter more to this jerry-rigged coalition of neoconservatives, free-market ideologues, and religious fundamentalists, each of these groups has found it useful to bash the welfare state in its campaign against the horrors of liberal government.

For their own reasons, both political parties have gone along for the ride. Republicans have appealed to the middle class with images of "slackers" and "welfare queens" while promising to give back the money saved through retrenchment. Whether or not the promised tax cuts ever get to the middle class few do this campaign has convinced just enough middle-class voters to defect from liberalism to create real problems for the Democrats. For their part, Democrats have chosen to defend specific programs, notably Social Security and Medicare, but not the underlying principles that animate the welfare state. This appeal to the self-interest of seniors has worked on occasion, but it comes at a great political cost because the Democrats have all but ceded the ideological ground to the right.

The decline of organized labor has enormously complicated progressive efforts to defend public provision. In fact, labor's own political and bargaining strategies, which have privileged negotiating private, job-based benefits from employers rather then universal benefits for workers as a class, have undermined efforts to put together a broad coalition in defense of social welfare. Until quite recently, organized labor's reluctance to join with advocates for the

poor and for immigrants in their efforts to defend programs targeted on unorganized workers has made matters worse.

The way that American liberals went about building the welfare state has also made social provision vulnerable. Put simply, there's far too little universalism (too many benefits are targeted on specific populations); the benefits are incomplete (there's next to no publicly-funded job training, for example); and there are far too few cost controls (the pharmaceutical companies will make a killing off of the new drug benefit, as doctors and hospitals once did off of Medicare). This costly but incomplete and inefficient version of the welfare state has led to a vicious cycle of overselling, under funding, policy failure, and political alienation, leading to calls for further cuts.

Finally, the right's willingness, even eagerness, to exploit the troubled relationship between welfare and race in the U.S. has further undermined public support for public provision. Welfare states are most easily defended when they are perceived as a shared reward for shared sacrifice, another way to assert a national, communal identity. It's not accidental that the modern welfare state expanded dramatically in the aftermath of World Wars One and Two, when the citizens of the Western democracies saw themselves as having pulled together to resist foreign aggression. But the assertion of a shared national identity is easiest in homogenous societies or at least in societies where racial, ethnic, and language differences have been incorporated into the political system in settled and legitimate ways. The U.S. did neither. Initially, blacks were simply denied benefits. Even the landmark Social Security Act excluded the two principal sectors agriculture and domestic work where blacks were concentrated. When the civil rights movements made racial exclusion no longer politically viable, the right worked overtime to make it seem as if blacks had blackmailed politicians into granting them these benefits rather than earning them as whites had done.

How to Respond

The right is also winning because none of the left's responses are gaining any political traction. Moving out from the center, the least ambitious response is to try to hold onto the New Deal and Great Society's vision of social justice while building a welfare state that appeals to the mainstream because it emphasizes work, market competition, and personal responsibility. These progressives believe that they can cut costs by introducing market incentives and encouraging individuals to save for their own retirement and health care while simultaneously selectively introducing some new benefits for the working poor, including health insurance coverage and even a modified "living" wage. This is essentially the New Democrat strategy and was, at bottom, Bill Clinton's approach.

Unlike the right's war against the welfare state, and contrary to what some on the left fear, this strategy is not intended as a Trojan horse to gut social protection. Contrary to the Republican right, Democratic Party centrists actually believe in the basic idea of public provision; they just don't like the idea that government must always take the lead. That's true, of course, But it doesn't address the larger political problem: while this strategy is supposed to appeal to the

mainstream, it actually captures no one imagination apart from the policy analysts and business friendly Democrats who've designed it. That was clear in the struggle over welfare reform in 1996 when the Republicans were able to replace Clinton's initial proposal to support work with expanded social services with a far more punitive work requirement that did little to actually help the poor.

Moreover, because it does not clearly address the fiscal straightjacket that the Republicans have imposed on welfare state spending, it is unclear how the centrist strategy might be financed. These two problems are related: without a political movement in support of such a program, it's hard to imagine mobilizing enough political support to restructure the tax system to pay for it. However long and hard Matt Miller may call for devoting 2% of the GDP to a renewed social compact, it's hard to believe that this or any Congress that might be elected in the near future is going to allocate the requisite $220 billion a year.[vi] In fact, as Al Gore's election year promise in 2000 to create a social security "lock box" illustrates, even Democrats have a hard time endorsing an expansion of the welfare state beyond core New Deal programs.

Putting a new round of welfare state spending off until the budget is once again in surplus is not going to solve the problem because Democratic Party efforts to balance the budget are likely to be exploited by Republicans who are eager to squander any and all surpluses on the military and tax cuts.

The interest group politics of this centrist solution are also not obvious. If recent history is any indication, middle class voters don't care much about the working poor, let alone the truly dispossessed. And the rich are likely to resist any effort to means-test programs like Social Security and Medicare. Nor is there any fiscally sound way to increase medical benefits without doing one or more of the following: forcing private providers to take less, forcing recipients into managed care, forcing drug companies to charge less, and cutting insurance companies out. All are politically explosive.

But while it's easy to criticize the New Democrat strategy, it's harder to figure out what to do differently. For one thing, there are deep differences on the left about whether existing programs are even worth defending. Work-based welfare reinforces capitalist norms. Is that our goal? Should progressives lobby to expand social services so that mothers can go to work, or push, instead, for expanded cash grants so that these poor women can stay home to care for their children? There is also little consensus on what to do next in particular on how to move from fighting against retrenchment to a more offensive strategy or whether that is even possible in the current political climate.

Consider the social democratic agenda. Clearly it's more radical and more humane than the New Democrat one. But at the end of the day, it is also organized around the idea that people should work and that social policy should reward and support that effort. But increases in labor productivity and capital flight threaten job creation throughout the West while global competition makes it even harder for nation-states to adopt Keynesian-style economic policies.

It’s also doubtful that social democracy can be sustained politically. Events in Europe suggest just how dire the situation is. Recently, mass demonstrations and major strikes in Italy failed to stop a new decree restricting pension rights. Though unpopular, the Raffarin government in France continues to press pension reform-despite the right’s electoral losses. In Germany, IG Metall ended a strike to extend the 35-hour working week eastward without winning any concessions-the union’s most dramatic defeat in fifty years. And while European social democrats have recently shown some interest in returning to Keynesian demand management techniques, it’s not at all clear that the European Union’s budgetary rules, however flexible, will actually allow that.

Recognizing that reformist social democracy may be played out, those on the “post industrial” left have argued for an entirely different approach based on the idea that social policy should be used not to prepare workers for routine jobs in industry and the service sector, but to teach new ways of working, thinking, and being. Rather than “train” people, government should provide individuals with the resources to educate, enrich, and enlighten themselves. The goal is not only to create more productive workers, but to encourage a more sophisticated and enlightened society. Certainly, enlightenment would have economic benefits: presumably, better educated workers would be more productive and more flexible, and find it easier to adapt to a changing workplace. But the real payoff would be social: these enlightened workers would make better citizens too.

But as attractive as this vision sounds, it’s hard to figure out how to get there from here. If it’s not easy to imagine cobbling together a political coalition to reenergize social democracy, which would at least appeal to organized labor and advocates for the poor, it is doubly difficult to figure out how to build a political coalition in support of post-industrial social policy. The middle class stands to benefit but it would likely only see the increased tax burden. To firms, the economic benefits are both long-term and hard to capture. Because they are “public goods,” no one is likely to lobby for them or be willing to pay the bill. Moreover, if, as advocates of this sort of social policy innovation want, government provides universal cash grants to people to invest in themselves, this program would be extraordinarily expensive. Conversely, if it is targeted on those in greatest need, it would likely devolve into a small-scale, means-tested, showcase project with little impact. It is important to remember that both social democratic and post-industrial social policies have been on the table in Europe for decades, and even those welfare states have run out of steam. It’s hard to imagine that the U.S. would finish this course when it is, in fact, running full speed in the opposite direction.

Some on the left suggest that whatever we do about the welfare state be part of a more radical and populist assault on American capitalism. They think that the left should harness the anger and discontent now directed at a host of targets, from big government to corporate pirates, to take on corporate capitalism itself, demanding more from the state, reasserting the logic of community against the market and the disenfranchised against the rich. Rather than tinker with social policy or worry about labor productivity, the left should demand that government take care of basic human needs at whatever cost. As long as we begin from capitalist premises, people will be forced to depend on the kindness of markets and enlightened capitalists. That

logic should be rejected in its entirely. Radically redistributive taxes; basic income grants; community control of local economic development this vision combines the best of progressive social policy with community activism and the goals of the anti-corporate globalization movement.

Forging alliances between college students protesting the IMF and poor mothers forced off of welfare, building coalitions of unionists, environmentalists, small business, and feminists, this strategy certainly represents the left at its best. But it also seems entirely unrealistic at the moment. These radical movements are only trace elements in American society. And organized labor is in decline. Moreover, while there is really very little in the short-run for the blue-collar working class or even the white-collar middle class in this strategy, it will go nowhere without them. As the New Democrats understand, reformers still have to win elections.

Nonetheless, there are some reasons to be optimistic, some developments that bear watching, and some openings that can be exploited.

For one, Western democracies are likely to see a steady erosion of social protection in the coming years, if only because capitalism is getting harder on everyday life and government has fewer resources to cushion the blows. This may move significant numbers of people to the left, if only for help. A real crisis in the provision of health care or a major reduction in pensions could spark a serious movement for reform. Ironically, the steady decline of organized labor in the U.S. means that private, union-negotiated security arrangements that have sheltered so many workers and made them less dependent on public benefits are not likely to survive, forcing those once-privileged employees into the same boat as other, less fortunate workers. Additionally, some of the racial and ethnic rivalries that undermine efforts to defend public provision may moderate as millions of recent immigrants are assimilated and African Americans are more fully incorporated into American economy and society. All of these things could change the political calculus suddenly, making new alliances and coalitions possible.

Obviously, we're not there yet. Particularly in the U.S., it may be a long time before the left can bring the right to bay. But progressives need to be very clear about just how much is at stake whenever the right turns its attention to the welfare state.
Notes

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Leo Strauss And The Rhetoric Of The War On Terror

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A very curious piece appeared on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times* on June 7, 2003. Its author was Jenny Strauss Clay, a professor of classics at the University of Virginia, and the title was, “The Real Leo Strauss.” Highlighted in a box midway down the page were the words, “My father was a teacher, not a right-wing guru.” Clay wrote,

Recent news articles have portrayed my father, Leo Strauss, as the mastermind behind the neoconservative ideologues who control United States foreign policy. He reaches out from his 30-year-old grave, we are told, to direct a cabal’ (a word with distinct anti-Semitic overtones) of Bush administration figures hoping to subject the American people to rule by a ruthless elite. I do not recognize the Leo Strauss presented in these articles.

The “recent articles” had appeared in an array of magazines and newspapers, including the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and *The New Yorker*. In only one of these does the term “cabal” appear. That one was Seymour Hersh’s*New Yorker* article, the opening line of which is, “They call themselves, self-mockingly, The Cabal,’ a small cluster of policy advisers and analysts now based in the Pentagon’s Office of Special Plans.” Abram Schulsky, “a scholarly expert in the works of the political philosopher Leo Strauss,” directs this self-identified cabal, according to Hersh.

In Clay’s apologia on behalf of her father, she wrote, “My father was not a politician. He taught political theory, primarily at the University of Chicago.” It is not incidental that Leo Strauss rarely, if ever, referred to what he taught as political theory, but that is another thing that I will come back to. “He was a conservative insofar as he did not think that change is necessarily for the better,” which is a rather bland description of a conservative. “Leo Strauss believed,” she wrote,

In the intrinsic dignity of the political. He believed in and defended liberal democracy, although he was not blind to its flaws. He felt it was the best form of government that could be realize, the last best hope.' He was an enemy of any regime that aspired to global domination. He despised utopianism, in our time Nazism and communism, which is predicated on a denial of a fundamental and even noble feature of human nature, love of one's own. His heroes were Churchill and Lincoln.

Keep in mind a few of the things that come up in this paragraph. Among these is the notion of the "dignity of political." We still need to know exactly what Leo Strauss thought the political was, as well as what he thought liberal democracy was and in what sense he was a defender of it. The use of the word "regime" on the part of his daughter is not entirely innocent, as we will see later on, and the notion that Churchill and Lincoln were his heroes and on the other hand that Nazism and communism were the things that he abhorred-I am going to come back to all of those things in due course.

Prof. Clay went on to say, "The fact is that Leo Strauss"-and this is very important and is the reason why the issue here is ultimately of much more than academic interest-

Also recognized a multiplicity of readers, but he had enough faith in his author to assume that they, too, recognized that they would have a diverse readership. Some of their readers, the ancients realized, would want only to find their own views and prejudices confirmed. Others might be willing to open themselves to new, perhaps unconventional or unpopular, ideas. I personally think my father's rediscovery of the art of writing for different kinds of readers will be his most lasting legacy.

Strauss' students are aware of the impression their admiration for him makes on outsiders. Allen Bloom was the best known of those students thanks to his best-selling 1987 anti-egalitarian diatribe *The Closing of the American Mind*, and more recently to his having been "outed" by his old friend Saul Bellow in Bellow's novel, *Ravelstein*. In his tribute to his former teacher, published after Strauss's death, Bloom observed that "those of us who know him saw in him such a power of mind, such a unity and purpose of life, such a rare mixture of the human elements resulting in a harmonious expression of the virtues, moral and intellectual, that our account of him is likely to evoke disbelief or ridicule from those who have never experienced a man of this quality."[i] Bloom's rhetorical strategy here of appropriating a projected criticism-the fawning admiration Straussians have for their teacher/founder and turning it around-also has the effect of demarcating an "out-group" that does not understand from an in-group that has experienced the truth, which is another characteristic feature of the style and substance of what makes a Straussian.

It is partly the aura that emanates from Strauss that gives credence to the claims of conspiracy when Straussians are involved in something, if that is in fact the claim that people make. More particularly, the prominence given to the notion of a charismatic founder within the Straussian fold means that it quickly begins to look like a cult.

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Who was Leo Strauss? He was born in Germany in 1899 and died in the United States in 1973. As was the case for many German Jewish intellectuals of his generation, he was active in Jewish youth groups in the 1920s. The ones that he was involved with were mostly inspired by the German nationalist youth movement. In Strauss's case, he admired the sense of spiritual unity that was promulgated in these German youth groups and it was that sort of nationalist or spiritual element that was appealing to him. He wrote a book on Spinoza published in 1930 and left Germany in 1932 on a Rockefeller Foundation grant for research on Thomas Hobbes in Paris and London. He was thus in Paris when the Nazis took power. However, Strauss should not be confused with the anti-Nazi refugees who soon arrived in the French capital, because at this time he was a committed anti-liberal, in the German sense of anti-liberal, which is to say, among other things, an anti-parliamentarian. Also in 1932, he wrote an extended review of a book by the German legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt entitled *The Concept of the Political*, in which Schmitt articulated his notion that the core of the political problem is the distinction between friends and enemies. Schmitt later became a member of the Nazi party and a leading figure in the main legal organization of the Third Reich. In Strauss's review, he criticized Schmitt from the political right. He argued that "the critique introduced by Schmitt against liberalism can . . . be completed only if one succeeds in gaining a horizon beyond liberalism. In such a horizon Hobbes completed the foundation of liberalism. A radical critique of liberalism is thus possible only on the basis of an adequate understanding of Hobbes."[ii] His point was that Schmitt was, in his criticisms of liberalism, working within the bounds of liberal society because liberalism had become so dominant that it was difficult see beyond it anymore, and it was thus necessary to go back to Hobbes to see what was there before. What was there before was a very strong sense of the absolute dichotomies of good and evil. For Strauss, Hobbes represents the foundation of liberalism and modernism in the claim that these notions of good and evil are nominalist; they simply do not exist in anything other than our judgment about them. So Strauss was suggesting that you had to go back before liberalism to reconnect with the sort of absolutist distinctions upon which Schmitt was attempting to ground the political.

German scholar Karl Löwith. This letter is included in an edition of Strauss' works and letters that has not been translated.[iii] Strauss wrote to Löwith in May 1933, five months after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor and a month after implementation of the first anti-Jewish legislation, that "Just because Germany has turned to the right and has expelled us," meaning Jews, "it simply does not follow that the principles of the right are therefore to be rejected. To the contrary, only on the basis of principles of the right-fascist, authoritarian, *imperial* [emphasis in original]-is it possible in a dignified manner, without the ridiculous and pitiful appeal to the inalienable rights of man' to protest against the mean nonentity," the mean nonentity being the Nazi party. In other words, he is attacking the Nazis from the right in this letter. He wrote that he had been reading Caesar's *Commentaries*, and valued Virgil's judgment that, "under imperial rule the subjected are spared and the proud are subdued." And he concluded, "there is no reason to crawl to the cross, even to the cross of liberalism, as long as anywhere in the world the spark glimmers of Roman thinking. And moreover, better than

any cross is the ghetto."

Two months later, in July 1933, he wrote to Schmitt-he did not realize that Schmitt had joined the Nazi party, or seemed not to fully understand what the regime was about in terms of its anti-Semitism-asking for help in getting entrée to Charles Maurras, the French right-wing Catholic leader of the *Action Française*. What all of this suggests is that in the 1930s Strauss was not an anti-liberal in the sense in which we commonly mean "anti-liberal" today, but an *anti-democrat* in a fundamental sense, a true reactionary. Strauss was somebody who wanted to go back to a previous, pre-liberal, pre-bourgeois era of blood and guts, of imperial domination, of authoritarian rule, of pure fascism. Like Schmitt, what Strauss hated about liberalism, among other things, was its inability to make absolute judgments, its inability to take action. And, like Schmitt, he sought a way out in a kind of pre-liberal decisiveness. I would suggest that this description of fascist, authoritarian, imperial principles accurately describes the current imperial project of the United States. Because of this, examining the foundational elements of Strauss's political theory helps us to see something important about our current situation, independently of any kind of Straussian direct influence, although there is certainly some of that.

In 1935, Strauss published a book on Hobbes as well as a book entitled *Philosophy and Law*. The latter, on Maimonides and other Jewish themes, is the book in which he announced the discovery of what he called "the forgotten kind of writing," to which his daughter referred. This entailed writing for different kinds of audiences simultaneously. Strauss had been working on Maimonides and he came to the conclusion that in order to understand Maimonides he had to understand the writers to whom Maimonides was relating and that led Strauss to Alfarabi, the medieval Islamic philosopher. In these authors, and in Machiavelli and Spinoza, and ultimately in Plato, Strauss thinks that he discovered something about the way that they wrote. In an oral presentation entitled "A Giving of Accounts," recorded near the end of his life, he said, "I arrived at a conclusion that I can state in the form of a syllogism: philosophy is the attempt to replace opinion by knowledge, that opinion is the element of the city, hence philosophy is subversive, hence the philosopher must write in such a way that he will improve rather than subvert the city." That is, the philosopher has to conceal what he is actually doing.

In other words, the virtue of a philosopher's thought is a certain kind of *mania* [inspired frenzy], while the virtue of the philosopher's public speech is *sophrosyne* [discretion or moderation]. Philosophy is as such transpolitical, transreligious, and transmoral, but the city is and ought to be moral and religious. . . . To illustrate this point, moral man, merely moral man, the *kalosgathos* in the common meaning of the term [that is, the good man], is not simply closer to the philosopher than a man of the dubious morality of Alcibiades.[iv]

The suggestion here is that philosophy always has to go underground, to conceal itself in some way because philosophy deals with truth while society is based on opinion and truth subverts opinion. This is the basis of what Strauss calls a "philosophic politics." In his book *On Tyranny*, about which I will have more to say below, he explains:

In what then does philosophic politics consist? In satisfying the city that the philosophers are not atheists, that they do not desecrate everything sacred to the city, that they reverence what the city reverences, that they are not subversives, in short that they are not irresponsible adventurers but good citizens and even the best of citizens. This is the defense of philosophy that was required always and everywhere, whatever the regime might have been.[v]

Philosophers have to convince the city that they are not subversive. What is entailed here is that philosophers such as Maimonides and the others that he described wrote for at least two different audiences. To one audience was addressed the so-called *exoteric* meaning of their texts, which was the edifying, superficial level, while to another audience was addressed an *esoteric* meaning, which is embedded in the text but which only some people are capable of drawing out. This "discovery" is what his daughter says is going to be his lasting contribution. Now there is something right about the claim that some writers conceal to some degree what their real intention is, but Strauss raised this observation to an art form, or thought that it was raised to an art form by the authors with whom he was dealing.

What is particularly interesting about this to me is that while he described this quite clearly in the middle 1930s, in his study of Alfarabi and Maimonides, he did not himself start to write in this mode until he came to the United States in 1936. This is an issue concerning Strauss that people gloss over too easily. The question, starkly posed, is why did Strauss himself start to write in this esoteric/exoteric manner only after he came to an "open" society, to the United States? It is often said that Strauss's discovery was somehow situated in terms of the Nazi regime and its repression, but that does not explain why he would only revert to this kind of writing when he came here. I suggest that Strauss's political position, which he articulated in the letter to Löwith and in his critique of Schmitt, never fundamentally changed, but when he came to the United States it had to take on a more prudent presentation. Strauss's criticisms of liberal-democratic societies did not stop at liberalism but went all the way through to the core-he was, in other words, far more reactionary than many contemporary critics suggest.

The notion of esoteric and exoteric writing means that one has to read writers, as Strauss put it, "between the lines," and he developed a very elaborate system of reading, which included silences, things that are not included in the text, and obvious errors or thematic points that appear to pop up out of nowhere. I do not want to get into this conception of writing too much, but to characterize it a little bit, Strauss held that the great books were written by authors who had complete and total control of their texts. Thus there are no errors, no false starts, everything is very tightly, beautifully constructed so that the initiated can pick up on little mistakes, little openings in the text and find their way in. Strauss himself adopted a system of using a great many interrelated footnotes and references and of quoting people whose position he would not overtly take while pointing to the fact that that was his position by other clues in the text, among other techniques. It is almost impossible to avoid the term Talmudic to describe the way in which he read and later wrote books. Two of his books are particularly instructive.

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Strauss's *On Tyranny* was published in 1948. This complex book consists of his translation of Xenophon's dialogue *Hiero*, also known as *Tyrannicus*, a work and an author whom Strauss considered unjustly ignored by modern scholars, along with an interpretive essay that partly decodes it and partly adds another layer or layers of convoluted meanings. In beginning his commentary, Strauss says that contemporary social science cannot identify the very tyranny that it faces. He writes of what he calls the modern form of tyranny that,

Not much observation and reflection is needed to realize that there is an essential difference between the tyranny analyzed by the classics and that of our age. In contradistinction to classical tyranny, present-day tyranny has at its disposal technology' as well as ideologies'; more generally expressed, it presupposes the existence of science,' i.e., of a particular interpretation, or kind, of science. Conversely, classical tyranny, unlike modern tyranny, was confronted, actually or potentially, by a science that was not meant to be applied to the conquest of nature' or to be popularized and diffused. But in noting this one implicitly grants that one cannot understand modern tyranny in its specific character before one has understood the elementary and in a sense natural form of tyranny which is premodern tyranny. The basic stratum of modern tyranny remains, for all practical purposes, unintelligible to us if we do not have recourse to the political science of the classics.[vi]

In reference to the structure of such a political science, which he sees as a subdivision of philosophy, he goes on to say that "socratic rhetoric is meant to be an indispensable instrument of philosophy, its purpose is to lead potential philosophers to philosophy, both by training them and by liberating them from the charms which obstruct the philosophic effort, as well as to prevent the access to philosophy of those who are not fit for it." Strauss then claims that,

The experience of the present generation has taught us to read the great political literature of the past with different eyes and with different expectations. The lessons may not be without value for our political orientation. We are now brought face to face with a tyranny which holds out the threat of becoming, thanks to the conquest of nature' and in particular of human nature, what no other tyranny ever became: perpetual and universal. Confronted by the appalling alternative that man, or human thought, must be collectivized either by one stroke and without mercy or else by slow and gentle processes, we are forced to wonder how we could escape from this dilemma. We consider therefore the elementary and unobtrusive conditions of human freedom.[vii]

Strauss's warning that modern society is heading toward a kind of tyranny is not directed only toward Hitler and Stalin, toward fascism and communism; he is talking about the development of Western civilization generally: the diffusion of modern science and technology, the spreading of education throughout the entire population, the foundation of democratic claims in the notion of popular sovereignty. This is the beginning of the end of a certain notion of the political, of a certain relation to the world that Strauss wants to reinvigorate. The tyranny that he is talking about when he is writing in 1948 is the tyranny that he experiences, or thinks he experiences, in the West. It is under the threat of that tyranny that he adopts this dual form of writing and this book is itself the great example of that form.

The other text, or collection of texts, from the period that is relevant here is entitled *Persecution and the Art of Writing*. It was published in 1952, but the essays in it were mostly written in the 1940s. And he says there of the literature of multiple meanings: "The fact which makes this literature possible can be expressed in the axiom that thoughtless men are careless readers, and only thoughtful men are careful readers."[viii] Obviously, Strauss is writing for careful readers and careless readers are going to give up on his texts after a certain point. In that same book, he writes: "What attitude people adopt toward freedom of public discussion depends decisively on what they think about popular education and its limits. Generally speaking, premodern philosophers were more timid in this respect than modern philosophers."[ix] Here again, Strauss identifies with the premodern philosophers, which is to say that his attitude toward popular education is completely negative. Strauss's entire orientation here is a criticism of Western modernity. This becomes especially clear at the end of the passage from which I just quoted. He goes on to write, "Those to whom such books are truly addressed"-the esoteric books-

Are, however, neither the unphilosophic majority nor the perfect philosopher, as such, but the young men who might become philosophers: the potential philosophers are to be led step by step from the popular views which are indispensable for all practical and political purposes to the truth which is merely and purely theoretical, guided by certain obtrusively enigmatic figures in the presentation of the popular [i.e., exoteric] teaching-obscurity of the plan, contradiction, pseudonyms, inexact repetitions of earlier statements, strange expressions, etc. Such features do not disturb the slumber of those who cannot see the woods for the trees, but act as awakening stumbling blocks to those who can. All books of that kind owe their existence to the love of the mature philosopher for the puppies of his race, by whom he wants to be loved in turn. All esoteric books are written speeches caused by love.'[x]

This last comment is one of the meanings of the "love of one's own" to which Jenny Strauss Clay referred.

* * *

Returning to the biography, we see that Strauss comes to the United States, gets a teaching position at the New School-his daughter said he was first and foremost a teacher, but he did not start teaching until he was thirty-eight years old and here in the United States-and then goes to Chicago in 1949 as professor of political philosophy. Now, his daughter said he taught political theory, but Strauss never said he taught political theory; he taught political philosophy. As Strauss understood it, political philosophy is the face that philosophy turns to the public. It is the way that philosophers address the public to convince them that they are not subversive at the same time that they are embedding another kind of message to those who will understand. Strauss went to Chicago in 1949, where he taught for twenty years, and it was there that he established his reputation.

This signals the establishment of Strauss as an academic influence in the United States. Up until this period I have been discussing his books alone. At Chicago he begins to have students,

schooling them in the techniques of his own writing, including, perhaps most centrally, irony. However, for Strauss, what philosophers say to each other, to their friends, in conversation someplace out of the public realm is one thing; what they say in writing to any group beyond that is another. The exoteric/esoteric distinction applies only to writing, and so you find Strauss' students emphasizing the conversations with Strauss that they had in classes, and that means that the people who were students of Strauss have a privileged knowledge that the people who were not students of Strauss do not have. Thus one begins to see a kind of network build outward from his charismatic center, where the truth is spoken in small groups and seminar rooms, and then conveyed in secondary kinds of ways to a larger group after that.

Besides his teaching activities, Strauss rather skillfully turned his attention, after he got to the University of Chicago, to struggles within academe rather than struggles in the popular, political arena. Positioned in a social science department, he started attacking social science for its value neutrality. He and his associates began attacking elements of contemporary society through their supposed representation in social science and other academic disciplines rather than out in the open as a direct political attack, and doing it in a way that made it seem that he and his students and friends were defending the principles of liberal-democratic society at the same time. This collective struggle was another element in the building of a Straussian network, one that continued after his death primarily through attacks on so-called multiculturalism and post-modernism.

The Straussian network is really an amazing thing. Any political theorist or anyone who has been around political science departments has seen it at work. Long before attaining public attention, the Straussians were often ridiculed for their cult-like qualities: they speak and write the same way, they write the same books on the same themes over and over again, they dress alike, they are almost all men, they went to the same schools-those sorts of things. It thus comes as a shock to discover that Leo Strauss may turn out to be the most influential political theorist of the last fifty years in the United States with respect to the exercise of political power.

If the Straussians were only one academic school among others, that would be one thing. But in the mid-1980s some commentators suddenly realized that they had begun to follow the lead of their liberal academic neighbors in heading for Washington, D.C. At that time, it was noticed that something strange was going on in the Reagan administration. The first sign of this was in an article by Stephen Toulmin, a historian of science, in the *New York Review of Books* in 1984, in the middle of a review of a book on Margaret Mead. Toulmin used Mead as an example to which he compared the then-current State Department policy planning staff, where, he said, they had more people who were acquainted with the writings of Leo Strauss than they were with the cultures that the State Department has to deal with.

Few people probably knew what he was talking about until Nathan Tarcov, a University of Chicago professor and a former student of Strauss, wrote a letter to the *Review* because he recognized himself in Toulmin's description and attempted to defend himself and the staff on which he served. Two years later the classicist F. M Burnyeat, in another article in the *New*

York Review, still possibly the best single piece anyone has written on the Straussians, took up the theme again and did a very thorough critique of Strauss's writings and the whole basis of the Straussian school. Burnyeat tackled the subject not just because it was an academic issue but because he knew there were influential Straussians in Washington. In the Reagan administration there were Tarcov, Carnes Lord, who was a member of the National Security Staff, and Paul Wolfowitz. Later on, William Kristol and Carnes Lord were part of Vice President Dan Quayle's staff. The Straussians clearly were aligning themselves with certain elements of the right-wing of the Republican Party.

Straussians have been around Washington for twenty years. In a sense, they invite the criticism of being a cult or a conspiracy by the networking that they do, by their purposive replication, and by the use of a certain kind of coded language. (For example, whenever Strauss talked about someone's theory he referred to his "teaching," and this is a term similarly deployed by all Straussians.) Strauss and his descendants use all kinds of stilted, oftentimes archaic language, and some of that language has found its way into the rhetoric of the so-called war on terror.

The most obvious place where one sees it is in the administration's use of the term "regime." Some people were surprised by what it turned out "regime change" meant, but one would not have been surprised if one were familiar with Leo Strauss's writings or those of the Straussians. "Regime" is the term that Strauss used to translate the Greek *politeia*, an Aristotelian category, and Strauss understood it to mean-what it more or less does mean in Aristotle-the form of a city; that is, its essence as opposed to the unformed humans, the matter, that the city forms. Aristotle, in Book Three of the *Politics*, makes the case that there are different kinds of polities-democracies, aristocracies, and so on-and that in each case, if one changes into another one it changes essentially; it changes its form into something else. And the citizens are different, they are changed-the citizen of a democracy is not a citizen in an aristocracy-so it is a total transformation of the city's essence, a formal transformation. Thus Strauss wrote that "a change of regime transforms a given city into another city," into something totally different. So to talk about "regime change," which was a relatively new term in the discourse of international relations, meant a total transformation of the model of the society in question rather than a simple change of government in the narrow sense. This has had immediate effects in the policy in Iraq.

But for Strauss, what was important about using this term is because in Strauss's mind it leads necessarily to the question of the "best" city. Strauss thought that if you start talking about fundamentally different forms, it necessarily leads you to begin comparing those forms, and the comparison leads you to a judgment about the best or worst sort of city. You see this, too, in the current discourse. On the one hand, the Bush administration always says it is not making judgments; on the other hand it is clear that there is a preferred form for the transformation they seek to effect, which they call liberal democracy-a combination of market economics and the appearance of representative political institutions. So regime is one clear example of Straussian influence on the administration's rhetoric and the thinking behind it. And indeed, William Kristol and a coauthor, in an article entitled "What Was Strauss up To?" point to the

notion of regime as an instance of Strauss's influence.[xi]

Another important element is the "good versus evil" trope. Here William Kristol and Robert Kagan can show us the way toward an understanding. They coauthored an article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1996, entitled "Towards a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy." They argued for the importance for conservatives to put moral judgments back at the center of American foreign policy, as Reagan had with the notion of the "evil empire." Carnes Lord, to whom I referred above and who now teaches at the U.S. Naval College and who was a member of the Reagan administration and the Quayle staff as well as a translator of Aristotle, wrote an article in 1999, in which he argued that the crisis of liberalism as he understood it was a crisis of the political class, of the leadership in this country. He blamed the agenda of what he called "multiculturalism" in both domestic and foreign affairs for the fact, as he saw it, that we had lost our way in this country.

Straussians are dogged critics of what they call multiculturalism in academia in general and in the society as a whole, and the supposed spread of multiculturalism in American society was castigated by Lord both on the domestic and foreign levels. Thus there was the need for an effort, he wrote, aimed at "arresting the decline of American education, reviving a sense of citizenship and civic responsibility, and repairing vital national institutions such as the armed forces." He was concerned that the next time there was a crisis and the president called us to sacrifice, will we be ready to do that? So the Straussians were talking about the need to infuse foreign policy with a moral language during both the George Bush and the Clinton administrations, and of course it came to fruition after September 11.[xii]

In this context, an Op-Ed piece written by William Bennett in the *Wall Street Journal* in September 2002, entitled "Teaching September Eleventh," is worthy of note. Bennett wrote, "An appropriate response to September eleventh begins with a kind of moral clarity, a clarity that calls evil by its true name, terms like evil, wrong, and bad were rightly put back into the lexicon. September eleventh also requires that we point to what is good and right and true. The dark day was pierced with rays of courage, honor, and sacrifice and they should be upheld for all to see, they too are enduring lessons." That kind of reliance on courage, honor, these are pre-bourgeois, aristocratic kinds of categories and they fall into Strauss's whole framework of the way "gentlemen" behave. Strauss saw the world divided up into three layers: there are the *vulgar*, there are *gentlemen*, and there are the *wise*. And honor and courage are the virtues of the gentleman; the virtue of the wise is wisdom. The wise need the gentlemen to be governing. And the gentlemen, this elite, do not operate with the categories of wisdom, but with the "simple virtues" that they are able to grasp and assert.

Another element of the administration's rhetoric, of course, is the division of the world into friends and enemies. Strauss said the way of the philosopher is the way of Socrates; of the pursuit of wisdom, of the good in itself. But the way of the world is the way of Thrasymachus. And the argument for justice that Thrasymachus makes in Plato's *Republic* is that justice is helping friends and hurting enemies. And this is in fact the moral compass that Straussians adopt in the world. It accounts, partly, for the network that they have constructed. And when

the friends are philosophers then that is a really good thing, but if they are not philosophers, well, that is the way the world works anyway-you help friends, you hurt enemies. It is a form of realism, but it is realism in the hidden interests of wisdom. Now, this attitude and this kind of language do not only derive from Strauss, but it is notable the degree to which this administration, in particular, has articulated the world in terms of friends and enemies from September 11th on. That is the way the world has been divided by this administration, and it does what it can for its friends, regardless of what regime they may have, and it does what it can to its enemies, or what the administration perceives as its enemies, domestic and foreign.

The trickiest element in the current rhetorical structure of things is "tyranny." As in the case of "regime," one perked up one's ears with the sudden ubiquity of the term tyranny. The term had not been used in contemporary political discourse until recently. Academic political science and public political discourse had used terms such as authoritarian or dictatorship or despotism to describe varieties of political domination throughout the last century. For the last half of it, the category of totalitarian was added. Despite Strauss's effort in 1948, it is only now that tyranny has entered the speechwriters' lexicon, and it seems clear that it is the work of Strauss's descendants.

This is the most complicated part of Strauss's thinking and the most important in terms of understanding the current political situation. In the passage quoted above, Strauss referred to an ancient teaching on tyranny with which he contrasted a problematic modern tyranny. In the ancient teaching, which is the teaching with which he wishes to identify himself, it is possible for the wise man to move a tyranny toward its best possible form. That is, there are tyrannies and there are tyrannies; there are really bad ones and relatively good ones. The good ones are ones in which the tyrant rules beneficially for his subjects, but does so beyond the law. And Strauss says in his book, through the words of Xenophon, the author of the *Hiero*, that the rule of a good tyrant is better than misrule under law, so that tyrannical rule can be superior to constitutional rule or to the rule of misguided political elites. It is simply not the case that Strauss is entirely hostile to the notion of tyranny; he is hostile to the modern notion of tyranny, which is articulated in the passages already cited and then is further articulated by Strauss in his response to Alexandre Kojève's review of his book.

In Strauss's post-Nietzschean view, the modern form of tyranny leads necessarily to a flattening out of experience, to the so-called "last man." Society eventually becomes uninteresting when it is permeated by technology and science and a generalized level of education, the flattening out of experience that Tocqueville partly anticipated for democratic societies and which Nietzsche railed against. Strauss held out the hope, under those circumstances, for some rebellion, for acts of courage or honor to reverse this trend, this so-called tyranny. For Strauss, tyranny is a problem in the modern sense, not in the ancient sense, and I would suggest that his admiration for Churchill and Lincoln is because they actually mirror, to some degree, the ancient notion of the tyrant, especially Lincoln, who sidestepped the Constitution during the Civil War.

Straussians love Lincoln and they love him for a couple of reasons, one of which is that he was

not reluctant to set the law aside when he felt it was necessary. But they also venerate Lincoln because he quite consciously set about the business of constructing a mythology about American identity, a patriotic mythology. Lincoln made the claim, in his Lyceum speech in 1838, that those who had had the experience of fighting for the establishment of the country in the Revolution were dying out as a generation and that future generations would have to revive this experience through myths and stories that they told about this founding generation. And that is what Straussians do in terms of American culture, primarily through the myth of the Founding Fathers, the notion of this aristocratic elite that established America and the way that it is established. So Lincoln is a very important figure for them because he resorted to tyrannical measures when he had to and because he sought to mythically restore heroic virtues.

As for Churchill, who was also something of a tyrant, the issue is somewhat different. Churchill stood up to Hitler, and Hitler is a representative of the bad kind of tyrant. It is embedded in the Straussian notion of the vulgar that they are thoughtless readers but they can see things, you can construct images-Strauss develops this out of Plato's notion of the noble lie-that it is easier for people to see constructions and through then to glimpse the principles that lie behind them. And so what was important about Churchill was his image as a figure representing this opposition; that one could then begin to raise the question of good and evil by having this figure confronting Hitler, and then you label Hitler as evil and Churchill as good and you are into that dialectic of good and evil, which is so important to Strauss, and such a fundamental element of what he understood the political to be about; that is about struggle, about this sort of confrontation. So when Jenny Strauss Clay says her father was opposed to all kinds of utopianisms, and then she cites the Nazi and Communist ones, there is more to it than that. For some, there is the utopia of a peaceful world, a Kantian sort of utopia, of an end to conflict, of a resolution of grievances through peaceful means. For Strauss, that eliminates the struggle that is at the core of the political and which is necessary to be going on in the political realm while philosophers can be busy doing whatever it is that philosophers do.

One modern philosopher who is important in a complicated sort of way for Strauss is Martin Heidegger. Strauss says he encountered Heidegger for the first time in the early 1920s when Strauss "attended his lecture course from time to time without understanding a word, but sensed that [Heidegger] dealt with something of the utmost importance to man as man." But despite his disclaimer of limited understanding, Strauss says that where he broke with Heidegger was with what Strauss called Heidegger's moral teaching, which he describes in this way: "The key term" in Heidegger's vocabulary "is resoluteness,' without any indication as to what are the proper objects of resoluteness. There is a straight line that leads from Heidegger's resoluteness to his siding with the so-called Nazis in 1933. After that I ceased to take any interest in him for about two decades."[xiii] In this post-Nietzschean world, where nothing really matters anymore, one possible moral position to take is to say: well, you choose something and you adhere to it with resoluteness; you affirm it, even though there is really no foundation for it other than your affirmation of it. Where Strauss differs with Heidegger is that Strauss wants to put truth in that place; the thing that you adhere to with resoluteness is truth. If you are going to hold society together, and keep it from becoming completely chaotic, you

must affirm the notion of an absolute truth. And that is where he makes the break with Heidegger, though actually they are on the same ground. He is also on very similar ground to all of the political and philosophical movements that descend from Heidegger, including a voluntarist existentialism and deconstruction.

I do not want to leave the impression that I think that Straussians are the root cause of all of contemporary political problems. They have clearly contributed on the rhetorical level. They have helped codify certain notions, they have helped push a war of images; but I do not for a second think that there are no material interests at stake in American foreign policy. Perhaps what is most worrisome about the Straussian influence is the way in which some of this language has permeated public discourse generally and not just what is coming from this administration. Paul Berman, for example, in *Terror and Liberalism*, wants to characterize everything that is opposed to liberalism, as he understands it-a liberal sentiment-as "terror." This is falling into the kind of dichotomous and problematic constructions that Strauss articulated.

Liberalism is itself fearful, in most instances, of popular power, of-for want of a better term-the power of the people. The big event in Allan Bloom's life, aside from meeting Strauss and writing a best seller and becoming rich, happened at Cornell University, while he was teaching there, when armed black students took over the student center. In many respects, Straussian cultural criticism is a reaction against the counter-cultural and political movements in the 1960s, including the student movement. But there has been a liberal reaction to that, too. And a liberal discourse that talks about the need for civic education, that talks about the need for a patriotic discourse-Wesley Clark's campaign talk about the need for a "new American patriotism" is an example-is really moving in the same area as the Straussian discourse. And there are some crossover types, as well. Mark Lilla, a professor in the Straussian redoubt of the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago and an associate director of the Olin Center there, published an article in the "liberal" *New York Review of Books* on the importance of the concept of tyranny. What is troubling in a lot of ways, more than anything else, is that the Straussians have begun to dominate the terms of public discourse. A fearful liberalism and a political and punditry elite have been fertile ground for Straussian seeding. It was shocking in some ways when the *New York Times* hired David Brooks as a regular columnist, but it was not a shock when he very soon afterward wrote a column on the persecution of conservatives in American universities and interviewed Straussian professors to drive the point home. There is no conspiracy at work here, but rather a conflation of a Straussian and a liberal discourse that is really, really troubling. And both of them are fundamentally anti-democratic.

Notes

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[i] Alan Bloom, "Leo Strauss," *Political Theory* 2:4 (1974): 372.

[ii] Leo Strauss, "Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*," in Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss: The Hidden Dialogue*, trans. J. Harvey Lomax (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 119.

[iii] I am indebted to Eugene R. Sheppard for this reference and translation. See his "Exile and Accommodation: Leo Strauss 1932-1937" (paper presented to the Working Group in Modern European Jewish History, Center for European Studies, Harvard University, February 2003).

[iv] Jacob Klein and Leo Strauss, "A Giving of Accounts," in Leo Strauss, *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 463.

[v] Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (New York: Free Press, 1991), pp. 205-6.

[vi] Strauss, ibid., p 23.

[vii] Strauss, ibid., p. 27.

[viii] Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 25.

[ix] Strauss, ibid., p. 33.

[x] Strauss, ibid., p. 36.

[xi] Steven Lenzner and William Kristol, "What Was Leo Strauss Up To?" *The Public Interest* (Fall 2003).

[xii] Carnes Lord, "Thoughts on Strauss and Our Present Discontents," in Deutsch and Murley, eds., *Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime*, pp. 413-17.

[xiii] Strauss, "A Giving of Accounts," p. 461.

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“Benevolent Global Hegemony”: William Kristol And The Politics Of American Empire

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Near the end of the Cold War a group of neo-conservative intellectuals and policy makers began to argue that instead of cutting back on America’s vast military system, the United States needed to use its unmatched power to create a global Pax Americana. Some of them called it the unipolarist imperative. The goal of American foreign policy, they argued, should be to maintain and extend America’s unrivaled global dominance.

The early advocates of unipolar dominance were familiar figures: Norman Podhoretz, Midge Decter, Charles Krauthammer, Paul Wolfowitz, Joshua Muravchik, and Ben Wattenberg. Their ranks did not include the godfather of neo-conservatism, Irving Kristol, who had no interest in global police work or crusading for world democracy. Though he later clarified that he was all for enhancing America’s economic and military preeminence, Irving Kristol thought that America’s overseas commitments should be determined by a classically realist calculus. His son William Kristol had a greater ambition for America, which he called “benevolent global hegemony.”

In 1992, the *New York Times* revealed that Wolfowitz, then an undersecretary for defense, was drafting a new policy plan for the Pentagon that sought to prevent any nation or group of nations from challenging America’s global supremacy. President George Bush disavowed the controversial plan, and for the rest of the 1990s establishment Republicans did not speak of grand new strategies. But the neo-cons continued to argue for “American Greatness,” founded new institutions, and made alliances with hard-line conservatives such as Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. By the time that George W. Bush won the presidency, neo-cons were the strongest foreign policy faction in the Republican party. More than twenty of them swept into office with Bush. Cheney was the key to the neo-cons’ windfall of appointments, but the key ideologist and builder of the new neo-conservatism was William Kristol.

Bill Kristol had made a name for himself during the George Bush presidency as Vice President Dan Quayle’s chief of staff; reporters called him “Dan Quayle’s brain.” After Bush lost the presidency, Kristol set up his own Washington advocacy operation, the Project for the Republican Future, and supplied Republicans with hard-edged policy advice. He played a leading role in the fight against Hillary Clinton’s health care plan, supported Newt Gingrich’s Contract with America, and became a fixture on television news programs.

In 1995, Kristol launched an upstart right-wing magazine, *The Weekly Standard,* that called

Republicans to dream of an American-shaped new world order. Like many neo-con enterprises, the *Weekly Standard* was founded with Rupert Murdoch's money. The following year Kristol and his ideological comrade Robert Kagan issued a manifesto, "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," that urged Americans to dump Clinton's nannyish multilateralism for a policy of global dominion. The year after that Kristol launched a think tank, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), that defended and amplified the Wolfowitz plan, called for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and spelled out the particulars of a global empire strategy. The time had come to redeem Wolfowitz's global vision, the PNAC neo-cons urged. America did best for itself and the world when it aggressively pursued its own interests and prevented all nations from challenging its power in every region of the world.

Many of the neo-cons supported John McCain in the Republican primaries. Kristol's group admired McCain's courage as a soldier in Vietnam, his maverick eagerness to take on the establishment, and his pledge to extend "the unipolar moment . . . for as long as we possibly can." George W. Bush, by contrast, had no inspiring biography and rarely spoke about foreign policy. He pledged to sustain America's global preeminence, but zigged and zagged between the party's isolationist and unipolarist wings. That smacked of another muddled-realist Bush administration. After the meaningful primaries ended, the neo-cons went to work on Bush.

The Defense Department had to fulfill four missions, they argued: defend the homeland, prepare to fight and win multiple large wars at the same time, perform the "constabulary duties" of a global superpower, and transform the U.S. armed forces. In September 2000, Kristol and the PNAC unipolarists explained that "the United States must retain sufficient forces able to rapidly deploy and win multiple simultaneous large-scale wars and also to be able to respond to unanticipated contingencies in regions where it does not maintain forward-based forces." This resembled Colin Powell's two-war standard, but the neo-cons believed that the Powell Doctrine had to be updated to deal with multiple simultaneous conflicts. Moreover, the so-called "revolution in military affairs"-employing advanced technologies-was a mission in itself, on a par with defending the homeland, fighting simultaneous wars, and maintaining the global order. The U.S. needed a major increase in its East Asian military presence, a more confrontational policy toward China, and a permanent force in the Persian Gulf. The neo-cons sadly observed that it might take "a new Pearl Harbor" for Americans to face up to the need for an expanded military.

They cheered candidate Bush's commitment to missile defense and liked his occasional words on behalf of American preeminence. But Bush's positions didn't add up to an aggressive unipolarist policy. He didn't advocate the increases in defense spending or reconfigurations of force structure that the PNAC detailed. Kristol and Kagan were not assured by private assurances from campaign officials that Bush would significantly increase defense spending beyond Clinton's 2001 budget increase. Condoleezza Rice was fond of saying that when Bush became president, the U.S. would no longer be the world's "911." Kagan surmised that the U.S. would be the world's busy signal. Rice assured reporters that it didn't matter if Bush didn't know much about foreign affairs, because "it's a whole team of people who are going to get things done." Kristol and Kagan worried that much of the Bush team would consist of

realpolitikers from the previous Bush presidency.

Right up to the election Kristol and Kagan complained that Bush downplayed America's military crisis and distastefully trolled for isolationist votes, denigrating Clinton's wars against Slobodan Milosevic in Bosnia and Kosovo. Bush suggested that American troops should be withdrawn from the Balkans; Cheney groused that Milosevic's electoral defeat on September 24, 2000, did not vindicate Clinton's decision to fight in Kosovo; Kristol and Kagan replied that it certainly did. The triumph of democracy in Serbia was Clinton's greatest foreign policy victory.

Kristol later recalled that he felt "moderately unhappy" about the Bush/Cheney team throughout the 2000 campaign. Though neo-cons wrote some of Bush's speeches, "he gave other speeches in which he said, We have to be humble. We're over-extended. We don't need to spend much more on the military.' " Besides Bush's advocacy of missile defense and his rhetorical commitment to American supremacy, he didn't seem like a good unipolarist. Kristol remarked: "I wouldn't say that if you read Wolfowitz's Defense Planning Guidance from 1992, and read most of Bush's campaign speeches and his statements in the debates, you would say, Hey, Bush has really adopted Wolfowitz's worldview.' " Though Rice and Wolfowitz were Bush's chief foreign policy advisors, Rice was much closer to him, and she kept her distance from neo-cons: "She was skeptical about a lot of these claims that the U.S. really had to shape a new world order, that we had to engage in nation-building, that we might have to intervene in several places at once." Sixteen months after 9/11, Kristol concluded: "She was much more, I think, kind of a cautious realist than she is today."

Cheney and Wolfowitz had worked together in the first Bush administration, where they hatched the first unipolarist blueprint, and in the 1990s Cheney strengthened his ties with neo-cons at the American Enterprise Institute. A charter member of the Project for the New American Century, Cheney embraced its imperial ambitions. Rumsfeld was also a charter PNAC associate, and unlike Cheney, had signed its letter to Clinton in 1998 that called for the overthrowing of Saddam Hussein

Powell was too important not to get a top position, and Rice was the obvious choice for national security advisor, but Bush and Cheney didn't want Powell to determine their administration's foreign policy. Someone of equal stature and forcefulness to Powell was needed; thus Cheney reached out to his former mentor Rumsfeld. Wolfowitz settled for the number two slot at Defense and was backed up by a more aggressive ideological twin, Douglas Feith, at number three. Thus the vice-president, defense secretary, and deputy defense secretary were all associates of the Project for the New American Century, while Secretary of State Powell and his top appointee, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage-also a PNAC associate-represented a realist unipolarism that accented diplomatic cooperation.

From there the unipolarist appointments went all the way down. Of the eighteen figures who signed the PNAC's 1998 letter to Clinton calling for regime change in Iraq, eleven took positions in the Bush administration. In addition to Armitage, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, they

were Elliot Abrahms (senior director for near east, southwest Asian and North African affairs on the National Security Council); John Bolton (undersecretary, Arms Control and International Security); Paula Dobriansky (undersecretary of state for global affairs); Zalmay Khalilzad (president's special envoy to Afghanistan and ambassador-at-large for Free Iraqis); Richard Perle (chair of the Pentagon's semi-autonomous Defense Policy Board); Peter W. Rodman (assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs); William Schneider, Jr. (chair of the Pentagon's Defense Science Board); and Robert B. Zoellick (U.S. trade representative). Other PNAC associates and/or prominent unipolarists who landed high-ranking positions included Stephen Cambone (director of the Pentagon Office of Program, Analysis and Evaluation); Eliot Cohen (Defense Policy Board); Devon Gaffney Cross (Defense Policy Board); I. Lewis Libby (Vice President Cheney's chief of staff), William Luti and Abram Shulsky (eventually, directors of the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans), James Woolsey (Defense Policy Board), and David Wurmser (special assistant to the undersecretary of state for arms control). Libby served as assistant to the president and national security adviser to the vice-president in addition to being Cheney's chief of staff, an unprecedented trifecta of positions that amplified Cheney's influence.

By all appearances this extraordinary harvest of appointments put the neo-cons in the driver's seat of the new administration. But for eight months, until 9/11, they didn't feel that way. They worried about Powell's influence over the president, Rice was hard to read, and Bush had other priorities. The complaining began very early. Shortly before Bush's inauguration, Kagan declared that the incoming administration had an obvious split between its leading hawks (Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz) and doves (Powell and Rice), and that even Bush's commitment to missile defense was jeopardized by it. Powell, a longtime skeptic about missile defense, had wanted the defense post to go to his friend, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, a missile defense opponent. Rice's viewpoint was not well defined, or at least not known, but she appeared to share the skepticism of her former boss and mentor, Brent Scowcroft. Kagan warned: "Whether the hawks or the doves prevail depends on the president, of course, but the president's judgment will depend on whom he's listening to. So far Bush's missile defense briefings would seem to have come exclusively from the doves."

On the latter issue he was in a position to know. Bulging with connections to the new administration, he and Kristol doled out inside dope that reflected the frustrations of their friends, and their own. Bush campaigned as an Eisenhower, they judged, not a Reagan, but America desperately needed a Reaganite president who fought for America's interests and scared people. Unfortunately, "Bush's campaign from the beginning was designed not to scare anyone, anywhere, on any issue." They judged that it would take six months to know whether Bush had the neo-con spirit. Their ray of hope was that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz would be running the Pentagon.

But on the mother of all issues, the Pentagon budget, Bush stunned his neo-con supporters by announcing that he would live with Clinton's defense budgets for 2001 and 2002. Informed by a "well-placed administration official" that Rumsfeld was blindsided by this decision, Kagan fumed at Bush's "first broken campaign promise." Bush's constant railing against America's

declining military strength had led Americans to expect something very different, Kristol and Kagan protested. Kagan caustically remarked that he certainly never said, “If elected, I promise to enact Bill Clinton’s defense budget.”

How could Bush and Cheney now claim that Clinton’s defense budget was good enough? How could they promise that “help is on the way” and then dare to say, “never mind?” Kagan judged that Bush cared more about his tax cut than national security; repeatedly he and Kristol observed that the budget decision was made by political aides and Office of Management and Budget bean counters, not those who knew the military situation. They also protested that Bush continued or even weakened Clinton’s foreign policy. *The Weekly Standard* neo-cons didn’t know that Bush targeted Iraq at his first National Security Council meeting, or that Rumsfeld announced at the second NSC meeting that “what we really want to think about is going after Saddam.” Kristol and Kagan bitterly complained that in place of Clinton’s broad economic sanctions against Iraq, Bush retreated to a dumb and spineless idea of Powell’s called “smart sanctions,” which targeted materials that might be used for weapons construction. Worse yet, instead of aggressively supporting the Iraqi opposition, the Bush team, “led by Powell,” backed away from Ahmed Chalabi’s Iraqi National Congress. Bush gave piddling donations to the INC, “just as the Clinton administration did,” and Chalabi was spurned by the State Department, National Security Council, and CIA. Incredibly, the Bush policy was a weak version of the Clinton policy.

In the spirit of the “let Reagan be Reagan” protests of the 1980s, Kristol and Kagan detected a fateful pattern in the early Bush administration. Bush would offer a strong immediate reaction to a problem, then back down after Powell, Rice, the bean counters, or political guru Karl Rove prevailed upon him. At the same time they gave praise where it was due, from a neo-con perspective. Bush’s unipolarism was half-baked, but he had its unilateralist spirit. Kristol appreciated that Bush dared to scare people on the ABM Treaty and Kyoto Protocol. In June, the *Weekly Standard* celebrated what it called “the new American unilateralism,” running a cover story by Krauthammer on the Bush Doctrine. According to Krauthammer, Bush accepted that the first and foremost purpose of American foreign policy was to maintain America’s preeminence. Though many Americans strangely desired “a diminished America and a world reverted to multipolarity,” Bush understood that the best world order would occur “under a single hegemon” and that America was a new kind of imperial power, one that promoted democracy and freedom.

But unipolarism on the cheap was a contradiction in terms. Writing in the *Weekly Standard,* PNAC deputy director Tom Donnelly reported that the White House blindsided even Cheney when it stuck with Clinton’s defense budgets. Donnelly came close to charging betrayal. Having condemned Clinton for cheating the military, Bush did the same thing.

So many members of the Project for the New American Century had taken positions in the Bush administration that the PNAC had to recruit a whole new group of associates. Yet the Bush administration was hardly any better than the derided Clinton liberals, because the bean counters and political spin-masters were running the Bush administration. By July, Kristol and

Kagan were so exasperated that they advised “two old friends,” Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, to resign in protest. The “best service they could perform for their country” was to ring the alarm by resigning. Rumsfeld had recently requested an additional $35 billion for fiscal year 2002, Kristol and Kagan observed, but for the third time in six months he “had his head handed to him by the White House.”

The campaign rhetoric of 2000 seemed long forgotten. A missile shield wouldn’t deter anyone if America lost its capacity to project force abroad. In mid-July, Wolfowitz told Congress that it was “reckless” for the administration to “press our luck or gamble with our children’s future” by spending only three percent of the gross domestic product on defense. Kristol and Kagan replied, “All honor to Wolfowitz for telling the truth about his own administration’s reckless’ defense budget.” Asking Cheney to intervene, they warned that if Bush did not soon reverse course, he would go down in history as the president who squandered America’s preeminence, “the president who fiddled with tax cuts while the military burned.” Kagan added that Bush’s Clintonesque approach to the military probably explained his Clintonesque Iraq policy; Bush feared that he couldn’t afford to fight Saddam, “or, to be more precise, he doesn’t want to afford it.”

Right up to 9/11, the *Weekly Standard* blasted Bush’s “soft” positions on China, Iraq, the Middle East in general, and defense spending. Not coincidentally it confirmed popular suspicions that Karl Rove, a campaign consultant, was running the country. As long as Bush had to worry about the anti-interventionism of soccer moms and the political trade-offs between cutting taxes and hiking the military budget, the *Weekly Standard* had one cheer for Karl Rove.

Eight days before 9/11, the *Weekly Standard* spelled out its solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict: a devastating war of invasion, seizure, destruction, separation, and evacuation. Kristol and Kagan implored the Bush administration to “give Israel a green light” to settle the Israel/Palestine dispute. Krauthammer explained that the green light was for a full-scale war of antiterrorist obliteration: “The Israeli strike will have to be massive and overwhelming. And it will have to be quick.” The Arab nations would call for world action through the UN, he observed, and America would feel tremendous pressure. The key was for the U.S. to give Israel a week’s worth of unrestrained destruction.

Upon smashing Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Palestinian Authority, Krauthammer explained, Israel would leave Palestinian chaos behind, build a wall between it and Israel, abandon Israel’s most far-flung settlements, and hope that Palestinian chaos might yield something better: “Chaos will yield new leadership. That leadership, having seen the devastation and destruction wrought by Israel in response to Arafat’s unyielding belligerence, might be inclined to eschew belligerence.” Israel would build a wall that suited its security needs and permitted a livable situation for the Palestinians. Though Israel appeared to have two choices-the status quo or antiterrorist devastation-in fact it had only one. Sooner or later Israel would take it: “Strike, expel, separate, and evacuate.”

Wanted: Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein

The fiendish attacks of September 11, 2001, drove Bush to fully join an administration that already existed. Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld wanted the U.S. to wage a global war against terrorism that began with Iraq and Afghanistan. On September 12th, Bush startled counterterrorism coordinator Richard Clarke and Clarke's assistant Lisa Gordon-Hagerty by pressing them to find a connection between Saddam and the attacks; Gordon-Hagerty surmised that "Wolfowitz got to him." The following day Wolfowitz declared at a press conference that instead of destroying only those who attacked the United States, the U.S. had to terminate governments that harbored or otherwise aided terrorists. That declaration earned a public rebuke from Colin Powell, who countered that America's goal was to "end terrorism," not launch wars upon sovereign states, and that Wolfowitz spoke for himself, not the administration.

But the developing Bush Doctrine led to Wolfowitz's position, not Powell's. Bush, Rice, Powell, and Wolfowitz all worried that the U.S. might get bogged down for months in Afghanistan; to Wolfowitz, this was another reason to attack Iraq immediately. Iraq was a brittle desert dictatorship that might break in a few weeks, he argued; overthrowing Saddam Hussein would give the U.S. an inspiring victory while American troops slogged through the mountains of Afghanistan. Rumsfeld supported Wolfowitz; Powell countered that attacking Iraq without any evidence of Iraqi involvement in September 11 would alienate America's allies. Sharing an eye-roll with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Hugh Shelton, Powell exclaimed, "What the hell, what are these guys thinking about? Can't you get these guys back in the box?" The Pentagon, showing a tin ear for connotations, wanted to call the war "Operation Infinite Justice," which suggested permanent war and the terrorists' conceit of a holy war between religions.

Bush sided with Powell for the moment, but he told Richard Perle at Camp David that after the U.S. disposed of Afghanistan it would be Iraq's turn. Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld had already won the argument about the scope and meaning of the war against terrorism; Perle later reflected that Wolfowitz planted the seed. Wolfowitz apologized for raising a public fuss about "ending states," but on September 16th, Cheney declared, "If you provide sanctuary to terrorists, you face the full wrath of the United States of America." Four days later, speaking to Congress, Bush declared war against all terrorist groups and "every government that supports them." The war against terrorism began with al Qaeda, he asserted, but "it does not end there." It targeted "every terrorist group of global reach." Though he made no specific vow to overthrow Saddam, Bush embraced Wolfowitz's global conception of the war against terrorism, including his contention that Saddam had to be overthrown, sooner or later, whether or not he had a connection to 9/11.

Kristol and the neo-cons seized the moment, plugging hard for a world war against terrorism, lifting Saddam above al Qaeda as an immediate threat to America, and defending Wolfowitz against a barrage of Powell-favoring commentary in the prestige media. The *Weekly Standard* made no pretense of concentrating on the terrorists who actually attacked the U.S., which smacked of mere police action. Even liberals were eager to destroy al Qaeda; from the

beginning Kristol and Kagan hunted bigger game, urging that al Qaeda was just the beginning of the war against terrorism and not its most important part. Addressing the NATO ministers meeting in Brussels on September 26th, Wolfowitz declared that "while we'll try to find every snake in the swamp, the essence of the strategy is draining the swamp." There was an "alarming coincidence" between the states that sheltered terrorists and those that sought weapons of mass destruction, he warned. Wolfowitz eschewed specifics, but the *Weekly Standard* adorned its October 1 issue with a poster reading: "Wanted: Osama bin Laden [and] Saddam Hussein." Even that suggested more symmetry than they had in mind, however. Citing the president's vow to destroy "every terrorist group of global reach," Kristol and Kagan declared: "We trust these words will reverberate far beyond Kabul, in Tehran, Damascus, Khartoum, and above all, in Baghdad."

Iraq was the prize. Afghanistan was a wasteland and geo-political nothing, they argued, but Iraq was the key to the Middle East: "Saddam Hussein, because of his strategic position in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, surely represents a more potent challenge to the United States and its interests and principles than the weak, isolated, and we trust, soon-to-be crushed Taliban." Al Qaeda had no weapons of mass destruction and was about to lose its sanctuary in Afghanistan, but Saddam Hussein had chemical and biological weapons, a nuclear weapons program, and a powerful state apparatus at his disposal. To Kristol and Kagan, it was inconceivable that the U.S. would destroy al Qaeda's Taliban base without overthrowing Saddam. They lauded Bush's September 20th address to Congress for establishing "that taking decisive action against Saddam does not require absolute proof linking Iraq to last week's attack." That was absolutely crucial, they contended; 9/11 opened the door to a worldwide American war against terrorism, not merely a police-action response to 9/11.

Kristol and Kagan admonished their unipolarist friends in the Bush administration to remember who they were. In 1998 they had urged Clinton to remove Saddam Hussein from power; now it was their job to do it: "The signatories of that 1998 letter are today a Who's Who of senior ranking officials in this administration: Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of State John Bolton, Under Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky, Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman, and National Security Council senior officials Elliot Abrahms and Zalmay Khalilzad. If those Bush administration officials believed it was essential to bring about a change of regime in Iraq three years ago, they must believe it is even more essential today. Last week we lost more than 6,000 Americans to terrorism. How many more could we lose in a world where Saddam Hussein continues to thrive and continues his quest for weapons of mass destruction?"

Recycling Kristol's talking points, the Project for the New American Century sent a new letter to the president on September 20th. Like the *Weekly Standard,* PNAC took a two-sentence pass at al Qaeda, emphasized Iraq, and called for anti-terrorist action against Hezbollah and the Palestinian Authority. In addition to providing "full military and financial support to the Iraqi opposition," it urged, American forces had to be ready "to back up our commitment to the Iraqi opposition by all necessary means," a euphemism for invasion. The PNAC also reminded Bush

that global war is expensive and that America needed to show “no hesitation” to spend whatever it took to prevail. New PNAC signatories included Krauthammer, former UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, *New Republic* publisher Martin Peretz and *New Republic* writer Leon Wieseltier.

Just days before 9/11, *Time* magazine had asked where Powell had gone; he seemed to disappear during the administration’s first eight months. Kristol and Kagan never felt that Powell was invisible; they detected his influence over the cautious, underfunded, and overly diplomatic foreign policy they disliked. But after 9/11 they ardently wished he had disappeared. Powell spoke constantly on television, tried to steer Bush away from crusading rhetoric, assembled a pro-American coalition for the war on terrorism, and sought help from Iran and Syria. Kristol and Kagan were appalled. Fighting terrorism meant destroying Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Hezbollah, they argued, not cutting deals with them.

Worse yet, Powell’s coalition-building led straight to UN nonsense about the existence of a “peace process” between Israel and the Palestinians. In October, Bush declared that he favored a Palestinian state. Kristol and Kagan noted that Bush had previously said nothing about a Palestinian state; his new-found conviction on the subject was obviously a ploy “to appease the so-called Arab street.’ ” Besides being pathetic, they protested, this piece of pandering told the Arab street that terrorism works. To the Palestinians and Arabs who cheered the terrorist assault on America, “Bush’s statement told them they were right to celebrate. Kill enough Americans, and the Americans give ground. Bush’s statement last week was thus not a blow against terrorism. It was a reward for terrorism.”

Disastrously, Powell was willing to be led by allies; even worse, he was eager to make alliances with terrorists to destroy other terrorists. Kristol and Kagan warned that if the U.S. made Phase One deals with Hezbollah and the Iranian government it would never get to the Phase Two work of destroying them. A month after 9/11, the *Weekly Standard* featured a cover article by Max Boot titled “The Case for American Empire.” Boot argued that imperialist realism was America’s most realistic option; 9/11 was a wake-up call for the United States to unambiguously embrace its imperial responsibilities. America felt conflicted in its imperial role, he explained, which emboldened its enemies. Now America had to deflate its enemies by aggressively using its overwhelming power.

Neo-cons Krauthammer, Angelo Codevilla, David Frum, Frank Gaffney, Michael Ledeen, Laurent Murawiec, Richard Perle, Norman Podhoretz, and others called for offensive wars of destruction against several regimes. Iraq, Syria, North Korea and the Palestinian Authority were named most often, in addition to Hezbollah; some lists included Cuba, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Sudan. Kristol and Kagan emphasized Iraq, Iran, and Hezbollah. “This war will not end in Afghanistan,” they vowed in October 2001. “It could well require the use of American military power in multiple places simultaneously. It is going to resemble the clash of civilizations that everyone has hoped to avoid. And it is going to put enormous and perhaps unbearable strain on parts of an international coalition that today basks in contented consensus.”

In January 2002, while American forces mopped up in Afghanistan, Kristol and Kagan urged Bush to get on with the real business. It was true that the U.S. needed to capture bin Laden, destroy al Qaeda, and build a functional government in Afghanistan, they acknowledged, but overthrowing Iraq was more important and urgent. The Iraqi threat got bigger every day "and it can't wait until we finish tying up all the loose ends.' " Iraq was the supreme test of America's global hegemony. "Whether or not we remove Saddam Hussein from power will shape the contours of the emerging world order, perhaps for decades to come," they explained. To merely contain Saddam Hussein would ensure that thugs of his kind would be tolerated. Thus the question of Iraq was "*the* supreme test of whether we as a nation have learned the lesson of September 11."

They brushed aside objections that invading Iraq would divert attention from destroying al Qaeda, or that the cure of war and occupation would be worse than the disease. A civil war would be unfortunate, but not as bad as "the disease of Saddam with weapons of mass destruction." And the diversion argument was a red herring. America fought Japan and Germany at the same time, and it was far more powerful in 2002. As for unilateralism versus multilateralism, they hoped that other nations would support the U.S. and share its burdens, but that was up to them. There was too much at stake to be slowed or deterred by anybody's objections.

The neo-cons often said that Bush became one of them on 9/11, but they only trusted it was true after he declared in his 2002 State of the Union Address that Iraq, Iran, and North Korea were an "axis of evil." The *Weekly Standard,* while wishing that Bush included China, Syria, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Authority in the axis of evil, enthused that he had become "a full-blown war president" who surprisingly fulfilled the dreams of his neo-con appointees. To Kristol and Kagan, the war on terrorism had nothing to do with adjudicating Arab or Muslim grievances. Bush did very well when he kept it simple and invoked a single anti-terrorist standard, they judged; when he performed poorly, as on the Palestinian problem, Powell was usually involved.

By January 2003, the Bush administration spoke with one voice on Iraq, and the following month, Powell made its showcase brief for war at the United Nations. Kristol's pro-war primer, however, *The War Over Iraq,* co-authored with *New Republic* Senior Editor Lawrence F. Kaplan, contained some anti-Powell holdovers. For the entire second half of 2002, Powell had cautioned that a U.S. invasion of Iraq might provoke its Sunni establishment to plunge the country into chaos. Kristol and Kaplan countered that Powell had made the same warning about Afghanistan, where the ethnic Pashtuns played the Iraqi Sunni role. They assured that Iraq's Sunni, Shi'ite, and Kurdish populations all wanted a unified nation and that the best way to do it was to build a federated system consisting of a central government in Baghdad and limited powers of self-government for each ethnic community.

More important than the precise model of the next Iraqi government was America's commitment to Iraq. Kagan worried that the Bush team seemed reluctant to plan for a long occupation or even think about what came after the war; Kristol and Kaplan, filling the

vacuum, explained that Americans had to prepare for a lengthy occupation of Iraq, an occupation force of 75,000 troops, and a cost of about $16 billion per year. Against the objection that democracy cannot be imposed by military force, they pointed to Japan, Germany, Austria, Italy, Grenada, the Dominican Republic, and Panama. Against the objection that Iraq made a poor candidate for American-style democracy, they contended that its high literacy rates and urbanized middle class made the country "ripe for democracy." If Iraq became a pro-American democracy, they argued, America would be able to stop coddling Saudi Arabia and other miserable Arab regimes. Iraq was the key to the political transformation of the Middle East. Realism was about coping with problems, but aggressive American internationalism was about solving problems.

It was true that Bush-style neo-imperialism might engender a countervailing threat, they allowed, but America had to cope with this possibility no matter what it did. Even a polite America would still be resented because of its power, but if America became too polite, it would lose its dominant position and the world would be much worse off.

Just after American forces marched into Baghdad, Kristol announced that Iran had to be next, along with North Korea. The battle for Iraq was "the end of the beginning" of a larger war for the world, he explained, and the "next great battle" was for Iran: "We are already in a death struggle with Iran over the future of Iraq. The theocrats ruling Iran understand that the stakes are now double or nothing." If Iran's Shi'ite rulers did not subvert America's victory in Iraq, their own regime would die; conversely, if the U.S. did not get a change of regime in Iran, its victory in Iraq would be lost. The U.S. could not afford to choose between Iran and North Korea, or delay on both while mopping up in Iraq. The fate of Iraq was inextricably bound up with that of Iran, North Korea couldn't wait, and Syria was a major problem too. America needed to turn Iraq into a "decent, democratic" society, but more importantly, Americans had to understand that there were other battles to fight, some of which affected Iraq. Kristol observed: "President Bush understands that we are engaged in a larger war. His opponents, on the whole, do not, and this accounts in large measure for the yawning gulf between the supporters and critics of the Bush Doctrine."

But the aftermath of the war against Iraq proved more absorbing than Kristol and the Bush administration had counted on, and the administration was deeply conflicted about how to manage the occupation. Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz wanted to establish a pro-American provisional government, but the State Department worried that such a nakedly imperialist strategy would ignite an anti-American rebellion, if not a civil war. After the rebellion occurred anyway, the Pentagon eventually opted for accelerated Iraqification, and the State Department favored a strong role for the UN. Kristol and Kaplan sharply told the administration to face up to its imperial responsibilities. It was too late to evade the "taint of imperialism," Kaplan chided, and Bush officials were embarrassing themselves by squirming to avoid it. Kristol urged the administration to send more troops to Iraq and apply overwhelming force-at the same time that it moved against North Korea and Iran.

Having begun the occupation with the fantasy of a rapid pro-American regime change, the

Bush administration sowed expectations of a quickie democracy, reverted to a longer occupation leading to a constitution, banked on an international bail-out, gave up on the constitutional model, resorted to a quasi-democratic caucus process, and finally begged the UN to broker a revision of the original Iraqification strategy. From November 2003 to February 2004, the plan was to yield sovereignty to a quasi-democratic patchwork of elites, but that was universally rejected in Iraq, Shi'ite leader Ayatollah Sistani refused to deal directly with the U.S. and demanded that any constitutional process had to be democratic, and America's hand-picked Iraqi Governing Council had no support either. The *Weekly Standard* protested that Bush officials learned nothing from the occupation and substituted an exit strategy for a victory strategy. "The Pentagon wants to get out," Kristol and Kagan observed in November 2003. "The stunning victory in the war to remove Saddam has been followed by an almost equally stunning lack of seriousness about winning the peace, despite the vital importance of creating a stable, secure, and democratic Iraq." The U.S. reverted to fast nation building, but that was even more pathetic and dangerous than reverting to the United Nations. American Greatness required something else: "Not blowing out the bad regime and then leaving others to pick up the pieces, but staying long enough to ensure that a good regime can take its place." It was absurd for the Pentagon to deny that America needed a major escalation of troops in Iraq; it was doubly absurd to reduce American troops in the face of escalating violence.

But how was an overstretched American military supposed to pacify Iraq at the same time that it brought North Korea, Iran, Hezbollah, and Syria to their knees? Kristol replied that that was exactly what his group had been screaming about for years. America lacked the force structure that it needed to be itself. The U.S. had to get a bigger military and a larger idea of its global mission: "We need to err on the side of being strong. And if people want to say we're an imperial power, fine."

He prized his influence on the Bush administration, while playing it down when asked about it. Before the 2000 election Kristol predicted that Gore would win, prompting Bush campaign spokesman Ari Fleischer to inform him that his words had been "duly noted." Two years later Kristol was still not invited to White House schmoozes with conservative journalists. "The Bush people aren't big on constructive criticism," he explained. But the administration was loaded with his friends, he counted Cheney and Rumsfeld as ideological allies, he met regularly with Rice to talk policy, and Bush made a fence-mending speech in honor of Kristol's father. "Look, these guys made up their own minds," Kristol said. "I would hope that we have induced some of them to think about these things in a new way." During the Iraq war, a White House official remarked of Kristol: "People appreciate what he's doing. But there's still hesitation and trepidation about where Bill would stand if our interests weren't mutual."

When Kristol founded the *Weekly Standard* and the PNAC, his causes were on the fringe of the Republican party. The neo-cons made them respectable, and then politically powerful, in remarkably little time. Just as Irving Kristol's generation of neo-cons believed they could do great things if they advocated the right ideas, and the New York intellectuals of the 1930s believed it before them, Bill Kristol exuded the neo-con belief in the power of ideas, backed by the Right's mighty Wurlitzer of foundations, think tanks, magazines, and media networks.

Kristol took pride that his ideas about global supremacy, regime change, preemptive war, democratic globalism, and weapons of mass destruction became the causes of a popular Republican administration. “We at the *Weekly Standard* and the Project for the New American Century-and many other people, Wolfowitz way back in 1992-had articulated chunks and parts of what later became the Bush Doctrine,” he observed. “Certainly there was a lot out there that could be stitched together into the Bush Doctrine. But certainly, even people like me were kind of amazed by the speed and decisiveness with which the Bush administration, post-9/11, moved to pull these different arguments together.”

He loved Bush’s line from his September 20, 2001, address to Congress, that “in our anger and in our grief, we have found our mission and our moment.” That was exactly right, Kristol believed; Bush spoke for America and himself in claiming the war on terrorism as the cause of the present age. Bush was not as militant on China, North Korea, and the Middle East as his neo-con allies, but to a remarkable extent he championed the neo-con vision of global Americanism. And every Monday Cheney sent a currier to pick up thirty copies of the *Weekly Standard*.

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Leo Strauss and the Noble Lie: The Neo-Cons at War

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As our Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld once noted in an off the cuff remark, strategic truths sometimes need be defended by a "bodyguard of lies."[i] Here Rumsfeld was thinking no doubt of Churchill's famous quip defending Operation Fortitude, the mock invasion force aimed at Calais that drew the attention of Herr Hitler and his high command away from the Normandy beaches and hid the Allies' operational plans in the summer of 1944. Rumsfeld's critics in Washington and London, however, have in mind more the history of contemporary philosophy than the history of WWII.

In the past few months, the "bodyguard of lies" metaphor has been redeployed and used to characterize the Bush Administration's raw manipulation of the CIA and other intelligence agencies for propaganda purposes and for the gross deceit that seems to characterize the rationales put forward for their Iraq policy. Of these there were many–WMDs, a suspected connection between Saddam and Al Qaeda, or the humanitarian rescue of the Iraqi people. They shifted depending on their intended audience and perhaps the day of the week. The "imminent threat" of WMD's were emphasized for the British public while links to "Al Qaeda-like terrorism" were stressed at home where the fiction that Saddam was directly involved in the September 2001 attacks has been firmly embraced by over two thirds of the American public. As Olivier Roy rightly noted last May, "Washington's stated war goals were not logically coherent, and its more intellectually compelling arguments were usually played down or denied." [ii]

By the summer of 2003 – when the hunt for banned Iraqi WMD's had gone nowhere and the Al Qaeda connection to Saddam had disappeared into thin air along with Saddam and Osama themselves, the cumulative disappointment shook the official rationale for the Anglo American invasion of Iraq. This placed Mr. Rumsfeld and the civilian policy makers in his Pentagon group on the defensive and set them up for the critics who had been waiting impatiently in the wings during the short but triumphal march to Baghdad. Secretary Rumsfeld's credibility problems had now become Blair's and Bush's nightmare-provoking a transatlantic media storm that has touched the political establishments of the co-belligerents.

In London this affair has mainly raised questions about the honesty of Mr. Blair and his press and defense secretaries. In Washington it has done so as well, and the prevailing view of the Administration's war policy among its critics is summed up succulently by the *United for Peace* slogan: "Bush lies-Americans die." But this affair has also a raised a related and perhaps even more troubling question about the philosophical roots of the ideology that's driving the "counter-revolution" in foreign and domestic policy within the Bush Administration. In short,

the relation between strategic disinformation and political truth has been very much on our minds of late-along with some concerns about the lessons taught by Leo Strauss to the brilliant group of his former students who now occupy the seats of power in Washington

A Crisis of Intelligence

Last May that Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia gave the speech on the Senate floor that marked the moment when Bush's Iraq policy began to seriously unravel. "The truth," he said, "has a way of asserting itself despite all attempts to obscure it. Regarding the situation in Iraq, it appears to this Senator that the American people have been lured into accepting the unprovoked invasion of a sovereign nation, in violation of long-standing international law, under false premises." He concluded, "We just fought a war that didn't need to be fought." And of course, Byrd assumes that "unnecessary wars" can never be just. But if proven this charge alone would constitute technical grounds for the impeachment of the President for "high crimes and misdemeanours"-as Senator Bob Graham of Florida pointed out last July.

The principal false premise in question was the claim that Saddam possessed an arsenal of chemical and biological terror weapons that was both operational in March and an immediate threat to the security of the United States, that is, an "imminent threat." This is no small matter. This was the central claim made by Colin Powell and Jack Straw at the UN Security Council in order to justify the immediate use of military force against the Iraqi regime. This was the claim that justified the charges of disloyalty and unfaithfulness that put Jacques Chirac, Gerhard Schroeder and Hans Blix on trial in the American and the British media for three long months. And finally this was the claim that-along with the baseless assertion that Saddam was a full partner with bin Laden's terrorists in the attacks on New York and Washington-finally persuaded a reluctant and divided American public to rally behind their President during the Second Iraq War. But since the invasion ended, as we all know, these claims have been very much in doubt. Both on the ground in Iraq where American weapons inspectors reported having found nothing after a fruitless search for the missing chemical and nuclear arsenal and in London and Washington where this "intelligence failure" has become a major political scandal.

By June, the "policy and intelligence fiasco" had triggered a flood of leaks from the CIA, the DIA and the State Department as the battle between Rumsfeld's Neo-Con warriors in the Pentagon and the "realists" in Powell's State Department and the CIA broke into the public arena.[iii] And it was revealed that last year our Secretary of Defence set up his own in-house intelligence service, The Office of Special Plans (nicknamed the "Cabal") to compete with both the CIA and the DIA. In the policy battles that raged throughout the summer and fall of 2002 within an administration deeply divided over its Iraq policy, this Pentagon group won almost all of the policy fights and as we say, "got their war on."

But by this past Spring retired intelligence officers from the CIA and senior diplomats from the State department had begun to complain that Rumsfeld's Pentagon "hot garbage" from Iraqi defectors around Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress directly to the White house in an exercise

of “faith-based intelligence” where the Pentagon knew beforehand “what they wanted the intelligence to show.” They argued that the Neo-Conservative faction in the Pentagon was guilty of “grossly manipulating” intelligence data in order to shape public opinion. In the view of groups like “Veteran Intelligence Agents for Sanity,” Rumsfeld’s decision to create his own intelligence service with a ” stovepipe” leading directly to Oval Office set the stage for “hyping” to the national media whatever reports supported the Rumsfeld line on Iraq and eventually to passing off forged documents like the infamous Niger uranium memo to the highest levels of the Administration, to the U.S. Congress and eventually to the UN Security Council. They said this to anyone who would listen, and among those who did was Nicholas Kristof who put their charges against the “Pentagon crazies” on the Op-Ed pages of *The New York Times*-the main newspaper of the establishment opposition.

The flap over intelligence issues in the summer of 2003 immediately recalled to mind the controversy over the Pentagon’s *Office of Strategic Influence* which had flared up in the Spring of 2002 with regard to Donald Rumsfeld’s proposal to conduct orchestrated media campaigns to achieve “strategic influence” with foreign public opinion. The manipulation of intelligence reports was seen as but one piece of a broader campaign of “information warfare”-where the Pentagon and British MOD jointly managed media stories before and during the Iraq conflict in ways that targeted the American and British domestic opinion. Sam Gardiner, a retired Air Force Colonel and professor at the National War College, analysed some fifty different stories in the U.S. and UK that were planted in the press as part of a strategic information warfare campaign to win public support for the war and to isolate and punish opponents. We should note in passing that among the privileged targets of this disinformation campaign were the French and German governments-who were subjected to a mean spirited but very effective campaign of disinformation which helped stoke public anger in the U.S. against “Old Europe” and spark consumer and travel boycotts against these two countries.

These operations were carried out by the Pentagon “Office of Strategic Influence” which after being announced in the Spring of 2002, was dissolved-officially-in the Fall in the face of the public reaction against the idea that the US Government would knowingly plant false stories in the foreign press. But apparently the disinformation campaign went ahead as planned even after the office was disbanded-only with a different target audience in view. As Donald Rumsfeld remarked in a November 2002 press conference: “If you want to savage this thing, fine, I’ll give you the corpse…but I’m *gonna* keep doing every single thing that needs to be done and I have.” And we can be sure that he did it with a smile.

In May 2003, the charges that U.S. Intelligence had been politically compromised were reinforced in by an inept attempt by Under-Secretary Wolfowitz to downplay the importance of the missing WMDs when he told *Vanity Fair* that the issue of Iraqi WMDs had been emphasised in the run-up to the war only “for bureaucratic reasons. It was the one reason everyone could agree on.” This effort at political damage control backfired and in a matter of days, the issue of the missing WMDs went from being a story told on the back pages to the lead article for *Time*, *Newsweek* and *US News and World Report. Newsweek* for example, gave the story to Michael Isikoff, their top investigative reporter who had dogged the Clintons for years throughout the

Whitewater and Monicagate scandals. Clearly by this July, blood was in the water and the media sharks were circling Rumsfeld's Pentagon.

The next step in the evolution of this affair followed from Seymour Hersh's report in the May 5th issue of *The New Yorker* that the head of Rumsfeld disinformation operation was none other than one Adam Shulsky, a "Straussian" conservative," who had once co-authored an article on Leo Strauss and role of deception in intelligence operations. The significance of this link went beyond Strauss' belief that the inter-state relations were characterized by rivalries that often dealt in the currency of deceit and deception. What cut to the heart of the current affair was his belief, as William Pfaff put it, "that the essential truths about society and history should be held by an elite, and withheld from others who lack the fortitude to deal with truth. Society, Strauss thought, needs consoling lies."[iv] This concept of the "consoling lie" became the journalistic key to how and why the Office of Special Operations had in the words of one of its staffers, Lt. Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski, carried off: what she describes as "a subversion of constitutional limits on executive power and a co-optation through deceit of a large segment of the Congress."

Neo Conservatives and the Strauss Connection

Hersh's report gave the unfolding story of bureaucratic competition and deception campaigns a new philosophical twist. Not content to denounce a neo-conservative cabal for the disinformation campaign that helped them sell the Iraq war to the Bush Administration, the Congress and finally the American and British publics, critics now drew the philosophical pedigree of Rumsfeld's Pentagon group into the debate. Quickly the members of the Cabal were dubbed the "Leo-Cons" in *The New York Times* to highlight their connection to political philosophy of Leo-Strauss-an émigré German professor of political philosophy who had taught at the University of Chicago in the 1950s and 1960s.

But other political pedigrees have been suggested for this group. Michael Lind for instance traced their roots back to the right wing Shactmanite faction of the American Trotskyite movement who entered the Democratic Party in the 1960s and then split with the Left over the Vietnam War. Many members of this group continued their rightward itinerary by rallying to Senator Scoop Jackson's campaign against the New Democrats. Some finished with the Democratic Leadership Council, while others found a home in the Reagan and now the Bush *fils* administrations. Other critics who promote an "Iran-Contra *bis*" scenario for the current flap over intelligence trace the group back to the policy cabal that had promoted the Contra war against the Sandinistas and who had lost their power and influence in the second Reagan Administration as a result of the Iran-Contra hearings of the late 1980s.

But in the midst of the growing press fury, it was the Straussian connection that stuck and the one writer who appeared as the most reliable guide to whom critics and journalists turned was Shadia B. Dury, the Canadian academic who had published her *Leo Strauss and the American Right* in 1999. Long quotes citing her as an authoritative source soon began to appear in the

progressive press. At the same time, conservative critics dismissed her as a “liberal academic” who had “made a career of writing anti-Straussian exposés,” and in particular, one self-declared Straussian, Robert Locke, criticized her *Leo-Strauss and the American Right* as a “snide, careless and inaccurate piece of liberal boilerplate.” More to the point, Dury’s recent claims about the links between Strauss, Straussians and Bush’s Foreign Policy have been rejected by Mark Blitz, (Professor at Claremont’s McKenna College and former Associate Director of the USUA under Reagan), because “Despite … Dury’s bluster, she give no coherent reason why Strauss’ students in the Bush Administration support the war in Iraq.[v]” As we shall see, Strauss, the Straussians and their critics as well have all been drawn into latest edition of America’s “culture wars” and find themselves at the epicenter of a distinct media storm of their own that has grown into an international *affaire*.

The Neo-Con Network and the Strauss School

In any case, Dury is quite right to point out that many of the most visible Neo Conservative figures within the ranks of the Bush Administration and among its house intellectuals who reside at the American Enterprise Institute and write for the *Weekly Standard*, have some kind of connection with Leo Strauss. Or if not with the Master himself, then at least with his most visible disciple, Allan Bloom, who taught at the University of Chicago in the 1970s and 1980s. Dury sums up her case about the Straussians connection to the Iraq war plainly: ” Leo Strauss was a great believer in the efficacy and usefulness of lies in politics. Public support for the Iraq war rested on lies about Iraq posing an imminent threat to the United State. Now that the lies have been exposed, Paul Wolfowitz and other in the war party are denying that these were the real reasons for the war.” Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense, and one of the accused, freely admits to having taken one course with Allan Bloom, but denounces the whole idea of a Neo-Straussian cabal as “the product of fevered minds who seem incapable of understanding that 9/11 changed a lot of things and who search for a conspiracy theory to explain it.”

But whatever their relation to the authentic thought of Strauss, the Straussians represent a distinct generational cohort. Among their alumni are other Pentagon officials, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, the Chair of the National Defense Policy Board, Stephen Cambone, the Under Secretary of Intelligence, Elliot Abrams of the National Security Council and Adam Shulsky already mentioned. These are members of coherent neo-conservative group of policy makers that have served together in since the Reagan administration and who often socialize together as well. And given their willingness to look out for one another’s offspring, the network has a multi-generational dimension that passes membership and ideological belief from father to son as is the case, for instance, with Irving Kristol of *Commentary* who begat William Kristol of the *Weekly Standard*.

As William Pfaff notes, before the Straussians’ entry into their ranks, Republican conservatives were distinguished mainly by their intellectual poverty, and for that the brilliant “inverted Trotskyism” of the Straussians provided a remedy. Today they represent a broad network that cuts across the neo-conservative wing of the Republican Party as well as a distinct intellectual school that has colonized Political Science and History departments as well as Law school

faculties. The list of Straussian students in an impressive one at least for their political influence if not always for their intellectual coherence: Justice Clarence Thomas: Robert Bork, Supreme Court nominee: Alan Keyes former Assistant Secretary of State and Anti-Abortion Presidential candidate; William Bennett, former Education Secretary; John Podhoretz, the former New York Post Editorialist, and John T. Agresto, former National Endowment for the Humanities Deputy Chair, among others. They represent the warrior elite of the Intellectual Right of the Reagan era who especially distinguished themselves in their service in the long but ultimately failed campaign to hunt down President Clinton in the 1990s and thereby to reverse the cultural settlement of the post 1960s. In the wake of 9/11, many were called out of retirement to rally the country behind the "War on Terrorism" and do battle in the media with the "Blame America first crowd" among liberal academics.

All and all then, the Straussians are an exceptional intellectual and social movement. As Karl Jahn observes: "The greatest peculiarity of Straussianism is that there is such a thing. Not a single other "conservative thinker" has inspired a following remotely comparable, in size, continuity and influence to that of Leo Strauss. There is a Straussian School as there is no Weaverian or Burnhamite or Meryeran or Kendallist school. And this school has its own interest, ideas and purposes, which are clearly distinct from mainstream conservatism."

But their influence is especially strong in the right wing policy think tanks in Washington-most notably the American Enterprise Institute (AEI)-set up by conservative foundations such as the Lynde and Harry Braddley Foundation. President Bush saluted the AEI as the home to "twenty of the best minds" in his administration, and it was their annual dinner in February 2003 that he give his clearest defense of his invasion of Iraq. Echoing the Wolfowitz argument for regime change in Iraq as the key to regional transformation, Bush declared that the liberation of Iraq was about bringing democracy to an entire region and Islam into the modern world. The audience at the American Enterprise Institute was understandably thrilled because his speech meant that the "Richard Perle School" had won its battle for the President's heart and mind at least for the duration of the war. Radiating the sublime self-certainty that can only come from the place where evangelical faith meets worldly inexperience, our Warrior President committed us to making over not just one Arab dictatorship but all of them at once.

The importance of this speech then was as much about where it was said as what was said. The AEI is the Washington think tank that housed most of the strategic thinkers-Perle, Donnelly, Muravchik, and others-who lead the charge for war with Iraq during their years of exile under Clinton. Home base for the "Project for a New American Century," whose authors dominate decision-making at the Bush Pentagon, this group has also been instrumental in aligning the administration's Mid East policy with that of Ariel Sharon's Likud. In the view of many critics the political kinship with Likud is as or more important than any lingering association with Leo Strauss for explaining the Neo-Conservative worldview.

In the reigning neo-conservative view, then, the Iraq war was a "a bold and daring project" to reshape the map of the Middle East by applying the "shock and awe" of battle to break down barriers to westernization-as though western armies from Napoleon to Dayan hadn't already

tried the application of brute force in 1799, 1918, 1956, and 1967. But for the Neo-con theorists, warfare remains the preferred means for administering shock therapy to the Mid East. In the event, things have turned out somewhat differently than expected. Conquering Iraq proved easier than occupying it, and far from breaking Islamist morale, the Bush conquest has instead turned Iraq into a magnet for violence attracting every available fedayin in the Middle East.

But the Iraq project is questionable on other grounds than its sheer political naiveté, for if we are to believe Shadia Dury, the *Neo-Khans'* preference for belligerence is as much philosophical as it is political and has less to do with the defense of liberal democracy than some might think. She argues that we should treat Neo-Conservative enthusiasm for the spread of democracy with great skepticism because: "The idea that Strauss was a great defender of democracy is laughable. I suppose that Strauss disciples consider it a noble lie. Yet many in the media have been gullible enough to believe it. How could an admirer of Plato and Nietzsche be a Liberal democrat? The ancient philosophers whom Strauss most cherished believed that the unwashed masses were not fit for either truth or liberty."

In explaining the real appeal of "Shock and Awe" demonstrations of military force, Dury points out that like Karl Schmidt, Strauss believed firmly that politics and the State are rooted in the maintenance of the "Friend/Foe" distinction. As she argues in her interview with Postel, for Strauss,

The global reach of American [mass] culture threatened to trivialize life and turn it into entertainment. This is as terrifying as a specter for Strauss as it was for Alexandre Kojève and Carl Schmidt… All three of them were convinced that liberal economics …destroys politics; all three understood politics as a conflict between mutually hostile groups willing to fight each other to the death… In short, they all thought that man's humanity depended on his willingness to rush naked into battle and headlong to his death. Only perpetual war can overturn the modern project with its emphasis on self- preservation and creature comforts. [Through war] Life can be politicized once more, and man's humanity can be restored. This terrifying vision fits perfectly well with the desire for honor and glory that the neo-conservative gentlemen covet. The combination of religion and nationalism is the elixir that Strauss advocates as the way to turn natural, relaxed, hedonistic men into devout nationalists willing to fight and die for their God and country. I never imagined when I wrote my first book on Strauss that the unscrupulous elite that he celebrates would ever come so close to political power… But fear is the greatest ally of tyranny.[vi]

In other words, Dury claims that Strauss believes that Men by their nature are inherently aggressive and can only restrained by a powerful nationalist state. "Because mankind is intrinsically wicked," Strauss once wrote, " he has to be governed. Such governance can only be established, however, when men are united and they can only be united against other people." And Dury adds that this means: " If no external threat exists then one has to be manufactured." Heroic values are required for the accomplishment of this struggle and for this the egoism and utilitarianism of modern liberalism is both an inadequate and unworthy

foundation. Apparently this was shown to Strauss's satisfaction by the utter failure of Weimar Republic to resist the rise of Hitler. In his view, Weimar's fate is the doom of all liberal democracies given enough time.

For Straussians like Mark Blitz, however, the American Republic has a unique chance of escaping this fate precisely because of its cultural and political "exceptionalism"-that is, because American political culture retained many pre-modern and illiberal cultural elements that have been lost in the rest of the modern world. Writing from a safe distance in Paris, Carole Widmaier in Paris defends Strauss from his disciples' nationalist excesses; denouncing their americano-centric, *"point de vue absolutisé d'une nation ou d'une culture particulière… Il est moins grec que barbare*." And citing Strauss' maxim that " *le barbare étant défini comme celui qui croit que toutes les questions ont été résolues par son propre tradition ancestrale*,' "Widmaier condemns the Straussians that have come to power in America as much for their barbarism as having reduced Strauss' esoteric philosophy to vulgar ideology.

After listening her defense of Strauss's critique of tyranny grounded in a close reading of his texts, one can imagine Leo Strauss repeating after Karl Marx, "Quant à moi, je ne suis pas Straussian." But then again, perhaps, Leo Strauss' attitude toward American power in world was not so distant from that of his unilateralist disciples as Widmaier would have us believe, and certainly no less "heroic" in its potential imperial applications. Dury states that whenever he discussed contemporary international relations, Strauss was fond of repeating the story of Gulliver and the Lilliputians. And more precisely of how: "When Lilliput was on fire, Gulliver urinated over the city, including the palace. In so doing, he saved all of Lilliput from catastrophe, but the Lilliputians were outraged and appalled by such a show of disrespect." An apt image, then, for an American Gulliver today who shows strong exhibitionist tendencies and whose militarist urges push him to play the "*pompier pyromane*" around the world while "Old Europe" looks on in disbelief.

The Straussian Neo-Cons, then adopt a peculiar stance in the "Quarrel of the Ancients with the Moderns." Essentially they argue that modern liberals are myopic dwarfs who actually have nowhere to stand philosophically and certainly not on any ancient giants' shoulders. For the Straussians modernity since Machiavelli has been a straight path to nihilism where all understanding of political virtue has been lost along with respect for a social hierarchy rooted in aristocratic values. To rediscover Virtue's true meaning, they argue we must return to the classical schoolroom and the pagan philosophers where moral teaching began – but this is a path is only open to a select few. For the rest of us, a return to organized religion, what Strauss called a "pious fraud," along with uplifting patriotic fables, are our only hope of avoiding the fall into total anomie. Given their rejection of modernity, it's not surprising that Straussians should endorse a religious faith they don't share as a necessary fiction needed to maintain good order among the masses. It is perhaps from this that comes the embrace of the Evangelical Christian Right by secular intellectual Jews as political allies within the Republican Party and of "Christian Zionists" by their Likud friends from Israel.

Dury work forces us to ask what qualifications if any the Neo-Straussians have for undertaking

the democratic modernization of the Mid-East as a "generational project"-given their own skepticism about democracy and liberal modernity as a political projects. "They really have no use for liberalism and democracy, "Dury remarks," but they're conquering the world in their name…" This suggests that the Neo-Cons are something more complicated than the *Wilsoniens bottés* that Pierre Hassner has dubbed them. They're too wedded to a radical critique of liberal modernity and to their alliances with Protestant fundamentalists Ayatollahs to be considered reliable friends of democracy in the Middle East or indeed anywhere else and most especially at home.

In helping us pose these political questions, Shadia Dury may sometimes slip into a partisan, polemical mode-as her critics suggest-but perhaps we might forgive her blunt Canadian way of speaking. In America, the Neo-Cons and the Religious Right are winning our culture wars, and the hour is already late. Liberal democrats in North America no longer have the time or the luxury of arguing the other side's position better than their opponents. Indeed, they must first understand their own position and argue it without reservation. This is something at least that Shadia Dury does not hesitate to do.

Notes

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[i] See Donald Rumsfeld, News Briefing, U.S. Dept of Defense, September 25, 2001, p. 1.

[ii] On the conflict between the official diplomatic line and real strategic rationale for the invasion see Olivier Roy's Op-Ed column, "Europe will not be fooled again, "*The New York Times*, May 13, 2003.

[iii] See Sonni Efron, "Diplomats on the Defensive," *The Los Angeles Times*, May 8,2003 www.latimes.com.

[iv] William Pfaff, "The Long Reach of Leo Strauss," Op-Ed, *International Herald Tribune*, May 15, 2003.

[v] See Mark Blitz's reply to Dury, "Leo Strauss, the Straussians and American Foreign Policy," *Open Democracy*, November 14th, 2003, www.openDemocracy.net, p. 1.

[vi] Danny Postel, "Noble lies and perpetual war: Leo Strauss, the neo-cons, and Iraq," www.opendemocracy.net/debates/article-2-95-1542.jsp.

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The Price Of Heavenly Peace: Tiananmen Square 15 Years Later

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Anyone who has walked along Chang'an Boulevard in Beijing in the last 15 years cannot help but be transported back to the spring of 1989. The ground still elicits the images of the tens of thousands of students and workers that gathered there to demand democratic reform of the Communist state. Even today, it is as if the square itself still vibrates with political meaning. This often happens when politics, history and location meet and intertwine. But whereas certain locales such as Berlin's Brandenburg Gate have come to represent the victory of freedom and democracy over fascism and totalitarianism, Tiananmen Square has taken on the opposite meaning: of the crushing and inevitable collapse of the democratic impulse and the gradual erasure of its memory. Students of history know all too well that the pursuit of democracy usually has more powerful enemies than allies; in Beijing on June 4th 1989, this historical lesson was to prove harrowingly true.

In the West, the crackdown was seen more as the bloody result of the actions of a totalitarian government. But the realities of the situation are more complex. Even though the 1980s saw dramatic reforms in Communist countries, Chinese reforms were more moderate and cautious. Mikhail Gorbachev's reformist agenda was echoed in China by the liberalizing vision of major political figures such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang who saw China's opening to the world has being more than merely economic in nature. The rigidity of the political systems that were formed and hardened during the Cold War were beginning to show signs of thawing. The word "reform" became as dangerous in certain circles as the word revolution had been 80 years before—it was a threat to all that existed and the encrusted, conservative elite that held power could smother the new-born impulse in its cradle.

But even the most conservative of the ruling elder statesmen knew that economic reforms were needed. The political and economic disasters of the "Great Leap Forward" in the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 70s had brought the Chinese economy to the verge of collapse. Reform meant absorbing ideas and institutions from the West, but only in terms of economics, technology and science; what was explicitly excluded were the political and moral ideas of the western political tradition and its cultural products. In 1983, a political movement under the title "Eliminate Spiritual Pollution" was initiated to eradicate what the conservative elite saw as "decadent" and bourgeois elements in Chinese culture and art. But despite this, a "Futurologist School" began to emerge. Through an analysis of western thought and science, the reality of the gap between what came to be known as a "backward society" and the "modern world," the Futurologists—led by figures such as Jin Guantao and Li Zehou—opened up a new horizon of consciousness for younger students and intellectuals. The centuries of Chinese isolationism had created not only a thirst and hunger for modernity, but a bitterness

and anger at being held back from realizing it as well.

Meanwhile, the realities of the newly reformed economy that Deng had created by allowing markets to be resurrected in the countryside and allowing international capital investment and joint enterprises between Chinese and international companies was extraordinary. As the new economy flourished and reform deepened, the calls for democracy were once again, after decades of silence, beginning to be heard. The 1980s saw the emergence of a "market fever" (shichang re) that gave birth to a "cultural fever" (wenhua re). The rise of living standards and the yearning for a "true" modernity rekindled the old yearnings from the radical movements of the 1920s. The slogan of "Democracy and Science" was the perceived solution to Chinese backwardness back then, and it was only logical to see it as the solution to the same problem in the 1980s as well. In literature with novelists like Gu Hua and Can Xue and in film with directors like Chen Kaige, Zhang Yimou and Tian Zhuangzhuang, Chinese culture was preoccupied with a project of self-critique which fed desires for political reform. It was only a matter of time before social and political crisis would shake China to its foundations.

Throughout the 20th century, democracy was never a foreign idea to Chinese intellectuals or activists. It is common for conservatives in the West to see the 1989 protests as the outgrowth of the American idea of freedom and democracy penetrating the Chinese walls and infecting its populace. But this is little more than a display of historical ignorance. After the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1909, movements for democratic reform and modernization were incessant, consistent and unwavering in their demands for Chinese modernization—democracy and western science were seen as the paths to modernization and students and intellectuals took up the banner of modernization under the auspices of both. Lacking a developed, industrialized economy throughout the first half of the 20th century, students and intellectuals—instead of a mobilized working class or newly emergent bourgeoisie—were the engine behind demonstrations and protests for democratic reform.

It was in 1978-79, after the deep freeze of Maoism began to give way, that the issue of democracy once again became the focus of mass appeal and government reaction. The "Democracy Wall" (Minzhuqiang) in Beijing was located in the Xidan section of the city where citizens gathered to read political tracts in the form of posters which advocated a new, open and democratic China. It was there that Wei Jingsheng wrote about China's need for democracy. For Wei and other activists of the Democracy Wall movement such as Liu Qing, Cai Song and Lü Pu, democracy was a precondition for all other forms of modernization and progress. They paid the price for their ideas and their forceful arguments. Wei was sentenced to 15 years in a "reform through labor" camp and Liu Qing would serve 10 years. They were a mere prelude of what was to come a decade later.

China had struggled throughout the 20th century with feudal traditions and power structures that date back to its Confucian past. A line from Book VII of Confucius' Analects says: "I transmit but do not innovate; I am truthful in what I say and devoted to antiquity." It was this burden of history and tradition as well as the conservative bias of Chinese culture that was coming into question in the 1980s with an increased intensity. And it was this type of culture

that was easily manipulated by the Communist Party to ensure devotion and to minimize dissent. Democracy and western science were seen as the means to throw off these historical burdens, as it had been in the West throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Translating these needs into the language of politics was only a matter of time. When the Tiananmen protesters came to the square in the spring of 1989, the "cultural fever" of the 1980s had been underway for at least seven years. They were a truly new generation with new ideas; the consequences of the end of their movement and the reforms they sought are only now beginning to be seen, and they require interpretation.

1989 was not only a movement of students and intellectuals, nor did it spring from mimicking the student movements of the West during the 1960s, as many in America have believed. The Tiananmen Square demonstrations incorporated workers who formed unions in the square and demanded labor reforms and slowly began to involve the entire citizenry of the city. In other major cities in China, student and intellectual supporters marched and rallied, as they did in Hong Kong as well, at the time still under British rule. It was a mass movement, a national movement in the classic sense of the term. And as such, in the end, the events that unfolded in the spring of 1989 ought not to be seen as being of consequence only to China and Chinese politics. It is difficult not to equate the political and moral impulse of the students and workers who demonstrated and opposed the Communist state in China during those spring months with the impulse of the revolutionaries of the late 18th century in Europe and America. What the students and workers sought were not simple reforms. They sought the modernization that the Chinese revolution of 1949 had initially promised: to be free from despotic rule and centuries of social and political dependency as well as cultural paternalism and the canons of oppressive tradition. In the face of a liberalizing economy, one which had become more private, generating more wealth, they sought not only to spread reforms to other spheres of society outside of the economy, but to protect their interests as workers and as young intellectuals from the growing capitalistic nature of economy and society.

China, Capitalism, Globalization and Democracy

Although today China has continued on its course of economic reform incorporating more market institutions into its quasi-socialistic economic framework and moving increasingly toward western economic institutions, "liberalization" has come to mean nothing more than economic liberalization—the hope for political reform, democratization and liberalization seems now to be little more than utopian for liberal-minded Chinese intellectuals and their foreign sympathizers. Today, as a world economic power, it is possible that China has less to fear from chants for democracy than ever before—the turn to capitalism may effect certain reforms and transformations, but it looks increasingly clear that a return to the sentiment of the spring of 1989 will not be one of them.

In his now classic study of the development of democracy and dictatorship in the modern world, Barrington Moore wrote, from the vantage point of the 1960s, that "the partial truth emerges that non-democratic and even anti-democratic modernization works." What we see in China is the evolution of a new kind of relationship between economics, politics and society. It is one that flies in the face of one of the core insights of neo-liberal western social scientists:

that the emergence of capitalism and its development will give rise to democracy. The neo-liberal mantra wedding markets, democracy and human freedom could not be more incorrect when considering the case of China whose private sector has grown to eclipse the once predominant public sector.

In the social sciences, the classic argument about the development of democracy was that capitalism was a precondition for democratic development. This view—primarily of American bastions of conservatism such as the Hoover Institution at Stanford and prominent sociologists and political scientists such as Seymour Martin Lipset—gave primacy to markets as the engine for the development of democracy. The argument was simple: as free markets developed and people entered commerce, wealth would be created by a talented entrepreneurial class which would seek democratic political reforms as its wealth grew and its interests in autonomy and an emerging civil society became more concrete. Thus the link between capitalism and democracy has always been strong in American understandings of economic and political development and it was premised on giving primacy to economic liberalization

China's path toward economic and social modernization was heralded as going against state ownership of economic enterprises which the Communist Party termed "wild and ultra-leftist socialism." What the new elite in the 1980s sought was the rapid economic development of the country. The Communist Party saw its interests as being at one with the nation, and they were right about this for a good period of time. People did want their living standards to rise, and rise it has throughout the last two decades, steadily. But what Chinese capitalism has also created is a massively unequal society marked by brutal capitalist exploitation, environmental degradation and little regard for human welfare in individualist terms. China's capitalism is what capitalism in the West would have become if it were not for radical workers' movements to curb the excesses of the industrial workplace. Lacking unions or any other kind of political or legal protection, Chinese workers and their families have little prospects for progressive change in their condition.

Even when it operates within a democratic framework, capitalism is an abusive, destructive economic system. Without the checks and steering capacity of some kind of democratic accountability—something that in the West has even been eroding over the past two decades—it is an economic system that can lead to even more horrible results. Liberal capitalism is therefore in stark contrast with Chinese capitalism. Liberalization of the market means that its effects—the generation of inequality, environmental degradation, the lack of regulations of all kinds—go largely, if not completely, unaddressed. In the case where there exists a liberal polity, however, these effects can be contested by social movements to mitigate the market's effects. The lack of a liberal, i.e., democratic, polity means that this mitigation of the effects of the economy by the state cannot take place, and the operation of the market goes unchecked, its effects unaccountable to any sector of the public.

This has also affected Chinese culture, but not in the way that neo-liberal apologists have argued. Instead of economic development leading ineluctably to further calls for democratic reform, there has emerged a massive consumerist culture within China which seems to take

after the contemporary United States. What Bin Zhao has called “Confucian consumerism” now mirrors what Daniel Bell referred to as the solution to the “cultural contradictions of capitalism”: consumerism, and on a mass scale, is the new face of capitalism, one untied from its traditional Protestant ethical foundations of thrift and asceticism. When capitalism is fed by raw, superficial consumerism, apathy in the political sphere is almost always a consequence. America and China may be more similar now than they have ever been—certainly more so than in the spring of 1989 when broad forms of democracy were on the mind of so many politically conscious citizens.

Expanding the Legacy of Tiananmen:
Prospects for Democracy in a Globalizing World

The age of democratic revolution is over. The era of democratic reform looks bleaker than ever. Tiananmen Square is the last gasp of the impulse for mass democracy on a national scale. One would be hard-pressed to think of another movement even half of its size in the last 15 years that was a movement for national democracy. It is not that the ideas no longer have appeal, this would be absurd. Rather, the brutal fact remains that so long as the ideas and traditions of democracy are undermined and successfully countered in the developing world, the less chance that it will have to succeed. Economic imperatives have won out over political principle. What we are witnessing in the context of globalization is the narrowing of the political sphere and the expansion of the economy as the road to modernization. Political instability—so long as it translates into economic instability—will be brutally quashed and it is difficult to see how any movement can compete with the technological and military power of the state as well as the effects of depoliticization that are put in place through educational programs and other ideological apparatuses. In China, this combination has been particularly effective; but even in places such as Iran which has a considerably more robust movement for reform and the political institutions to effect real change, has seen a slow weakening of the effectiveness of its reform-minded approaches.

As an event, the Tiananmen Square movement should be seen as more than a student movement. It was, in every sense of the word, a mass social movement that lost its political focus and, as it veered toward radicalism, also begged its own violent demise. The politics of social movements are all too commonly seen in naïve terms. For any social movement to be effective, as people like Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward have shown, they require regimes that are in some sense sympathetic to the demands of the movement. This was not lacking in China before May 19th, the day that the reformist Zhao Ziyang—China’s near-equivalent of Gorbachev and Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party—was deposed and many of his reformist allies along with him. After this, the conservative forces within the Party held sway, and there was no one that the movement could find to continue dialogue.

The demonstrations were more than the collective voice of disaffected students and workers, it was the largest movement for democratic reform and political, economic and cultural change in the post-war period of the 20th century. Even more, in an era where globalization continues to bind more markets to one another in different locations, the Tiananmen movement can also be seen as the last great movement for democracy outside of those places where some form of

democracy already exists. The Tiananmen protests and the crackdown therefore need to be placed in a very different historical and political context: the context of global movements for democracy that have taken place since 1989 and the burst of political and social movements and events that occurred at that time. This context tells us a different, much more sober tale. The Tiananmen protests constitute not only the largest mass movement for democracy in the 20th century, it is also the last mass movement for democracy that has taken place in the last 15 years. The increased power of the state in developing countries and the weakening, or outright lack, of democratic political traditions is at the root of this reality, and the trajectory of globalization seems all too intent on keeping it that way.

It may be commonplace to put blame for the lack of democratic change on the nature of the state, locating it as the source of all problems. But this quickly fizzles into libertarian fantasy. Franz Oppenheimer's phrase about the state from the dawn of the 20th century that "a small minority has stolen the heritage of humanity" is no longer a sufficient explanation for the lack of democratic reform in the political sphere in the context of globalization. What we are witnessing is the dawn of a new form of political economy in China—one that will serve as an ideal type for many other developing nations under the auspices of globalization. This is a kind of political economy that stresses the liberalization of markets even as it restrains democratic reforms within the state and its laws. It is one that puts primacy on economic development and growth and does not seek the same kind of development and openness of the state and society. The idea that capitalism and democracy are not only mutually inclusive but also two sides of the same historical coin is nothing more than apologia for capitalism itself and the hegemonic worldview of American liberal capitalism. But even in America, liberalism and capitalism are not wedded in some form of chemical affinity; rather, American society is the result of a liberal-capitalist consensus—one that has been erected between what historically has been two separate social aspirations: the first capitalistic which is the pursuit of profits and the other of workers and other members of a pluralist society that have sought individual freedom and social justice.

It is no longer enough to say that the crackdown and the subsequent efforts to quell dissent in China are the reasons for the subsequent political quiescence. Certainly the state's power has always been instrumental in crushing political change, but the reality is, I think, much deeper, in China and elsewhere: the rapid spread of capitalism has not led to a similarly rapid spread of democracy because capitalism and democracy—real democracy—really do not mix well. Rapid economic development and growth requires—as the political economist Rudolf Hilferding observed—an increased exploitation of labor and the environment; social dissent is therefore an obstruction to the dream of modernization, tolerance for unrest will therefore rarely be prolonged. But what of the predominant theories of neo-liberalism? An emergent middle class has developed in places like China, and it is robust to say the least. But calls for democratic reform have been lacking from this class as a result of an increase in political apathy that has been made palatable by a new consumerism and an increasingly powerful state. The prospects for democracy are perhaps worse now in China than ever before in the 20th century.

Democracy is more than a framework for political institutions. It consists of more than

elections and a system of checks and balances. Democracy is a mindset that requires a cultural component as well. Democratic impulses move people to solidarity, make movements that push for reform more rational and, ultimately, more successful. But the new dynamic of globalization should be seen for what it really is, and hyper-optimistic predictions about the future of democracy ought to be tempered by reality. The increasing power of economy over society—and the ability for the economy to play into a consumerist and politically apathetic populace—can only weaken chants for democracy, even by the most disadvantaged. In Europe, the Middle Ages went on for centuries with peasant revolts from below, but real change was not possible without a broader solidarity of different social strata.

We may very well be witnessing the victory of a capitalist form of globalization at the expense of robust democratic change. Indeed, the authoritarianism of modern Russia and China do not elicit the anxiety and fear in the West that their Soviet and Maoist manifestations once did; but at best, they are only marginally more democratic than those regimes. If Marx was right that men make history, but never under the conditions of their own choosing, then the conditions of the present need to be clearly demarcated. The context of global capitalism—one that is premised at the expense of democratic ideas—may be paving the path toward the very death of the political itself with its emphasis on market processes and the primacy of the interests of capital. In such an inverted world, the prospects for democracy depend not only on the infusion of democratic ideas, but also of an opposition to the effects of capitalism and the illusion that capitalist development is somehow equivalent to human development itself. Michael J. Thompson is the founder and editor of Logos. He teaches Political Science at William Paterson University. In 1995-96 he was a visiting lecturer at South China Agricultural University in Guangzhou, China.

The Zionist Attack On Jewish Values

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On November 17, 1917 Sir Arthur James Balfour, acting for the wartime British cabinet of Prime Minister David Lloyd George, issued what has historically become known as the Balfour Declaration. Promising a national home for the Jews in Palestine, the declaration established an alliance between the Zionist movement and the British Empire. For the Zionists the end game was to turn Palestine into a Jewish state. Though the Zionist leadership probably did not initially intend it, an eventual consequence of this ambition was the transformation of institutional Judaism into an adjunct of Zionist state ideology.

Even before the Balfour Declaration was announced the danger to Judaism inherent in the Zionist state orientated ideology was sensed and criticized by insightful Jewish individuals. They would describe their anxiety in varied ways, sometimes using political, or moral, or religious argument. All of them, however, could draw on a tradition of Jewish tolerance and humanitarianism that, in its modern formulations, went back to the work of Moses Mendelssohn and the 18th century Jewish enlightenment. For instance, Ahad Ha-am (the pen name of the famous Jewish moralist Asher Ginzberg), noted as early as1891 that Zionist settlers in Palestine have "an inclination to despotism. They treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, deprive them of their rights, offend them without cause, and even boast of these deeds; and no one among us opposes this despicable and dangerous inclination." He warned that such behavior stemmed from the political orientation of the Zionist movement which could only end up morally corrupting the Jewish people.

Unlike Chaim Weizmann, who famously desired that the Jews become a nation like all other nations, Ha-am (who was dedicated to Jewish cultural revival in Palestine) believed that the return to Zion was worthwhile only if the Jews *did not* become like other nations. By 1913 Ha-am knew this was not to be, and he completely rejected the nature of Zionism as it was evolving. "If this be the 'Messiah,'" he wrote, "I do not wish to see his coming." In effect, critics like Ha-am were making a distinction between Judaism, with its moral values and cultural richness, and the ethnocentric, tribal Zionism that was now coming into being.

As the issuance of the Balfour Declaration drew nearer other Jews voiced their worries. In England, on May 24, 1917, the Joint Foreign Committee of two Jewish organizations, The Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association issued a statement which asserted, "the feature of the Zionist program objected to proposes to invest Jewish settlers in Palestine with special rights over others. This would prove a calamity to the whole Jewish people who hold that the principle of equal rights for all denominations is essential. The [Zionist program] is all the more inadmissable because…it might involve them in most bitter feuds with their neighbors of other races and religion." In the United States, a letter typical of the Jewish opposition to Zionism was sent by Henry Moskowitz to the *New York Times* on June

10, 1917. He wrote the following, “what are the serious moral dangers in this nationalistic point of view from the standpoint of the Jewish soul? Here are some of them: first, it is apt to breed racial egotism….the establishment of the Jewish state may coarsen the quality of Hebrew spirituality and result not in a pure but in an alloyed idealism.” A year later the debate over Zionism still went on in the American Jewish community and occasioned Rabbi Louis Grossman of the Plum Street Synagogue in Cincinnati to write to President Woodrow Wilson. He told Wilson, “…a considerable number of Jews condemn the misrepresentation and resent the campaign which is being conducted by the Zionists and the political complications into which they are dragging our faith and ideals….The Zionists may have alleged to you that Zionism is extra-religious…but there are Jews who differ from them and maintain with equal certainty that the Zionistic assertion is a violation of their religious sanctities, and they protest against the secularization of their faith.”

Even though remarkably prescient, these warnings were steadily pushed aside by the rise of Zionist ideology among Ashkenazi Jews. The cause of this was the virulent anti-Semitism in Europe. The imprinting of fear and paranoia that was the primary psychological effect of pogroms and the Holocaust seemed to render the criticism of the Zionist position foolhardy. Anti-Semitism was posited as an eternal phenomenon that could only be effectively answered by the drive for a Jewish state. However, even given these severe conditions, Jews of high intellectual and moral sensitivity still expressed important reservations about where Zionism was leading. Hannah Arendt, one of the most insightful Jewish political philosophers of the 20th century, characterized the Zionist movement in a 1945 essay as a “German-inspired nationalism.” That is, as an ideology that holds “the nation to be an eternal organic body, the product of inevitable natural growth of inherent qualities; and it explains peoples, not in terms of political organizations, but in terms of biological superhuman personalities.” The result was a modern form of tribal ethnocentrism that led to virulent, politicized racism. In 1948 She and 27 other prominent Jews living in the United States (including Albert Einstein) wrote a letter to the *New York Times* condemning the growth of right wing political influences in the newly founded Israeli state. Citing the appearance of the “Freedom Party” (Tnuat Haherut) led by Menachem Begin, they warned that it was a “political party closely akin in its organization, methods, political philosophy, and social appeal to the Nazi and Fascist parties.” Begin would go on to become one of Israel’s prime ministers and the present day ruling party in Israel, Likud, is a direct successor of the “Freedom Party.”

Albert Einstein, was also a Jew of acute moral sensitivities. As such he too ultimately distanced himself from both Zionism and the Israeli state it created. Like Ha-am, Einstein was most interested in a cultural safe haven for the Jewish people and this was reflected in his strong support for the founding of Hebrew University. The political policies of the Zionists, however, alienated him. In 1938 he observed, “I would much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish state. My awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish state with borders, an army, and a measure of temporal power, no matter how modest. I am afraid of the inner damage Judaism will sustain–especially from the development of a narrow nationalism within our ranks….” Later, toward the end of his life, he warned that “the attitude we adopt toward the Arab

minority will provide the real test of our moral standards as a people." An investigation of the conclusions drawn by every human rights organization that has examined Israeli behavior toward the Palestinians over the last 50 years, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Israel's own B'Tselem, leaves no doubt that the Zionists have failed Einstein's test.

Yet that is just the conclusion that today's Zionist cannot face. Thus, any revival of these early and prescient objections as part of a contemporary critique of Zionism represents the promotion of supposedly traitorous anachronisms that are not only an embarrassment, but also politically dangerous. Jews who express such concerns are systematically denigrated and non-Jews who are critical of Zionism are slandered with charges of anti-Semitism. The U.S. media, still bound by the mythology of Israel as a democratic, modern, secular state that shares America's pioneering tradition, have traditionally ignored or downplayed critics of Zionism. And, indeed, one has to hunt for contemporary expressions of these traditional apprehensions and objections. How many have heard of *Neturei Karta* (Jews United Against Zionism) or the other 18 presently active anti-Zionist Orthodox Jewish organizations?

Generally speaking these groups assert a religious objection to Zionism and claim that Jewish "peoplehood is based exclusively on the Torah" and not on the land or state of Israel. Among the more secular there tends to be a focus on and rejection of Israel's policies of occupation and colonization as the basis for a moral critique of political Zionism. For instance, there is *Not In My Name,* a coalition of American Jews founded in Chicago in 2000. The organization declares that "the State of Israel often claims to act in the name and interests of world Jewry, but …these actions do not reflect our Jewish values and beliefs." They not only oppose Israel's present illegal occupation and colonization of Palestinian lands, but also reject as morally unacceptable the position that "Jewish survival depends on unconditional support for the Israeli government and its policies. There is also *Tikkun*, a mainly (though not only) Jewish organization that opposes the aggressive style of Zionism that has resulted in the colonization of the Occupied Territories and the persecution of Palestinians, while seeking, among other things, "the spiritual renewal of Judaism." The American organization, Jews Against The Occupation, based in New Jersey, points out that Judaism is a cultural and religious identity, which must not be equated with Zionism, a political movement." The British organization, Jews for Justice for Palestinians, affiliated with the European movement, Jews for a Just Peace, promotes the "human, civil, and political rights" of the Palestinians–the victims of the Zionist movement. These are just a few of the Jewish organizations now existing worldwide that find themselves at odds with the present political and institutional manifestations of Zionism.

Mainstream Judaism, however, is ever more closely identified with Zionism and the state of Israel. There are some 13 million Jews throughout the world (approximately 5.8 million of them live in the United States as compared to 4.6 million in Israel). According to the Jewish Agency, "70% of Jews around the world see Israel as vital to their Jewish identity." Zionist education is aimed at the remaining 30%, who are categorized as victims of "assimilation and Jewish illiteracy." Again, quoting the Jewish Agency, "Jewish Zionist education is a critical aspect of Jewish continuity and identity." This effort, ongoing since before the Balfour Declaration, has been remarkably successful. Walk into the vast majority of synagogues anywhere in the world,

and you will see pictures, posters, declaratory statements, or other indicators of a connection with the State of Israel. Talk to the congregants and you soon find that they see Judaism and the Israeli state as inseparably bound together. It is in fact the case that most Jews have been raised to be viscerally concerned with well-being of their tribal state. While we might not quite be there yet, the opinion of Professor Robert Wolfe is indicative of the direction in which both Zionism and Judaism are evolving. “There exist innumerable definitions of Zionism,” Wolfe tells us, “in my view, Zionism is Judaism.”

What does this growing identification mean for Judaism? To answer this question we have to look at both the ethical values that historically characterize modern Judaism and compare them to the values of Zionism as characterized by the practice of the Israeli state.

If one looks at the descriptions of Judaism’s ethical stance, particularly as expressed by concerned and learned Jews outside of Israel, we often find variations on goodness, tolerance, acceptance of others (good neighborliness), justice for all, and the maintenance of peace. For instance, the Columbus Platform of the Reform oriented Central Conference of American Rabbis states that “the love of God is incomplete without the love of one’s fellow men. Judaism emphasizes…justice for all….it aims at the elimination of man-made misery and suffering…of tyranny and slavery, of social inequality and prejudice, of ill-will and strife….It regards justice as the foundation of the well-being of nations and the condition of enduring peace.”

The more Orthodox Rabbi Naftali Brawer, representing England’s Chief Rabbi’s Cabinet at the December 2001 Interfaith Meeting on “The Peace of God in the World” told his audience that since ancient times the Jewish ethical outlook had been that “the world endures by three things: truth, justice, and peace…if there is no justice there can be no peace.” Where an interpretation of truth conflicts with the ideals of peace the Talmud teaches that “we abandon the ‘truth’ and strive instead for peace.” Part of this striving for peace (“one of the most exalted ideals in Judaism”) is the exercise of tolerance, or an “appreciation for the other. Shalom comes from the word Shalem – Whole. We must recognize that alone we are incomplete, it is only when we see the value of the other that we ourselves can be whole.” Variations on these themes can also be found in the writings and sermons of some Conservative and Reconstructionist Jewish leaders in the diaspora. It can be argued that such an emphasis on tolerance, peace, and justice grew up because preaching them was in the interest of the historically vulnerable diaspora Jews, but this does not negate the essential positiveness of such values.

When the question of ethics and values are discussed in relation to Israel, however, there is a change of categories and interpretation. For instance, Conservative Judaism as it manifests itself within Israel as the *Masorti Movement*, declares that “the Jewish State of Israel is the ultimate concretization of Judaism’s goals and ideals.” The movement views the “building of the land and the nation as a primary mitzvah” (good deed). That is, the process of state building and reclaiming the land somehow incorporates and projects Jewish ideals, ethically and otherwise. However, the Masorti Movement does not recognize, at least in its public statements, the possibility that adaptation to a tribal (in this case manifested through an

exclusively Jewish state) rather than pluralistic nationalism may negatively impact the traditional Jewish emphasis on "truth, justice, and peace." Nor do other Zionist oriented Jewish organizations active in the United States such as *Hadassah, B'nai B'rith,* and *Hillel* consider it possible that a perversion of values might result from the melding of Jewish identity and the religio-tribal, Israeli/Zionist ideology. On the contrary, these groups openly assert that values of tolerance, neighborliness, and a sense of justice, can best cultivated and enhanced by the "Israeli experience"– that is, through the vehicle of the tribal state. What they mean, however, is not a universal practice of these values, but rather a practice restricted to the Jewish community.

A recent paper on "Jewish Values in the Jewish State" issued by The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs renders Jewish ideals and values into something less universal and more tribal through association with religiously defined nationalism. The paper speaks of Israelis struggling to adapt the "universalistic values of humanitarianism and social justice which Jews have acquired over centuries from the Bible and Jewish tradition" to the "specific situations that they confront" in the state of Israel. Yet the example offered by the Center refers to a situation that, from a non-Zionist, outsider's point of view, seems to belie both humanitarianism and social justice. Thus, the example given is "the recent controversies over building the bypass roads in the [occupied] territories between those who *want the roads to be built as rapidly as possible so the peace process can continue* in the field and those…who worried about permanent damage [caused by the road building] to the environment"(my emphasis). The paper does not mention that the construction of these roads facilitates illegal Israeli colonization, that access to them is restricted to Israelis only, and that they are used almost exclusively by Jewish colonists and the army. To what extent, the non-Zionist can ask, do such bypass roads serve to promote truth, justice, and the "peace process"? Later on in the paper we find the following statement, made without irony, "…those Jews *among the least attuned* to an overt recognition of the place of Jewish values in our society *are among the most active* in the struggle for Israel-Arab peace.…The peace process…will undoubtedly be involved in the clash of values between those who see peace as a preeminent value and those who see other Zionist and Jewish values as equally if not more important" (again, my emphasis). Compare this to Rabbi Brawer's emphasis that peace is among the highest of Jewish values, a value more important than any particular (tribal) interpretation of "truth."

A negative transformation of Jewish values is further encouraged by the Zionist emphasis on the idea of covenant as a source of those values. As applied to Israel, the primary interpretation of covenant involves God, the land and the creation of a tribal state. That is, following divine instruction, Jews are given the land of Israel and possess it as an exclusive Jewish community. Most of today's Jewish rituals, holidays, liturgy, and religious education have served to reinforce this position. Within the context of this defining relationship of the Jewish "nation" and God as it now acts itself out in contemporary history, those principles of the Talmud (for instance peace and tolerance) that tend to the universal are necessarily trumped, or subject to reinterpretation, by the particularism of state building and its foundational religio-tribal ideology. Disagreements might arise between the Jewish citizens of the covenant state as to the proper balance between the religious and secular norms, esoteric debates might arise as to

who can perform legitimate conversions, and hand wringing can be witnessed over the effective or ineffective enforcement of the sabbath, but these are secondary to the almost unanimous belief in the divinely bonded nature of land and people. Within the Israeli context, Jewish values must conform to this a priori ideological doctrine or, sooner or later be downgraded if not discarded. Justice, tolerance, and "peace" become understandable only in reference to the advancement of tribal interests.

What happens, in practice, when this religious tribalism clashes with the traditional humanitarian interpretation of their values that some Jews of the diaspora have continued to cultivate, not only for their humanitarian worthiness, but as long term survival principles? Here one can take the recent case of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Great Britain's Chief Orthodox Rabbi. Taking Rabbi Sacks public statements over the years as a whole it is clear that he supports the existence of Israel. Yet, in August 2002, the consequences of aggressive Israeli expansionism brought him to warn that Zionist state policies, as they manifest themselves in the colonization of the Occupied Territories and the associated persecution of the Palestinians, are perverting "the deepest ideals" of Judaism. Sacks emphasized the Jewish values of acceptance and tolerance. "Do not ill-treat a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Referring to this commandment, he observed that, "you cannot ignore a command that is repeated 36 times in the Mosaic books: 'You were exiled in order to know what it feels like to be an exile.' I regard this [tolerance and a sense of justice toward the "stranger" who shares the land] as one of the core projects of a state that is true to Judaic principle. And therefore I regard the current situation as nothing less than tragic, because it is forcing Israel into postures that are incompatible in the long-run with our deepest ideals….There is no question that this kind of conflict, together with the absence of hope, generates hatreds and insensitivities that in the long run are corrupting to a culture." It is clear that the culture he is concerned about is Jewish culture itself, as it has metamorphosed under the influence of Zionist tribal nationalism.

Diaspora reactions to Sacks's assertions were mixed. The Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues in England supported him. "What Jonathan Sacks has said is what liberal and reform rabbis have been saying for many years." On the other hand Likud-Herut GB (Great Britain) asserted that Sacks position was one of "moral blindness." In the United States, where most official Jewish organizations are lock-step supporters of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the Likud Party, Sacks was largely ignored or given short shrift. For instance, in the case of the major American Jewish newspaper the Forward, Sacks's remarks got scant coverage. What there was, however, ended with this quote from Rabbi Sholom Gold, dean of the Jerusalem College for Adults in Israel, "…it is extremely sad for me to hear him make comments of such a nature which for all intents and purposes will now make him irrelevant in the world Jewish community." In Israel major news and official outlets were often harshly condemnatory.

On August 8, 2002 the *Jerusalem Post* published an editorial that called Sacks's remarks "morally inexplicable and astonishingly naive." *The Post* continued, "For Sacks to lecture us about 'our deepest ideals' is worse than insulting…it deprecates the fundamental value that we

are fighting for our freedom and our very lives….Indeed, rather than 'corrupting' us this war of self-defense has brought out some of our finer qualities, such as patriotism, national pride, and willingness to make personal sacrifices on behalf of the common good." *The Post* than called on Rabbi Sacks to resign his position as Chief Rabbi. The official Voice of Israel radio combined descriptions of Sacks's criticism with the fact that the Chief Rabbi had recently met with Iran's ayatollah Abdullah Javadi-Amoli at a UN conference of religious leaders in New York. Sacks had said that he and the ayatollah, as two men of faith, had "quickly established a common language." What Rabbi Sacks meant was the "particular language believers share." However, the way the Voice of Israel reported it implied a connection between Sacks's criticism of Israel and his "common language" with the Iranian cleric. To those, such as Rabbi Arik Aschermann, the head of the Jerusalem based Rabbis for Human Rights, the aim of the Voice of Israel was clear, the criticism of Rabbi Sacks "was an effort to discredit him."

Those who assert that Zionism is the tuest form of Judaism must dismiss or discredit the critics of Israeli policies. For these Zionists it is logically impossible for such policies to do damage to Judaism because faith and fatherland have been melded into one. Those who, like Sacks, imply that Israel's behavior may indeed do such damage appear as traitors. Therefore, they must be rendered "irrelevant to the world Jewish community." It would be interesting to see how today's tribal Zionists would react to the statement made in 1961 by the great Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Essentially sharing Sack's distress, Buber asserted that "Only an internal revolution can have the power to heal our people of their sickness of causeless hatred….Only then will the old and young in our land realize how great was our responsibility to those miserable Arab refugees in whose towns we have settled Jews who were brought here from afar; whose homes we have inherited, whose fields we now sow and harvest; the fruits of whose gardens, orchards and vineyards we gather; and in whose cities that we put up houses of education, charity, and prayer…." Buber concluded that the situation was so morally reprehensible that "it is bound to bring complete ruin upon us." Buber too would now have to be labeled "irrelevant in the world Jewish community."

The continuing disagreement as to what constitutes the real values of the community has, in effect, split Judaism into majority and minority parties. The majority element, which controls the religion's institutional manifestations, openly identifies itself and its ethics with the expansionist, brutalizing policies of the Israeli tribal state. They have given themselves and their religion over to the Zionist dream of a Jewish state. What they have inherited, however, is the very worst aspects of nationalism that comes when nationhood is pursued not in a pluralistic spirit, but in a tribal one: chauvinism, aggressiveness, and xenophobia. As a result there has been a militarization of the Jewish mind, the Passover ritual and other Jewish celebrations have been turned into paeans of nationalism, imperialism and colonialism, and Zionist nationalists have invented (as a vicarious act of fratricide) the category of "self-hating Jew" for those who share their religion but not their politics.

And what of those other, hopefully more authentic Jewish ideals, the humanitarian ones? They have gone over to a small minority of the Jewish people who seek to promote them as a curative to the values that underlie the aggressive and colonialist policies that now

characterize Zionist-Israeli behavior. It is worth noting that this minority appears to be growing. Jewish activists, both within Israel and the diaspora, now organize and support boycotts, divestment campaigns, and demonstrations that spotlight the aggressive and oppressive policies of the Zionist state. These people are Judaism's best hope for the future. They are also Israel's best hope, in that the interpretation of Jewish values they preserve may help to eventually de-tribalize, and civilize that country. *Civilitas successit barbarum*–with struggle civilization can succeed barbarism.

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Security And Global Justice

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Since September 11th we have heard the word “security” so many times (as in “national security interests,” “Office of Homeland Security,” etc.) that it set me to ruminating about its meaning. There are many ways in which the concept of security could be interrogated—“whose security?” is one question that might be asked—but I have been thinking principally about the various kinds of security we all want and the various kinds of insecurity we face. Upon reflection, these turn out to be much broader than the way the concepts of security and insecurity are usually understood. When we think of security in all its senses, it seems to me that the importance of global justice for security simply cannot be stated too strongly. And secondly, it seems to me that public goods are essential for justice and hence for security—both here in the United States and around the world. By public goods I am referring to goods that all can share because they are not privately owned. My enjoyment of it does not preclude your enjoying it as well. Some goods are public because of their intrinsic nature, like air; other goods are public because their nature makes it too inconvenient to make them private. The classic example is the lighthouse; to try to make a lighthouse that people could get the benefit of only if they paid individually for its use is just too complicated to bother. And other goods like education or health care are public—if they are—only because people have struggled to take them out of the private for-profit sector and make them available for all. What we need to see is that public goods are intimately bound up with security in all kinds of ways.

But first let us consider how security is commonly understood. As it is usually talked about these days, as in “Office of Homeland Security,” “our national security,” “the conflict between civil liberties and security considerations,” “security was tightened,” or, more mundanely, “security guards,” the threats to our security are always *intentional* threats to our safety and well being, which of course means they are threats by people, whether individuals, groups, or nations. Not so long ago Communists were said to pose the biggest threat, now it is “terrorists” and “rogue nations.” Security is a major growth business here and in many other parts of the world and an increasingly high tech one. While we used to worry about intentional threats only from criminals, now our daily lives have been transformed by far more serious security concerns. More and more people have to carry, even to wear ID cards, big concrete blocks line the sidewalks of many of our streets and our access to countless public buildings is tightly controlled by phalanxes of security guards and video monitors. But most people pay little attention; the possibility of terrorist attacks has been normalized.

Now protection against intentional threats to our safety is not the only way “security” is understood. We have “security blankets” when we’re babies and “Social Security” when we are elderly—things that protect our safety and well being both in material and emotional ways. This is security in the broader sense—safety and well being both of an objective material or a subjective emotional kind. It is not only intentional acts that can threaten our security

in this *broader* sense of the word; threats to our security in this sense are also conceived more broadly.

But generally speaking, most Americans' concern about security today that is posed in terms of the word "security" is about intentional threats by people. We pay much less attention to threats to our safety and well being that are from nature rather than people, or are only indirectly from people, as unintentional consequences of human action. Though we read all the time about the dangers of global warming—a threat from nature that is an unintended result of human action—that is not what is usually intended by a "security" threat and it does not grip our imagination and fears in any way proportional to its severity. Hans Blix, the United Nations weapons inspector in Iraq, said, "I'm more worried about global warming than about war." But even for those of us who share his assessment of the severity of the threat of global warming, I think that such threats do not grip our imagination and fear in any way proportional to their seriousness.

So first let me address some connections between public goods and threats to our security from intentional acts, in particular threats to people in the United States from the terrorists of 9/11. Many of the Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters were trained in Pakistan in *madrassas*, all male religious schools many run by fundamentalist clerics who use them to recruit their students for *jihad*. What is the connection to public goods and global justice? First of all, most parents send their sons to these madrassas not out of ideological commitment but because there is no alternative; there are no public schools in Pakistan. I am not saying that public education would eliminate terrorists, but clearly it would substantially and directly reduce the number of these kinds of terrorists and their sympathizers, thereby increasing our security as well as advancing social and economic justice for Pakistani people.

Similarly, a number of commentators have explained the growth of Islamic fundamentalist organizations throughout the Mideast as due—in large part—to the fact that these organizations have stepped in to provide basic services for people that the governments should provide, but do not. Why don't these countries, even larger more powerful countries like Egypt have the money for basic social services? One reason can be seen in the struggle in Cancun this September over farm subsidies that the richest countries give to their farmers, making it impossible for countries like Pakistan, Egypt and some sub-Saharan African nations that grow cotton to compete. A root cause of the kind of terrorism we fear today is the obscene global gap between rich and poor which has been worsened through globalization; with the absolute hegemony of capitalism on a global scale, most people throughout the world have no way to satisfy their needs but through the market. The guarantees provided by the old Soviet system, bad as it was, are gone and people throughout the developing world have lost the land that provided for their meager subsistence and are overflowing the cities. But almost half of the world's people are unable to provide for their needs through the market. With socialism perceived as a failure, where can they turn in their desperation and anger? Thus our insecurity in the narrow sense of the term is due to their insecurity in the broadest sense. Of course, not all terrorists are poor. Many people in developing societies who are more educated are nevertheless underemployed and humiliated culturally, but left-wing alternatives no longer

attract such people and some turn to fundamentalism. So again it seems that steps toward economic justice throughout the globe would be steps toward our security. There is beginning to be some verbal acknowledgement of this within official circles. For example, the recent meeting in Mexico of the Organization of American States on security said it planned to address poverty, disease and the environment as well as the usual military threats. However, though the U.S. ambassador acknowledged that extreme poverty contributes to violence and insecurity, the United States' solution for poverty in Latin America—the FTAA—is even more of the same failed policy.

Right after 9/11 there was the anthrax scare that raised the threat of bioterrorism. Although it turned out not to be as serious as was thought and not to be from a foreign source, nevertheless the threat is potentially very real, simply because biological and chemical weapons are so cheap. Unlike all other weapons of mass destruction biochemical weapons are potentially accessible to the poorest nations and individuals. During the anthrax scare which in the end killed only six people, it was quite apparent that the absence of a decent public health system in the United States renders us defenseless against a threat of this kind. A minimum necessary condition for increasing our security against the threat of biochemical terrorism is a good public health system. Now millions of Americans are uninsured, hence not secure, against *ordinary* medical problems, but since the harm there is not intentional, it gets less priority; it seems less threatening—except of course to the sick person and their families who don't have insurance.

Air and water are paradigmatic examples of public goods and are particularly vulnerable to bioterrorism. Just think how many people could be killed by poisoning our reservoirs and how easy it would be. Now, air is not privately owned, nor is most water in the world, so that is not the primary problem, but neither are adequately protected from acts that endanger them. So far, our air and water have not been damaged as a result of acts that aim at this as a goal, i.e., they have not been damaged by terrorism. But they have been damaged by innumerable intentional acts such as pouring PCBs into the river, or oil waste into streams and soil, etc., acts motivated not by a desire to harm, but rather to cut costs, and thereby increase profits. Either way people are poisoned by water and intentional acts are the source of both.

But many people on the planet have other problems getting clean water. I just said that most water on the planet is not privately owned, but much of the *drinkable* water *is* privately owned; or in other cases, it is the *provision* of water that is a private business. The government of South Africa, for example, has bought the neoliberal argument that providing services, including the provision of water, through the market will lead to greater conservation. What that has meant is that people there who cannot afford to pay to be connected to the clean water supply have only two choices since doing without water is not a choice: they can get the clean water illegally and risk jail, or they can get their water from polluted rivers in the midst of a cholera epidemic. The threat to poor South Africans' security is not from terrorism or other intentional acts—except of course the act of privatizing the provision of water. Both for poor South Africans and Americans whose water has been contaminated by dumping of industrial waste, the problem is that access to a basic necessity of life is compromised by the profit

system.

Taking something essential like health, education, transportation or basic resources out of the private, for-profit sector and making it *public* is essential to making it work for our common security. When an individual capitalist firm makes a decision regarding what to produce and how to produce something, it can ignore—as externalities—any damage to the environment or peoples' health that might result. Within a capitalist framework it would be very *irrational* for any firm to base its decisions on such social costs unless it could be sure that other firms would do the same. The same is true for each one—which leads to the paradoxical conclusion that thoroughly rational action as defined by mainstream economists will lead to results that are worse for all.

This paradox, known as the "collective action problem," is generated by the individualist logic of capitalism and the narrow definition of rationality enshrined in mainstream economics. It should not be surprising therefore that environmental problems are virtually ignored by the economics profession. Perhaps the potential dangers of the conflict of security and profitability are symbolized most dramatically by the name "Bhopal," where Union Carbide's carelessness caused the death and illness of thousands of people. So removing the bottom line of profitability is essential to our security. However, it is not sufficient. There are interests other than profit that can conflict with security and these might be summed up best by the name "Chernobyl." The environments of many former Soviet bloc countries are absolutely devastated, despite the fact that all industry was publicly owned. The Danube has been likened to a sewer and the air in Beijing is practically unbreathable many months of the year. The decision makers under the Soviet system were not aiming at profit, but at building up their own power by building up the state.

The crucial point from both these examples is that is that in order to ensure our security, the essentials of human life must be under public *democratic control*—how else can we be sure that they will truly serve our interests—as we perceive our interests? There are risks to almost everything we humans do and we often have competing goals. This means that complex decisions and often tradeoffs have to be made, and no one is in a better position to make these decisions than the people who are most directly affected. Contrary to received wisdom, no great expertise is required.

A fascinating book called *Demanding Democracy After 3 Mile Island* shows the changes in ordinary peoples' attitudes toward business and government after the accident at the nuclear power plant at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania. From feeling incompetent and trusting the authorities, people in the community came to feel that they were the ones who should decide. One woman in the community said that if the experts had told her that nuclear energy would lower energy costs so she could use her electric dryer, she would prefer to hang her clothes on a clothesline now that she knows the risks. That is why experts are needed: to lay out the implications of different technical choices. But then it is only the individuals directly involved who can evaluate these implications and choose in terms of what they most care about.

Nine-eleven might have a similar effect; at least *The Wall Street Journal* reported that various privatization schemes had become less popular since then with people feeling that maybe some things—water was one example—are simply too important to be left to the profit motive. Since 9/11, nuclear power may seem even more dangerous as we can suddenly, all too easily, imagine a plane flying directly into a nuclear reactor. Once again, however, terrorism is only one kind of danger from nuclear power plants. A few months after 9/11, a front page *New York Times* article reported that the U.S. had ordered that all reactors be checked for corrosion after it was discovered that acid in cooling water had eaten nearly all the way through a liner; less than half an inch was holding in hot radioactive water, the loss of which could cause a meltdown. The laughable emergency evacuation plans press the question: are nuclear reactors something we need to have? We should decide that question. The same conflicts occur around the world with more devastating effects in the developing world. As Arundhati Roy describes in *Power Politics*, big dam projects in India have been justified by the cheaper electricity costs they will bring. But the projects benefit only the elites in the cities and have displaced millions of people who have now lost the essential elements of well-being. They did not get to decide.

Human security requires, minimally, that all decisions about vital resources be brought under public scrutiny and control. This would be global justice. But "democratic control" in a system dominated by private corporations is hard to come by. India, like the rest of the developing world, faces multinational corporations and institutions like the World Bank and the IMF dominated by the richest countries. But in the richest countries the problem is similar. In hearings on the Clean Air Act, the Energy Department consulted sixty-four corporations and trade groups—and only one environmental group. Clearly this will be a hard struggle.

I would like to turn now to the question of what might explain our focus on threats to security that come from intentional acts. It is certainly not because intentional acts do more harm. Around 8.5 million people were killed during the four years of World War I, but more than twice that many—twenty million people—died from the flu pandemic in 1918-19.

So what does explain the focus on intentionality when we think of threats to our security? Some might argue that the focus on intentionality has moral roots—the most basic negative duty is not to harm, and it's worse to harm intentionally. Acts of commission are generally seen as worse than acts of omission, and positive rights and duties (rights and duties that require help, rather than simply requiring that one *not* harm or interfere with another person's actions) are not universally acknowledged—certainly not in the laws of our country. Hence the focus on intentional acts might be said to have a legal basis—all societies have laws against harming people that reflect our moral judgment that harm done intentionally is the worst kind (except when the government does it in wars or capital punishment). Despite opposition from the United States, we are moving closer to having international laws and courts of the same kind. Thus institutions are already or will be in place to protect our security against intentional threats. So perhaps we focus on those kinds of threats because we have a better chance of being efficacious.

Perhaps we can just extend this explanation and say that we focus on threats to our security

from human acts for practical reasons, because they are potentially under our control, whereas other threats to our security, like natural catastrophes, are out of our control. This sounds reasonable; what is the point of focusing on threats that we can do nothing about? And some natural catastrophes are of course out of our control. *Some*, but not all; some "natural" threats may be caused by human action. Global warming obviously is, but some are less obvious. The cholera epidemic in South Africa I mentioned earlier is called a natural disaster by the government, but in reality is due to their privatization of water. Or consider the drought in many parts of Africa, or the sand storm that came over Beijing a couple of years ago; both are caused by cutting down too many trees. Moreover, even natural threats that are not *caused* by human action, might nevertheless be controllable by human intervention—as diseases are in the richer parts of the world.

So some natural threats, like global warming or the drought, are clearly side effects of our economic system—collateral damage one could say—so they are potentially under our control. But we are all too prone to see the economic system as being like nature rather than constituted by human relations and countless human acts. We listen to the stock market report like we listen to the weather report, as something we're powerless to affect, that happens to us, rather than something we do. This is, of course, what Marx called "commodity fetishism," which he saw as a very central aspect of the ideology of capitalism. So long as we believe that it is out of our control, then it is. So the focus on intentional acts has the effect of shielding the economic system from scrutiny and from being exposed as the major cause of insecurity for millions of people around the world. Ernest Mandel once pointed out that the number of calories consumed by the prisoners in Nazi concentration camps exceeds what millions, perhaps billions, of people get every day, simply as a result of the normal workings of the global market. Another comparison: Everyone knows the rough figures on the deaths from the WTC attack: upwards of 3,000 people were killed; some of us know that at least the same number, maybe more civilians have been killed in Afghanistan by our forces. But few people are aware of the effects of the economic downturn that was brought on or exacerbated by the attack; according to the World Bank, in countries without a social safety net, 40,000 children will die from disease and malnutrition.

Why doesn't this suffering and insecurity deserve as much concern? Is it not so bad because it is not intentional? As I said earlier there is more of a consensus on the immorality of intentionally harming people than there is on the immorality of failing to help, on negative duties rather than positive duties. But that's among philosophers and politicians. Ordinary people around the world struggle for the satisfaction of their basic needs and think it's only right; most other people agree even if they wouldn't pose it in terms of positive rights. Furthermore, even within the narrow terms of negative rights and duties, it is almost as bad to do harm unintentionally but with reckless disregard for the harmful consequences—drunk driving for example—as it is to do harm intentionally—and this conviction is embedded in our legal system. You might be charged with manslaughter rather than murder, but manslaughter is still pretty bad. Certainly this description—doing harm unintentionally but with reckless disregard—would apply to the ordinary workings of global corporate capitalism. So there is little basis for saying that the focus on threats to our security from intentional acts is due to

their being so much worse from a moral point of view.

Perhaps the focus on threats to our security from intentional acts has psychological, emotional roots. Perhaps we are afraid, most basically, of someone trying to hurt us. Even if the objective harm is the same as harm that is from natural causes, it is more hurtful psychologically when it is intentional because it is a conscious, deliberate rejection of who we are. And if our attacker feels this way, maybe the rest of the world does too. Survivors of violence report that it changes the way they look at the world. Perhaps also we're more afraid of intentional threats to our security because the danger tends to be sudden, to hit all at once, so there is no time to get used to it and the fear of the surprise intensifies the fear of the harm and so when it occurs we experience shock. Some researchers have suggested that the stress of waiting for the blow to fall explains why sometimes victims of domestic violence seem to provoke the violence. The shock of the totally unexpected blow was multiplied many thousand times in the attack on the World Trade Center where more people were killed all at once than at any other time in history. In contrast, the damage done by the absence of goods to satisfy basic needs tends to hit far more slowly; people suffer and die from malnutrition little by little over a very long time making it quite unsurprising; in fact, it just seems "natural." As Amartya Sen points out in arguing against the satisfaction of preferences as a basis of welfare ethics, in some contexts women suffering from malnutrition seem not even aware that they are hungry. Psychology students may remember the gruesome experimental results that a frog dropped in boiling water struggles mightily while a frog dropped in water which is then heated to boiling does not.

Or finally, perhaps the crucial issue explaining the focus on threats to our security from intentional acts is the one I mentioned at the outset but said I wasn't going to focus on: namely, that when we speak about security, we have to ask, "Whose security?" Perhaps it is simply those of us who are fortunate enough not to have to worry about threats to our safety and well-being from nature or from the ordinary workings of the economic system who focus on the dangers of people intentionally trying to hurt us, whether they be ordinary criminals or terrorists. Thus it is especially Americans, Europeans and the elites of the developing world who focus on security in the narrow sense. Of course, people in war anywhere have to focus on those dangers; if they're not alive, they don't have to worry about clean water. But ordinarily, poor people have more basic worries. Thus, it is not surprising that the only academic discipline where "security" in used in the broad sense I am advocating is in development studies, e.g., "food security."

Whatever explains our narrowness in thinking about threats to our security—perhaps all of the above factors contribute—the effect is the same, viz. that we miss the most crucial threats to global security in the long run and the best way to defend ourselves. The focus on intentional acts is simply too narrow to provide genuine security, certainly for the poor of this country and the rest of the world, but also, increasingly, for the rest of us as well. To make everything necessary for our security into public goods that are democratically controlled is the only way, I maintain, that the human species can be secure in the long run. This would be global justice. Although we can hardly afford to be optimistic, there is some evidence that more and more

people around the world are beginning to think in this direction—and to organize. The anti-globalization movement—more properly called the global justice movement—is enormously promising. Although 9/11 was a big blow to the movement, there were almost half a million in the streets of Barcelona for the meetings of the European Union, the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre drew 50,000, and Cancun many thousands from around the world. Brazilian President Lula's attempts to forge a multi-national coalition to resist the U.S. Goliath is a hopeful step; in Bolivia the grassroots struggle against privatization actually succeeded in forcing a president from power.

In conclusion, it is worth noting the gender dimension to what I have been discussing. And indeed it is pretty obvious, once you think about it, how "gendered" the two meanings of "security" and threats to security are. When we talk of security in the narrow sense, as in "our national security interests," we know that it is men who will be defending us against other men who are attacking us. Although the sexual division of labor is amazingly variable through human history, one thing that does not vary is that men are responsible for warfare. Even though women are now soldiers in the United States, on the ground and piloting planes, this is basically unchanged. In photo after photo of ordinary soldiers, military leaders, "experts" and politicians, women are out of sight—except for the occasional photogenic exception like Jessica Lynch, And today's warfare is a very high-tech affair, another masculine domain.

On the other hand, if we think of security in the broader sense of security blankets and social security, then women immediately enter the picture. The other invariable piece of the sexual division of labor is that women do the bulk of care-taking—of the young, the old and other dependents, so women around the world are providing the bulk of the ongoing material and emotional security everyone needs. This is not high-tech at all, but simply caring labor, usually on top of other labor. When the market threatens this security by not providing enough for a family's needs, women pick up the slack; when public goods are cut back women's burden increases. This has been worsened in poor countries by Structural Adjustment Plans that force cutbacks in social services and in our own country with so-called welfare reform. The difference is that in our country the burden of privatization does not fall equally on all or most women; it falls predominantly on poor and minority and overwhelmingly on immigrant women who do the bulk of caring labor—as nannies, homecare workers, elder care workers—caring labor that is still not acknowledged as a public good. As long as this socially necessary labor is left to private arrangements, it will fall primarily on women, and particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, women who have to leave their own families to care for others. Sometimes they leave them at home in the same city, sometimes far away back in their home countries. These are all, of course, issues of global justice.

For our own security it is time we reconceived the meaning of security. When we do we will recognize its connections to global justice.

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Dazed And Confused: The 1970s And The Postmodern Turn

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Like the loop of Brady Bunch episodes ubiquitously playing across the 500-channel wasteland of cable TV, the decade of the 1970s is a specter haunting the American popular imagination. It is the specter of cheese culture, the jelly-headed amiability of smiley faces, white polyester three-piece suits, and the most recent return of the repressed, Starsky & Hutch, set to a mind-numbing soundtrack of Barry White, Kiss, and "Stairway to Heaven." Yet the arguably tackiest American decade is also when much of what is termed the postmodern condition began to emerge.

The 1970s have been studied from a range of perspectives. Liberals like Boston University historian Bruce J. Schulman assert that the lessons to be learned from the decade ultimately attest to the inalienability of individual rights. Conservatives like former Bush administration speech writer David Frum point to the need for moral values as the moral of the story. The erstwhile social historian and now bioethicist Francis Fukuyama professes a more academic perspective, suggesting a broader view be brought to bear in understanding how trends leading up to and beyond the period demonstrate the social-scientific notion of the mutability of social forms. But a closer look at the period reveals major economic and social shifts that these readings neglect.

Schulman's study The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics (Free Press, 2000) sees the 1970s as the start of a renaissance in American entrepreneurialism and the move to a more libertarian political agenda. These developments were rooted primarily in changes in the nation's population demographics, following the migrations to the Sunbelt, and a greater emphasis on individual self-reliance in the face of the apparent breakdown of traditional institutions, such as government and the family. The nation emerged from the 1970s with an admittedly more conservative orientation; however, the decade saw many progressive political, social, and cultural achievements.

For example, women's rights were brought into the political and social mainstream, as exemplified by Roe v. Wade in 1973. School bussing and other affirmative-action initiatives were also undertaken. Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, and other Hollywood auteurs made their most aesthetically successful films during the decade. And there was a creative explosion in popular music with punk and new wave challenging corporate rock and disco. In making the transition into the 1980s, Schulman asserts, liberalism did not "sell out," that is, morph from "yippie" to "yuppie," so much as pragmatically change with the times while retaining its core values of self-actualization. The generation that came of age in the 1970s used market-based strategies to further their notions of progress, including workplace

flexibility made possible by decentralized computing and increased opportunities for self-expression through new forms of “lifestyle” consumption.

Frum, in How We Got Here: The 70’s: The Decade That Brought You Modern Life, For Better or Worse (Basic, 2000), portrays the 1970s as the time when the excesses of the 1960s came home to roost. Vietnam, desegregation, and inflation converged to reveal the limitations of the modern bureaucratic state, which failed in administering public and private life. Among the ill-fated initiatives: a monetary policy that attempted to cover government budget shortfalls by artificially increasing the money supply, sowing the seeds of lingering economic malaise, and political reforms that discouraged work, undermined traditional mores and values, and otherwise rent the nation’s social fabric. The problems were made even worse by the self-absorbed myopia of the liberal elite, who turned a blind eye to the impending chaos of social disintegration their ill-conceived ideas had set in motion.

The resulting crisis revealed the inadequacy of liberalism and its various social welfare schemes for having taken for granted the security provided by the state in pursuing romantic notions of individual rights and personal liberation. Fortunately, Americans responded to the alarm: “Out of the failure and the trauma of the 1970s,” Frum writes, “they emerged stronger, richer, and—if it is not overdramatic to say so—greater than ever.” As the decade turned, the ostensibly popular revolt against taxation, the move toward deregulation, and the “creative destruction” of business innovation set the stage for the prosperity of the 1980s and 1990s that were to come.

Where Schulman and Frum limit their accounts to America in the 1970s, Fukuyama surveys a larger context and a longer period of time, the industrialized world from the mid-1960s to the late 1990s. In The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order (Touchstone-Simon & Shuster, 1999), Fukuyama argues that rising rates of crime, drug use, unwed pregnancies, and other types of social turmoil occurred not only in the United States but in Canada, Western Europe, and Japan as well. For Fukuyama, these statistics were indicative of what he terms “The Great Disruption” in the social order, seismic repercussions of the restructuring from the industrial to the informational mode of organization. The Great Disruption was essentially a manifestation of the dialectic of Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, community and society, the process of social evolution that sociologists have long identified as a characteristic of modernization.

According to Fukuyama, in the move from industrial to informational society, intellectual ability came to be more highly valued than physical capacity, changing the nature of work and resulting in the need to mobilize larger pools of workers, particularly women. This affected men in lower-skill occupations in particular, driving down their average earnings as labor competition increased primarily in non-manufacturing sectors and contributing to the erosion of the traditional male-head-of-household model. Lower fertility rates and higher divorce and single-motherhood rates also reflected increased pressures on the family as women entered the workforce in greater numbers. Higher earnings among women promoted their independence in terms of the traditional marriage contract, further eroding the social norm of male

responsibility that easy access to birth control also threatened.

At stake in this period of transition was “social capital,” which Fukuyama defines as “a set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group that permits cooperation among them.” The Great Disruption in Fukuyama’s reading was an expenditure of social capital, the start-up cost of a new social contract. The new order was based on the “high-trust” participatory systems of the flattened corporate structures of the informational form of work, which were replacing the “low-trust” models of the Taylorist micromanaged hierarchies of industrial production. The Great Disruption would gradually subside as this new order became increasingly secured at all levels of society. Fukuyama’s statistics show a decline after the mid-1990s in the measurements of disruption, suggesting that the social capital of cooperation was once again starting to accrue by the time his book was published on the eve of the new millennium.

Both Schulman and Frum reference the energy crisis, inflation, and other economic upheavals in American society in the 1970s. Frum observes that the rising price of energy was not the primary cause of inflation, but an effect of it and the volatile international currency exchange rates that were its result. Fukuyama does not cite individual economic events; yet his analysis of the period, premised on the stresses caused by world-historical changes in the work-based social order, affirms then Economic Council of Advisors Chairman Alan Greenspan’s statement made in the mid-1970s that capitalism was at the time in a state of “crisis.” The crisis was not one of energy or the natural rhythms of Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, but of capital accumulation. Simply put, the rate of economic growth of the postwar era in America and elsewhere in the industrialized world simply could not be sustained under existing structural circumstances. In the 1970s, a number of events took place, which helped set reorganization into motion. Analyzing this process from the vantage point of America, as the first nation of the first world, has value in terms of understanding the mechanisms of transnational capital and its effects on global culture, but it must be done with what Immanuel Wallerstein calls the “modern world-system” always in view.

In the transition from industrial to informational society, Fukuyama notes, “many new high-skill jobs were created and many low-skill jobs began to disappear.” But by confining his analysis to the industrialized world, Fukuyama obscures a significant aspect of the Great Disruption: in roughly the period he surveys, the number of “low-skill” manufacturing jobs worldwide actually increased more than 30 percent according to Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation/World Bank statistics. Starting in the 1970s, manufacturers in advanced sectors of the global economy began to disaggregate their organizational structures, offloading certain functions (primarily manufacturing operations) to lower-cost zones, typically in lesser-developed regions of the world. The 1970s were when Nike was officially incorporated, from the very beginning using Asian suppliers to manufacture its products. This is also when the Big Three American automobile companies began to heavily invest in Mexico.

Changes on the production side coincided with new demands on the part of consumers. Schulman, Frum, and Fukuyama all note the rising tide of individualism in America and the

rest of the industrialized world during the 1970s, a demiurge of self-sufficiency in a society perceived to be in flux. The cultural changes of the 1970s were in one sense a culmination of the critique begun after the Second World War of the "outer-directed" individual, the person whose self-definition was derived from the authority of external social associations, such as corporate affiliation and nationality. (The outer-directed thesis was initially articulated in such 1950s classics as The Lonely Crowd by David Reisman with Nathan Glaser and Reuel Denny, White Collar by C. Wright Mills, and The Organization Man by William H. Whyte.) This rejection of authority took the form of new patterns of consumption, embracing innovative products then coming onto the market. It was expressed in the surge of interest in physical culture and individual bodily health, which manifested itself in regimens of self-discipline for men and women alike. The demand for healthy-lifestyle accessories was satisfied by new athletic apparel companies such as Nike. Another was the desire for natural fibers in clothing, in part a rebellion against the standardized ideals of mass-manufactured modernity and the "top down" forms of bureaucratically administered society they seemed to represent. The market for natural fibers was especially dependent on the reorganization of the cycle of transnational production and consumption and its new economics.

After the Second World War, man-made fibers such as Dacron, orlon, and other wash-and-wear fabrics emerged in the consumer marketplace as examples of modern-day convenience made possible by the marvels of technology. In addition to ease of maintenance, synthetic fibers offered value and style, the latter due to the material's ability to accept and retain high-chroma dyes without fading. Anthropologist Jane Schneider notes that the market penetration of polyester synthetics peaked coincidentally with the first energy crisis in 1973, by which time they had become "commoditized," i.e., the perceived difference among products in the consumer's mind was strictly a function of price. Synthetic fiber production is capital intensive, requiring large physical plants for chemical compounding and manufacturing, which conflicted with the crisis of accumulation then under way. Many of the world's lesser-developed regions are located in warmer climates more suitable for the production of natural fibers, such as cotton, flax, and silk. Natural fiber production does not require expensive facilities other than fertile land. The management of production is easily decentralized under the expanded information and communications technologies available to advanced industrialized nations. Lesser-developed regions also had large pools of low-cost labor awaiting mobilization. The natural fiber clothing that began to appear in the 1970s featured value-added attributes, such as ornamental stitching and form-fitted tailoring, made possible by the labor-intensive handwork of these low-wage workers. The alignment of production with consumer demand can be readily seen in one of emblematic product innovations of the 1970s, designer jeans.

Originally created for practical purposes by Levi Strauss & Company in the second half of the nineteenth century, blue-denim jeans were first taken up as fashion items in the 1920s by members of the Santa Fe artist's colony in New Mexico to express their identity as cultural prospectors of the American Scene. Jeans as anti-fashion emerged after the Second World War to symbolize the rebellious independence of the Beat Generation against the gray-flannel conformity of outer-directed society. In the 1960s, jeans gained broad popularity as quintessentially American, representing a classless society where labor and leisure were

equally valued and where material comfort prevailed. The individualistic connotations of blue denim stayed intact in the 1970s, when designer jeans appeared as part of a larger movement in consumption toward what may be termed the democratization of distinction, the birth of what philosopher Jean Baudrillard calls the “commodity-sign.” In addition to the value-added features of other natural fiber clothing, designer jeans carried the premium marker of haute couture branding, but at relatively affordable prices when compared to traditional luxury goods.

The rise of designer jeans was facilitated by the introduction in the 1970s of computer-assisted methods, known as “geodemographic clustering systems,” that could compile and analyze large amounts of data on the location of wealth, the distribution of population by race, age, gender, and educational level, and other indicators of purchasing power and patterns of behavior. These techniques presented information at finer levels of detail than had been previously available to purveyors of the mass market. This enabled clothing manufacturers, among others, to identify and respond more quickly to market opportunities, which low-cost, labor-intensive offshore producers could supply without needing otherwise prohibitive capital investment. The designer jean consumer was upscale (or at least aspired to be), paying double over the average price of a pair of Levi’s. While fewer units were sold, due to the smaller pool of potential buyers, profit margins were far higher than available in the traditional mass-market model.

At the same time that these smaller market segments were being uncovered, the ability to accommodate design changes was enhanced, again due to the economies of low-cost labor engaged in handwork. This served to shorten the fashion cycle, accelerating the process of product obsolescence. During this same period, polyester was pushed down market, relegated to the lower-margin segments of mass consumption. Designer jeans worked alongside the new trademarked running shoes, logo-imprinted t-shirts, and other branded items to help a reconstituted capitalism straddle the globe with renewed vigor. As part of the process, branding became a kind of system of symbolic exchange, a re-enchantment of the world, a mechanism for channeling consumption into new forms. Facilitating the flow between consumer desire and value-added products were other changes that undermined the worldly asceticism traditionally associated with America’s Protestant heritage.

In The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism, first published in 1976, Fukuyama’s mentor Daniel Bell noted a shift in American society that amounted to what he termed the “death of the bourgeois world-view.” Through the market operations of consumerism, Bell argued that the normative values of the Protestant ethic were being demolished, leaving capitalism without a moral center. While concerned most directly with the effects of this development on culture as a shared system of beliefs (i.e., Fukuyama’s social capital), Bell acknowledged a more fundamental change within the economic system. In the 1970s, the contradictions Bell noted were being resolved, but not by returning to the austere ways of the Puritan. The answer to the crisis of capitalism was to destabilize the notion of thrift.

Schulman and Frum cite some of the effects during the 1970s of Regulation Q, which since 1934 had given the Federal government authority to set interest rates paid on savings deposits

held by banks. Regulation Q was supposed to manage inflation by providing incentives or deterrents to save, depending on market conditions. In inflationary times, the theory held, keeping interest rates low would discourage savings, thereby reducing funds on deposit. This would limit the supply of available credit, in turn reducing consumption and bringing inflation into line. But several financial innovations of the 1970s rendered Regulation Q ineffective. (It was repealed in 1980.) Money-market and mutual funds were introduced, which skirted the interest-rate limitations of Regulation Q and substituted higher risk and the potential for capital gains in place of regulated guaranteed returns on insured deposits. The Visa credit card network was incorporated, providing a universal, standardized mechanism for obtaining and using unsecured revolving credit. The Fair Credit Reporting Act was passed, giving married women legal access to credit ratings independent of their husbands. The stigma of debt was undercut by relaxation of the bankruptcy laws. Theories also emerged to promote the use of credit as a sound financial strategy. An example can be found in an article, “The Hidden Prosperity of the 1970s,” written by Harvard sociologist Christopher Jencks and published, perhaps not ironically, in The Public Interest in 1984.

In order to refute U.S. Census Bureau data suggesting the American standard of living had declined in the 1970s for the first time since the Second World War, Jencks proposed that well being should be measured by factors other than income. Using benchmarks such as physical health, housing, transportation, and food, Jencks concluded that the standard of living for the average American actually improved in the 1970s when compared to the 1950s and 1960s. Some of the reasons he cited were increases in longevity, average home size, number of automobiles per hundred persons, and the amount and type of food consumed. Jencks even asserted that due to the effects of appreciation, inflation, and preferential tax treatments, monthly principal and interest payments on home mortgages were in actuality a form of savings. Jencks also reported on the proliferation of appliances and other household possessions in the 1970s, but failed to explain how these goods were acquired in a period of falling real incomes.

Contrary to the Great Depression of the 1930s, consumer demand during the troubled 1970s did in fact remain at relatively high levels and actually increased over the decade according to government statistics. Besides subsidized payments of the welfare state, this activity was sustained by two factors: the rise in household incomes due to the entry of more women into the workforce and the growth of consumer credit exclusive of home mortgages. U.S. Census data from the period show that the number of working women doubled, although their representation among the working class (in occupations such as clerical, retail, and non-production manufacturing) outpaced their representation in the managerial segment by nearly thirteen times. Also during the 1970s, installment debt increased annually at double-digit rates. Higher debt ratios were managed with lower down payments and extended repayment terms, which increased the cost of goods purchased with unsecured credit. According to the feminist scholar Jane S. Smith, the impetus to consume was further fed by the transformation of American life, from the suburban migration and the need for automobiles and other durables of the family economy to ideological changes that excused men from their traditional roles, leaving large numbers of female-headed households in their wake.

In his 1976 New York magazine article titled the “Me Decade,” Tom Wolfe asserted that postwar prosperity had made possible on a broad social level the self-idealization that had come to characterize the period, all but rendering the term “proletarian” obsolete. “Many millions of middling folk,” as he called them, could afford the luxuries of material pleasure and self-determination previously only available to the well-to-do. In retrospect, Wolfe was decidedly behind the curve. (In fairness, Shulman, Frum, and Fukuyama also missed the broader currents, even with the benefit of decades of hindsight.) The global economy was increasingly coming to operate on a model of first-world consumption and third-world production. Two-income households became an ever more common way to manage family financial obligations. Consumer credit exploded. The so-called American Dream was increasingly being purchased with the promise of future earnings. Thus the position of average workers indeed became such as to bring their proletarian status into question. Instead, a new and improved form of indentured servitude appears to have been introduced. It is with all of this in mind that the question of the postmodern may now be entertained.

In Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism, art historian T. J. Clark writes about modernism’s two overarching desires: “It wanted its audience to be led toward a recognition of the social reality of the sign [. . .]; but equally it dreamed of turning the sign back to a bedrock of World/Nature/Sensation/Subjectivity which the to and fro of capitalism had all but destroyed.” The first desire was to have been realized by understanding that all our representations of the world were cultural constructions, that “we,” that is, humanity, individually and collectively, were ultimately responsible for conceiving the social, historical, political, and economic reality in which we lived. The second desire would be resolved by being able to see beyond the fetish of the commodity (which increasingly penetrated every nook and cranny of our lives) to the finite and necessary conditions of being-in-the-world. It was essentially the opposition of avant-garde and kitsch, the resistance of the commodification of all aspects of existence under the logic of capital versus the acquiescence to it. For Clark, the abandonment of socialism, which coincided with the abandonment of modernism, put the realization of these desires out of reach for the time being at least.

Postmodernism embraces the notion that the experienced world is itself “culture all the way down,” as ethnographer Clifford Geertz expresses it, abandoning hope that there might be another, more authentic world to get back to. In Marxist terminology, if modernism was concerned to expose the base upon which capitalism is erected, then postmodernism would appear happy enough to reside within its superstructure. It embraces the fetish of the image, the mystical force of special effects first introduced in the latter half of the 1970s by the likes of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. From this perspective, postmodern culture can be seen as the most recent expression of the power relations of the global capitalist system upon which America currently sits atop. The postmodern condition is akin to the graphical user interface (GUI) of a personal computer. Like the desktop metaphor of virtual file folders, documents, and wastebaskets, it is a layer of representations hiding the machine’s inner workings from view. It is the logical outcome of capitalism’s perpetual flexibility, the world-historical process of all that was once solid melting into air. “Solid modernity,” as sociologist Zygmunt Bauman terms the social system based on the mass-manufacturing economy, was liquidated in the 1970s. The

postmodern turn that unfolded over the decade tracked the shift from vertically integrated assembly line to outsourced sweatshop, production to consumption, commodity to brand, equity to debt, concrete to spectacle.

In this light, it makes sense that America's latest and possibly lamest situation comedy of manifest destiny, a misbegotten, horrific pastiche of All in the Family, M.A.S.H., and Fantasy Island, should have been scripted by the cast and crew brought back to prime time from the Nixon-Ford Administration. It's yet another rerun of that '70s show. Vince Carducci spent the American Bicentennial unemployed. He is waiting out the current economic downturn by working on a Ph.D. in sociology at the New School for Social Research in New York City.

Europe As A Political Project

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In the 1980s, with several friends, I helped produce a radio program called “Europe-in-Formation” in the New York left-wing public radio station WBAI. This was a time well before the ultimate internal weakness of the Soviet Union became apparent and when a true or good or purified socialism remained a hope for many leftists. Our idea was that the model of a European Union, enlarging the welfare state and challenging the *realpolitik* cynicism of a U.S. government that supported repressive regimes in the name of fighting the communist enemy would encourage political criticism that was still leftist even while it contained a dose of realism. The process by which Europe was coming into being was to serve as an inspiration for the creation of a left that was at once democratic and social.

Two decades later, the question of Europe remains relevant but the challenge it poses is different. Whereas the left had been the stubborn victim of its own ideological dreams or hopes, today, after the end of the Cold War and with the victory of liberalism and capitalism, there is no serious left wing political project. In the earlier moment, the left was full of ideas, inventing Projects (with a capital P) and knitting together the undeniably important but always partial, and often temporary, successes into a global vision. Today, the left has few ideas; its politics consists in opposing the most egregious elements of the economic free-marketeers and the attempts by social reactionaries to roll back the achievements of modernity.

The European idea has gained some attractiveness as, even in the countries that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld refers to as the “new” Europe, healthy majorities have appeared to oppose the pre-emptive unilateralism of the U.S. foreign policy. On the other hand, that “old” Europe has been denounced—not without some grounds—as the weak-kneed “Venus” whose well-being depends on the military strength of the American “Mars.” What is more, in at least some countries (such as France), large minorities within the orbit of the socialist party considered seriously the idea of voting against the ratification of an eventual European constitution if it were put to vote in a referendum. Europe seemed to them the vehicle of an expanded capitalism; its advances in the sphere of human rights standing only as a concession to liberalism. Europe, from this perspective, is said to suffer from a “democratic deficit”—although it is often not clear just what is meant by this vague concept.

In order to get some perspective on the status and implications of the European model today, I propose to return to the old distinction between two kinds of liberalism, and the two models of democratic politics with which they are associated. The roots of this distinction are both historical and conceptual, while its manifestations can be seen in the contemporary political cultures of the Europeans and the Americans.

One appealing approach to the Euro/American distinction between the two cultures is

suggested by Pierre Hassner, who traces the difference back to the geo-political fact that Europe is a continent composed of nations defined by their borders, which entails the need to form alliances and to understand the need to maintain a balance of power, whereas America is a continent that can chose isolation, decide when to use force or can opt to employ the peaceful arms of commerce. As a result, Europe has learned to recognize the usefulness of rules that bind sovereignty, while ensuring that war is limited to those who are actually fighting, whereas the U.S. refuses to accept limits on its sovereign will and, when it does go to war, it accepts no constraints (such as worry about "collateral damage). Old Europe calls the agreed-on rules "civilization," while virile young America treats them as limits, and denounces them as a sign of weakness of will.[i] This difference is manifest, for example, in the different attitudes toward the creation of an International Court of Justice.

But Hassner recognizes that the European solution is threatened. Its civilized rules were the based on a Westphalien notion of a sovereign national will (and the material reality of states that could protect their citizens as well as their economies); that vision may be simply a dream in a globalized and "postmodern" society that cuts across national boundaries and transforms the citizen into a mere consumer. This could explain some of the complaints about a "democratic deficit" in the EU. But that is too simple. The institutional question depends on cultural premises. To denounce the incompleteness of democracy is a facile ploy, as nationalists and communists know only too well. By its very nature, democracy is never, and can never be, a true or fully realized political form; to think otherwise is to dream of an end to history. That is why it's better to take some distance on the problem of Europe and its "democratic deficit," appealing to those vague but perhaps for that reason fruitful notions of culture and history.

The contrast between European and American political culture dates from the French and American revolutions. The Americans had to free themselves from the control of the British empire. Their new institutions sought to preserve an independent society in which material inequality co-existed with the absence of status hierarchies. That latter absence (rather than the material inequalities) explains Americans' anti-statist liberalism in which the (pre-political) rights of the individual elevate pragmatic self-interest over collective goals.[ii] It also explains the oft-remarked absence of social solidarity in a brutally competitive society whose liberalism, in principle, protects the rights of the individual.

In France, on the other hand, monarchical power had created national unity out of feudal diversit*ies*; but it had at the same time consecrated an hierarchical society of orders. As a result, it was necessary to seize, and then to use state power in order to institute a society based on (at least the principle of) equal rights for all. The liberalism that resulted appealed to rights that, although they were said to be "natural," could be made effective only by state intervention. Individualism (which Tocqueville saw as the new threat arising in American democracy) is a threat to rule-based and self-limiting civilization created by European states; its concern with private interest is an anti-political threat to the kind of solidarity needed in a competitive (and anomic) society based on rights that protect the individual from the power of the collective. We can't of course expect that the associative democracy that Tocqueville hoped

would provide a corrective in this regard will be reproduced in the new Europe of the twenty-five. But is there, as another Frenchman would ask a generation later, a functional equivalent?

As Emile Durkheim recognized, forms of solidarity are cultural products whose consequences that are neither immediate nor simple. One might ask why the European[iii] political culture that emerged from its particular path to liberalism and democracy produced the (non-identical) twins of socialism and nationalism which were never able to gain more than a temporary foothold in the U.S. The answer depends on cultural *expectations*. The attempt to institute rights by means of state action cannot stop with the achievement of merely formal equality; the notions of equality and of rights drive each other forward in the (utopian) quest to realize what I call a *democratic republic*. This project seeks to add democratic social policies to the formal framework of the political republic. Its goal is to free social relations from the stain of particularity or hierarchy; unity would replace difference as the alienation of political life is overcome as society becomes fully rational. The problem, however, is that this complete realization of equality and of rights *can* conflict with the basic liberal right to have rights—which is particular, differential, and individual(ist). For this reason, rights-based liberalism may seem to be the enemy of social solidarity.

A different institutional history produced an American political culture oriented toward *republican democracy*. The distinction is not simply rhetorical. When they freed themselves from Britain, the Americans tried to insure that their democratic self-rule would not be infringed by the political state (whose existence, said Paine, is a sign of human sinfulness). But they soon learned the necessary limits that sin imposes on pride; more concretely, they recognized that self-governing society needed to adopt political forms in order to conserve its own autonomy. Their national confederation was too weak to attract the ambitious, who instead made a mess of local politics (particularly in Pennsylvania). A new national constitution was produced, and ratified by specially elected conventions. An illustration of the way this republican document not only conserved but encouraged democracy can be found in the justification of Senate (in *Federalist* 63). While a senate is supposed to represent the aristocratic order, no aristocracy existed in egalitarian America. What then does the Senate represent? It represents the people—as, *The Federalist* insists significantly, do *all* of the institutions of a republican democracy. And that means, in turn, that *no institution can claim to incarnate fully* the sovereign people. Yet that is just what the democratic republic seeks to do.[iv]

This distinction suggests why Europe could become the showplace of both nationalist and socialist ideologies. (America is of course *not* exempt from these temptations, particularly in moments when the nation itself feels threatened.) The European model of a democratic republic that seeks to overcome the separation between the society and its political representative illustrates what I call a *politics of will*. The will must be one and harmonious; a divided will is incapable of willing. Socialism on the one hand, nationalism on the other attempt—each in its own way, of course—to overcome division, to create unity and homogeneity while absorbing (or eliminating) particularity and difference. This tendency to think of politics as depending on the will, whose unity must be achieved and conserved,

reached its extreme form in the twin totalitarianisms that disgraced the 20th century.

The reference to totalitarianism brings us toward our own time. After 1945, nationalism was so discredited that even the all-dominant U.S. recognized the need for a multi-lateral world. But the outbreak of the Cold War, exacerbated by the socialist dream of *real democracy* as incarnated in a democratic republic that remained alive in Western Europe, suggested to many Europeans the need to find a third way. Fearful of renewed nationalism, but needing also to keep their domestic working class satisfied, they took steps toward common economic politics that culminated in the 1956 Treaty of Rome. But the political implications of what was first called simply a "Common Market" became apparent when it was challenged by Britain's creation of a rival, purely economic association called the "European Free Trade Association" (EFTA). That reduction of political to market relations (like the critique of the Rome treaty for consecrating the injustices of international capital) could be said to represent another variant of the *politics of will*, but based this time on the assumption that the invisible hand of the market would transform competitive individual action into a rational and unified society. Just as the democratic republic reduces politics to social relations, this time politics is reduced to economic relations. The denial of the autonomy of the political sphere was based on the vision of a society (or economy) wholly transparent to itself. The failure of the British alternative meant that the EU would have to learn to articulate the political essence of its own culture. The third way could not just mediate between two kinds of economic society.

While the Cold War continued, the European project could advance only slowly. But the turning point came already *before* the end of the Soviet Empire. The anti-totalitarian politics that emerged in the wake of the Helsinki Accords[v] made clear that human rights are not only *not* granted by the state; they are also *not* the private rights stereotypically identified with American liberal individualism. The politics of human rights went together with the idea of an autonomous civil society. But this new vision was still open to the temptation of a politics of will that sought to overcome the separation of state and society in the unity of civil society. (This may explain the attraction of movements like *Solidarnosc* or *Chater 77* to some of the normally "anti-anti-communist" Western left, who could see here the *mise en oeuvre* of their own goal of self-managed socialism.) The imposition of a state of siege in Poland should have made clear the need for some kind of political state to protect the rights of the individual without which civil society cannot maintain itself. But what kind of state? *It is at this point that "Europe" begins its contemporary career; the notion of "third way" now no longer conceived in economic terms; it has now to be conceived politically.*

With the unification of Germany, and the May 2004 integration of states formerly belonging to the Soviet bloc, what could become of the European political project? The first task is negative, to avoid the missteps of the various forms of what I have called a politics of will. It is clear that the enlarged EU cannot be expected to realize the socialist (or the nationalist) project; nor can it restrict itself to simply economic homogenization. It is also clear that it has to face up to the denunciation of a "democratic deficit." But this issue is less institutional than it is cultural; the proposed European constitution cannot on its own solve the problem. Europe has to create a paradoxical kind of unity, one that is more solid because it is plural. Solidarity is the key

concept; and it is not based on identity or on the exclusion of difference. This is where the European project can come to a better self-understanding by comparison with the American attempt to maintain a liberal political culture by creating a republican democracy.

A return to the historical roots of America's republican democratic culture illustrates the difficulty of overcoming the unitary temptations of what I have called a politics of will. Twelve years after the ratification of the new constitution, Thomas Jefferson was elected president in what contemporaries called "the revolution of 1800." The term is surprising, and it has fallen out of use by historians.[vi] Since Jefferson's support for the French revolution was well-known, it led to the belief that he would bring social change, a kind of American version of 1793. What was in fact revolutionary was not the social content of Jefferson's politics, but rather the political fact that *power passed peacefully from one political party to another*. This had never happened before; it was made possible by the unique political culture that was described at the outset of this argument: "the" people (in their plurality and difference) are represented in all the institutions of the republic, which means, therefore, that they are incarnated in none. But Jefferson's republicans themselves did not understand this republican democracy, as they showed shortly thereafter when they refused to confirm the ("midnight") appointment by the outgoing government of a federal magistrate. They, after all, were now the democratically elected majority who, they assumed, represented the actual will of the people and were not bound by the action of the previous majority. In 1803, in *Marbury v. Madison*, the Supreme Court issued the decision that was the foundation of its own independent power—a power that, *like all powers in the United States*, is based on the constitution rather than on the will of any temporary majority.

These two institutional innovations were made possible by the culture of a republican democracy. The foundation of that political culture can be understood by its contrast to the forms of the politics of will. It rests on what can be called a *politics of judgment* that begins from the plurality of rights-bearing individuals in order to make possible a kind of solidarity that need not claim to incarnate the unitary will of a homogeneous nation. Leaving aside the philosophical foundations of this concept, its institutional form can be described in general terms by a closer look at the American constitutional practice of republican democracy. At issue is the relation between the particularity and plurality of socio-economic relations and the juridical-political framework that unifies society. On the one hand, political parties articulate particular problems that emerge within civil society and aggregate them in the form of a proposed law. The temptation for the parties is to reach for the lowest common denominator, and to avoid issues that concern only minorities, with the result that the laws may prove inadequate to protect the rights of this or that group or individual. At this point, the Court enters the picture, providing a republican check to ensure that the temporary legislative or executive majority cannot claim to incarnate once-and-for-all the *vox populi*. This interaction of particular and universal can be repeated in the other direction. There will be times when political debate is blocked, issues appear too hot to handle; and at this point the Court intervenes, this time in order to make certain that the particular is not blocked from debate. Now it becomes the task of the parties to find a way to deal with the issue at the level of the everyday political life of the citizenry (rather than at the constitutional level).[vii]

Two conclusions and a *caveat* follow from this comparative account. The *caveat* is most important. It insists that the cultural politics of judgment is not attained once and for all; a fall back to the politics of will is always possible. One cannot expect to introduce (or impose) the American institutional structure in foreign contexts, as if their own political culture and history did not matter. What one can learn from the American experience is what kind of political culture would satisfy the structural imperatives of a politics of judgment. This permits a negative conclusion. The hope that "Europe" will become that third way formerly identified with the *economic* policies of "Social Democracy" will not be realized. As indicated at the outset, the problem for a liberal political culture is not to add social and material predicates to the formal rights of the individual; the problem, rather, is to imagine and understand the new forms of *solidarity* that, paradoxically in the eyes of some, are based on the individual right to have rights. Europeans need to look at their achievements since the 1956 Rome Treaty with an eye toward finding the functional equivalent of the American politics of judgment. Meanwhile, from their side, the Americans have something to learn from the "civilized" political culture of modern Europe (which Pierre Hassner, in search of a ringing paradox, too quickly identifies with postmodernism). A republican democracy, after all, is only possible when it gives itself rules that limit its will while making necessary the exercise of judgment and the assumption of responsibility for it. Contemporary America seems to have forgotten that basic lesson.

Notes

[i] The debate between such "civilization" and the virile energy of nature can be found already among Greek sophists such as Callicles. It reappears as the Roman republic becomes Hellenized . . . before it rediscovers its supposed virility and becomes the world-encompassing Empire. The astonishing parallels between Roman history and that of America are well-illustrated by Peter Bender in *Weltmacht Amerika. Das neue Rom* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2003).

[ii] C.f., Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution. How a Revolution transformed a Monarchical Society into a Democratic one Unlike any that had Ever Existed* (New York: Knopf, 1992). The subtitle of this fascinating book points to the thesis expressed here, since "monarchical" implies the existence of a status-hierarchy.

[iii] I am equating "French" with "European" for the sake of simplicity.

[iv] It might be noted that this refusal to admit that any power can incarnate the sovereign will of the people explains why, in the long run, America will prove to be incapable of becoming a truly imperial power.

[v] It is worth noting that the chief negotiator of the Helsinki Accords, Henry Kissinger, did not intend the so-called "third basket" that treated human rights to be taken seriously; he was operating within a *realpolitik* framework that sought to make permanent *détente*.

[vi] I have been able to find only one book specifically devoted to the theme. C.f., Daniel Sisson, *The American Revolution of 1800* (New York: Knopf, 1974). The book is out of print,

and the author seems to have written no other book since that time.

[vii] Illustrations of this process in recent history concern such questions of racial integration, sexual (or gender) discrimination, the rights of women and other minorities. Such contemporary illustrations may suggest that 19th century politics, particularly in the period leading to, and then emerging from the Civil War, were at best only approximations to the kind of republican democracy that has come to exist in the 20th century. ***Dick Howard*** *is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at SUNY Stony Brook. His most recent book is* The Specter of Democracy *(Columbia University Press).*

Critical Reflections On Mel Gibson's "the Passion Of The Christ"

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The February 2004 release of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* is a major cultural event. Receiving a tremendous amount of advance publicity due to claims of its anti-Semitism and adulatory responses by conservative Christians who were the first to see it, the film achieved more buzz before its release than any recent film in our memory. Gibson himself helped orchestrate the publicity with selective showings of *The Passion* and strategic appearances on TV shows where he came off as something of a Hollywood eccentric, albeit one who was only too happy to admit to his past sins and to claim that he had achieved "salvation" through his adherence to Christianity. His film, he insisted, would be testament to the truth of Christ and how Christ died so that sinners like Gibson could be saved and enjoy eternal life.

Our reflections will interrogate reasons for both the popularity of the film and why it has educed such intense controversy. The film emerged during a period of passionate debate and global friction over the Bush administration Iraq intervention, leading to concern over the Manichean vision that informs contemporary Islamic fundamentalism and Bush administration militarism and rightwing Christian fundamentalism.[i] We argue that Gibson's film is part of the reactionary Manicheanism that is fueling religious hatreds and violence today and that therefore the film deserves a close reading and political contextualization to discern its meanings, ideologies, and possible effects and uses.

The Gospel According to Mel Gibson

The Passion of the Christ is very much Mel Gibson's construction of Christianity, depicting Jesus of Nazareth's arrest, prosecution, and Crucifixion via depiction of the 14 stages of the cross and last 12 hours of Jesus's life, involving a set of painful and extremely violent episodes that make up much of the film. The narrative closely follows the form of the notorious Oberammergau medieval passion plays, that themselves have been accused over the centuries of promoting anti-Semitism and hatred of Jews. Yet the extent of the violence and blood gives the film the aura of a splatter film as Jesus is beaten, whipped, and nails are pierced through his hands so that he is covered with lacerations and blood by the end of the film. The languages used include Aramaic, Latin, and Hebrew, which provide both a distancing effect that creates an illusion of realism and a sense of weirdness and eeriness different from previous Hollywood Jesus films.

Gibson himself allegedly held the hammer that pounded the nail through Jesus's hand, signaling his personal involvement in the film and participation in the sinfulness for which

Christ died. The use of steadcam cinematography helps provide a quasi-documentary look and feel, as do the use of languages of the region and sets that appear to capture the atmosphere of the region (though it was filmed in Italy). Yet *The Passion* deploys a variety of cinematic techniques to help capture the strangeness of the story and while much of the narrative follows the Gospel accounts there are significant departures that signal the specificity of Gibson's version of Christianity and view of Christ's death.

Revealingly, most of the main characters and cast are clearly white and Western, which is not an accurate portrayal of race and ethnicity of the biblical peoples of the period. Despite some attempts at authenticity, Gibson thus continues a long Western tradition of whitening Christian iconography and presenting images of Jesus and his followers as projections of the white, Western imagination.

The representation of the strong and stoic Jesus, manly enough to be beaten to a pulp with nary a whimper, is reminiscent of Clint Eastwood's "Man With No Name" in Sergio Leone's "spaghetti Westerns" and his own 1973 film *High Plains Drifter*. The ultramacho bearer of unimaginable violence and torture is also evocative of the Rambo figure and many of Mel Gibson's previous action adventure heros, such as the stalwart *Braveheart* (1995) in which Gibson's William Wallace character is virtually crucified at the end of the film, or any number of other Gibson figures in films like *Ransom*, *Payback*, or *The Patriot*, who are badly beaten, but ultimately redeemed.

Further, *The Passion* presents a pornography of violence with savage beatings, brutality, and torture as extreme as any in S&M porn films. The narrative also contains suppressed homoeroticism, fetishism of body parts from the reverently portrayed foot washing to obscenely violent flaying and scourging of flesh. The fact that the violence is being inflicted on a major global religious figure adds to the horror and provides iconography of violence as extreme as any in cinema history.

Hence, formally, Gibson's *The Passion* can be read as a postmodern pastiche of different Hollywood genres and conventions, drawing on both European art film and Hollywood biblical epic, action adventure, horror film, and other genres. Ideologically, on the whole, Gibson's *The Passion* is an utterly rightwing and reactionary version of Christianity and the arrest, torture and murder of Jesus. Various filmmakers have presented Jesus's life and the story of the Gospels extremely differently in diverse historical epochs. Nicholas Ray's *The King of Kings* (1961) presented a pacifist Jesus and Franco Zefferelli's *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977) focused on Jesus's teachings and good works, while Norman Jewison's *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) provided a hippie Jesus. Although one could present a revolutionary Jesus, as did the Italian filmmaker Pier Paulo Pasolini in his 1967 *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, Gibson's Christ is a solitary fanatic who is betrayed by his followers and stoically accepts his isolation and harsh fate. Whereas Pasolini stressed the social gospel, with emphasis on Christian love, community, and benevolence, Gibson's gospel is more violent and bloody with no Beatitudes or sympathy for the poor, oppressed, and excluded who either look to Jesus for miraculous cure's in Gibson's film, or exult in his suffering and Crucifixion.

The Passion really has little interest in the life or teachings of the Christ, focusing instead on the Passion, with very brief flashbacks to episodes in Jesus's early life, the Sermon on the Mount, and the Last Supper. The film has been, somewhat surprisingly in view of its almost unbearable violence, a global success that is helping to make Gibson one of the hottest kingmakers in film today. Helped by all the advanced publicity, it appears that many evangelical and fundamentalist Christian churches organized their congregations to attend together, making the showing of the film a religious event. Many audiences allegedly wept loudly during Jesus's tormenting and found it a deeply moving and disturbing experience. Many film critics tended to be negative, although there were some positive reviews and the popular press emphasized the popularity of the film making it a "must see" cultural phenomenon that helped put it on the top of the list for week after week.

The Passion became an instant box office success and has elicited heated controversy, with passionate defenders and sharp critics. Opening widely in the US on February 25, Ash Wednesday, by the Easter and Passover holidays in April, it became the 10th highest grossing domestic movie of all time, grossing $331 million. As of May 22, 2004, it has grossed $368,894,610 in the US and $581,027,248 worldwide.

Further, the film has also been a great merchandise marketing success, selling books, CDs, and various religious items, such as nails emulating those that pierced Jesus. An article on the merchandising of paraphernalia linked with the film notes that a book *The Passion: Photography From the Movie 'The Passion of the Christ'* rose to number 3 on the New York Times bestseller list and has sold over 650,000 copies; the CD soundtrack of the film was a best-seller; and the jewelry firm that was exclusive marketer for the film sold 150,000 crosses and 125,000 pewter Crucifixion nails as of early April 2004.[ii]

Hence, Gibson's marketing strategy and the support of Christian churches and audiences may help explain in part the great commercial success of the film. Yet the intense focus on the drama and intensity of Christ's Passion (i.e. the suffering in the Crucifixion) may also clarify both the power and esteem of the film with certain audiences.

Reviews indicate that some major film critics responded to *The Passion* very positively qua film, including its horror film and cinematic violence aspects. Fans of extreme cinema affirmed the cinematography, style, and excessive violence, while religious audiences responded to its Christian themes and other filmgoers resonated with the titanic struggle between Good and Evil that is a staple of popular cinema.[iii] The Passion story is one of a monumental clash between Good and Evil and the monstrousness and horror of the Crucifixion has never been presented in such excruciating detail. For certain audiences the unbearable suffering imposed on the Christ and his endurance of the Passion confirms their experience of Christ's divinity and that his purpose was to redeem "Mankind's" sins. Much of the film deals in painful detail with Christ's suffering and this seems to have provided a powerful experience for some audiences.

Gibson's film crew focused serious attention on historical detail and some viewers read it as

documentary proof of the authenticity of the Gospels, providing a "you are there" experience of Christ's last hours. The use of natural lighting provided striking contrasts between night and day, and exterior and interior scenes. Some of the interior and nighttime scenes achieved a dramatic chiaroscuro quality reminiscent of religious art, while the outdoor scenes had a dusty and sun-drenched Mediterranean look. Lavish care was extended to sets, costumes, and designs making the film much more believable than many Biblical epics.

Thus, the carefully crafted cinematic aspects of the film help account for its power and popularity. The soundtrack is extremely well produced, providing both exotic sounds that disorient audiences and induce a sense of the macabre to the story. Like *The Exorcist*, *The Passion* may well utilize subliminal sounds and images to intensify its effects.[iv] All of the tricks of the hi-tech horror film are produced with demonic and monster children screaming, birds screeching and poking out eyeballs, and people speaking in tongues or strange languages with few subtitle translations to help anchor meanings. The musical score sweeps up and down in crescendos of (simulated) majesty, cuts to familiar weepy and sentimental orchestrations, and then deploys chanting vocals and non-Western audio effects. And the sounds of blood spurting, whips lacerating flesh, nails being pounded into hands, and the other horrifying details of Christ's Crucifixion provide an overpowering panoply of sound.

The fast editing and crafted cinematography also contribute to the power of the film for some audiences. Never has there been so much blood and gore in a single film and the experience of such extreme pain and suffering leaves its audiences overwhelmed, susceptible to subliminal messages and ideological massage. The torture scenes often cut to Jesus's point of view with startling close-ups and quick flashbacks to episodes of his life that enable audiences to identify with the character and undergo his torment. The guttural moanings, groanings, gurglings, and gaspings of Jesus during the Passion are interspersed with Mary's agonized face and close-ups of crowds cheering and Roman centurians jeering and hysterically laughing. The film rapidly cuts to reaction shots with women, children, and others looking at Christ in wonder and adoration, thus providing a mis-en-scene that suggests Christ's divinity and uniqueness. Yet precisely the intense drama of the Passion, the almost unbearable violence, and the horrific act of the Crucifixion of the alleged Son of God provides an artful cover for some extremely reactionary messages and ideologies, as we will argue in the next section.

The Passions of Anti-Semitism and Rightwing Patriarchy

In terms of the film's politics of representation, *The Passion* is deeply sexist and patriarchal, homophobic, classist, and anti-Semitic, although Gibson allegedly toned the latter down in response to early criticism, cutting, for instance, the subtitle of the passage in Matthew 27:25 that states: "His blood be on us, and on our children." The phrase is kept, however, in the Aramaic, and the film's anti-Semitism goes beyond the biblical sources in both subtle and overt ways. Wasting little time in getting into the film's sadomasochism, the temple guards arrest

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, savagely beat him, and take him to the Jewish high priest Caiaphas. On the way, they suspend Jesus from a bridge, choking him and dangling him over the water, incidents for which there are no Gospel basis.

To prolong the suspense and agony, Caiaphas turns Jesus over to the Romans and Pontius Pilate, who personally finds no fault with Christ, but in the face of a hostile, angry mob and the Jewish Priest's insistence upon his guilt turns him over to King Herod, the Jewish authority in collaboration with the Romans. Herod is presented as highly effeminate and his court are overtly homosexual, promiscuous and debauched. The brief Herod sequences produce images of Jewish decadence and sensuality, consistent with rightwing views of pagan pre-Christian culture, yet without explicit Biblical grounding, revealing again the constructiveness of Gibson's interpretation.

There are also more subtle connections between Jews and the devil, a highly polymorphus and sexually ambiguous figure in Gibson's narrative. Opening images show Jesus praying in the blue-lit and fog-shrouded Garden of Gethsemane while an androgynous devil appears to tempt him (played by actress Rosalinda Celentano with shaved eyebrows and a dubbed voice). Jesus resists the devil, stomping on a snake which slithers toward him as one of Satan's apparitions, but Jewish guards soon appear to arrest him. In the scene where Judas bestows his fateful kiss, one again hears the snake hissing, and as the Temple Guards haul Jesus away there is another quick glimpse of Satan and an ominous hiss. When Jesus is brought before Caiaphas and the priests, once again Satan appears. As Jewish crowds chant to kill Christ and the Jewish priests smugly look on, again images of a smirking demonic figure appear, as they do when Judas betrays Jesus and Jesus is beaten and scourged, with Satan reveling in the brutality.

The Passion is thus deeply and insidiously anti-Semitic, as the film systematically produces a series of associations of Jews, Satan, and Christ's arrest and Crucifixion, going well beyond Gospel accounts of the connection of Jews with Christ's death by associating the episode with Satan in a Manicheanism as pronounced as that of George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden. Since Satan does not appear in any of the Gospel accounts of Christ's Passion, this obvious departure from the scriptures and association of the Jews and Satan give away Gibson's biases and undermine his claims that he is just following the Gospels.

Throughout the film, Satan hovers in and out of scenes that prominently feature Jews and Christ's passion. The implication is that Jews are a source of the world's evil who are in the grips of Satan and thus minions of the Devil. This appalling view has been used to justify extermination of Jews over the centuries and is embedded in the iconography and mis-en-scene of Gibson's film, if not explicitly argued and presented in the text.

Gibson insists that he presents good Jews in his narrative, such as the priests who argue that the group does not have the authority to execute Jesus and individuals in crowd scenes who respond favorably to his teaching and then show sympathy for Jesus during the Passion, such as the woman who gives him water and the man who helps carry Jesus's cross after he had been beaten to a pulp. This is, however, a weak defense for, in fact, Jesus and the disciples

were Jews, and Gibson's distinction between "good" and "bad" Jews exhibits both his fundamental Manicheanism and his bad faith in presenting strongly negative and anti-Semitic representations of Jews, associations of Jews with Satan, and strong responsibility for the death of Jesus in his narrative.

On the whole, the women in the film represent a conservative patriarch's fantasy of how women are put on earth to serve and adore men. The main women in the film, Mary Magdalene and his mother Mary, look on at Jesus in adoration during the Passion episode, hold each other and weep, and say little during the entire film. Like Jesus, they are stoical and largely silent during the unrelenting violence inflicted on Christ, exhibiting no agency or resistance, other than crying and holding each other, rather than shouting out, protesting, or screaming, as one might well respond to seeing such brutality inflicted on a loved one.

The film follows conventional patriarchal iconography, evident in Clint Eastwood's films like *High Plains Drifter* (1973) and *Pale Rider* (1985) that highlight close-ups of adoring women looking on at the major male character. There are no strong women characters in the film and women are largely part of a faceless crowd who sadistically enthuse during Christ's systematic abuse and torture or look on helplessly. Mary and Magdalene are attired in what appear to be Nun's habits during the Passion and appear to embody Gibson's idealizing of women who are saintly, pure, quiet, and reverential toward men.

The film is also highly individualist, focusing relentlessly on Christ and showing his disciplines and followers as weak, timid, and pusillanimous. While many versions of the Gospel play up the Christian community and Jesus's close and loving relation with his disciples, in Gibson's version the disciples are uniformly cowardly and craven, raising the question of why one would want to join such an organization, and undermining notions of Christian community and solidarity which have been so important over the centuries. None of Jesus's followers stands out or speaks up and the Judas episode in Gibson's version also does not probe into why his supposed friend betrays him. Further, the contemptuous look of the Jewish priests who buy Judas and the loud clink of the money thrown to him dismiss Judas as a sell-out, rather than probing Judas's motivations. Interestingly, by contrast, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) paints Judas as a resistance fighter who breaks with Jesus because the Nazerene sells out and gives up the revolutionary cause for celebrity status and a decadent life-style, while an ABC TV-movie shown at the time of the *The Passion's* opening in 2004 presents Judas as a revolutionary disappointed in Jesus's pacifism, who desires a more vigorous response to Roman oppression. Yet Gibson has no interest in Judas beyond associating him with the devil, money, jealousy, and betrayal.

Although the Jews are largely shown as corrupt, decadent, and causing Christ's death, or as ignorant masses calling for Christ's Crucifixion, the Romans, by contrast, are shown ruled by noble leaders like Pontus Pilate, who twice refuses to condemn Christ despite pressures from the Jewish priests, the crowd, and suggestions that in the light of the wide-spread calling for Jesus's punishment, Caeser will punish him if another rebellion occurs. Pilate philosophizes, posing the fabled query "What is truth?" when claims of Jesus's blasphemy are posed and

loudly proclaims “Behold the Man!” when Jesus is presented to the crowd before his condemnation. Pilate lavishing washes his hands to signal his distance from Jesus’s persecution and then proposes that he pardon a criminal in the traditional fashion, providing another avenue of escape for Jesus. But in the face of repeated calls by Caiphas and the Jewish mob to “crucify him!” and Caiphas and the crowd’s call to spare Barbabbas instead of Jesus, Pilate reluctantly signals that the mob can have its way and take Jesus. Crucially, it is Caiphas who prompts the crowd to release Barbabbas and not Jesus when Pilate offers mercy to one of the two individuals up for Crucifixion. Moreover, Caiphas is the first to repeatedly shout out “Crucify him!”, thus pinning Jesus’s Crucifixion largely on the Jews. Importantly, neither of these interventions is depicted in the Gospels, revealing again Gibson’s anti-Semitic biases in the narration.

Further, Pilate’s wife Claudia is idealized as a noble Roman who comes to recognize Jesus’s divinity. When Pilate is first confronted with what to do with the prophet Jesus who Caiphas and his clique have arrested and charged with blasphemy, Claudia recommends that Pilate not persecute the Nazarene and she provides a sympathetic gaze on Jesus throughout. She is an admirable partner to Pilate who confides his political dilemmas to her. Curiously, Pilate and Claudia are perhaps the only two characters beyond Jesus who have any character or depth in Gibson’s narrative, with most figures appearing as caricatures and cartoons. While the noble Romans are shown as sensitive and caring, Pilate’s underlings, who ultimately carry out the scourging and Crucifixion of Christ, are represented as sadistic thugs who revel in and abuse and torture. Earlier, the Jewish guards who arrested Christ in the Garden were shown as brutish and thuggish, a consistently negative view of lower class functionaries. But it is the Roman police who carry out the most brutal beatings in unbearably long sequences and sadistic detail, which signals a deep misogyny and sadism in Gibson’s imaginary, as well as contempt for the underclass.

The view that military/police underlings explode out of control and engage in brutal torture and abuse is startlingly parallel to rightwing readings of the Iraqi abuse scandal, which unfolded in the media in May 2004, who blame it on callow youth lost in a culture of pornography and media sadism and who betray their noble leaders. This view, however, was undercut by recent exposes by Seymour Hersh and *Newsweek* writers who see the source of Iraqi prisoner abuse as directed from top echelons of the Pentagon and Bush administration.[v] Indeed, Gibson is obviously engaging in historical revisionism, letting the Romans off the hook for their oppression of the Jews and Jesus. Most reliable historians, starting with Philo of Alexandria and Josephus, present Pontus Pilate and his gang as brutal thugs who systematically persecuted and killed thousands of Jews, including, according to many accounts, Jesus and his followers.[vi] Gibson’s Pontus Pilate, by contrast, is the Noble Roman, a Brutus/Caesar hybrid who intones noble sentiments, philosophical utterances, and who tries his best to keep his hands clean of the act of condemning the Christ.

Crusading Fundamentalism, Militarism, and Contestation Over Christianity

To properly assess the resonance and significance of *The Passion* in the contemporary moment, we suggest that the film be read in the context of present-day politics, marked by a war of religious fundamentalisms, militarism, and accelerating societal violence and turbulence. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there has been a wave of religious fervor in former Communist regions and in the U.S. with the election of George W. Bush Christian fundamentalists have received high positions in government and at least part of Bush's Terror War policy and invasion of Iraq was fuelled by a sense of crusade. In his response to Bob Woodward's question of whether Bush Junior had consulted his father, former President George H. W. Bush, before invading Iraq, Bush admonished Woodward saying that he consulted his Heavenly Father and hoped that he was worthy to be "God's Messenger."[vii]

Ironically, there are many neoconservative and pro-Israel Jews in the Bush administration who are among the most aggressive militarists, revealing the complex intermixing of religious and political passions in the Bush administration.[viii] In this context, there is clearly danger of a surge of irrationalist religious fervor that can take violent forms such as Al Qaeda's attack on the infidel West, Bush Junior's retaliatory militarist unilateralist response in Afghanistan and crusade in Iraq, or Israel's escalating attacks on the Palestinians. Films like *The Passion of the Christ* fuel this religious fervor and are thus dangerous cultural forces that should be taken seriously by those interested in political and cultural critique.

Rightwing militarist culture like the Gibson film or the *Left Behind* novels have their analogue in crusading Christian militarists in Iraq.[ix] Last October, General William G. Boykin received brief press coverage when it was revealed that the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence had been regularly appearing at evangelical revivals preaching that the U.S. was in a holy war as a "Christian nation" battling "Satan." General Boykin revealed the insight that his battle with the forces of evil was a crusade between his "true God" and "the false one." Boykin insisted, "I knew that my God was bigger than his. I knew that my God was a real God and his was an idol."

Interestingly, there are a series of interesting similarities between George W. Bush and Mel Gibson. Bush has famously declared that Jesus is his favorite philosopher and part of Gibson's highly effective publicity for the film was stressing his deep Christian beliefs that drove him, despite the controversy, to make and market the film. Both Gibson and Bush Junior are born-again Christians who overcame struggles with drugs and alcohol to embrace a highly fundamentalist Christianity (albeit of different denominations). Both are Manichean to the core, see themselves on the side of Good and see their enemies and adversaries as Evil. Both are morally righteous and accept redemptive violence in the struggle for Good. Both often appear addled and inarticulate when confronted with difficult questions (possibly due to years of excessive drug and alcohol abuse that impaired their cognitive faculties). And both deploy their

respective political and cultural power to advance the ends of their conservative version of Christianity, arguably with highly destructive effects.

Crucially, *The Passion of the Christ* promotes hatred through its relentless Manicheanism and caricatures of evil Jews and Roman soldiers who condemn, torture, and brutally kill Jesus. The film projects a vision that violence is prevalent in the world and Christ is the Savior who will put the world aright. It is, of course, too soon to evaluate the ultimate effects and impact of *The Passion of the Christ*. It has been highly popular in the Arab world where it could possibly intensify anti-Semitism and contribute to violence against Jews. It has allegedly produced conversion experiences for Christians, which may take any number of forms. Notoriously, at the time of *The Passion's* release the Lovingway United Pentecostal Church in Denver posted a marqee reading "Jews Killed the Lord Jesus." A Georgia couple got into a violent theological dispute after seeing the film, police were called, and the couple spent the night in jail, each charged with battery. Showing the contradictory effects a media culture artifact can have, a 21-year old Texas man admitted to killing his pregnant lover and making it look like a suicide after seeing Gibson's film.[x]

Ultimately, *The Passion of the Christ* may or may not significantly contribute to the spread of rightwing crusading Christian fundamentalism and militarism. There are important countervailing factors to the aggressive religious militarism in the Pentagon and White House, such as outspoken criticism of religious fundamentalism and revisionist takes on Christianity. While Gibson's version of Christianity is strongly masculine, there are attempts to stress the "feminine" side of Christianity, with a series of studies stressing the importance of Mary Magdalene in early Christianity after lost Gnostic texts were discovered containing an alleged Gospel by her.

Further, there are popular strands of Christian revisionist history that find articulation in the best-selling novel by Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*.[xi] While Gibson's version reinforces and upholds an unquestioning patriarchal and violent interpretation of Judeo-Christian politics and beliefs, *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) provides a damning critique of the conservatism of both the Catholic Church and the kinds of misanthropic, misogynist and fundamentalist Christianity reified in Gibson's film.

Drawing on a number of controversial theological arguments and scholarly sources, (which include the Gnostic Gospels, discovered in Egypt in 1945), Brown's story articulates alternative and resistant accounts of a far more egalitarian Christianity, which celebrates a feminine/masculine dialectic and attributes status to Mary Magdalene as the thirteenth—and most important—apostle of Christ's teachings. Part of the plot centers on the Catholic Church and the Opus Dei's attempts to suppress documentation which not only attests to Mary Magdalene's, and women's active contributions to and importance in early Christianity, but also the nature of Mary Magdalene's (spiritual and physical) relationship with Jesus.

Brown's novel is important for its documentation of the constructed nature of the Gospels, with the Church choosing some texts of the period and rejecting others. Moreover, Brown's

accurate identification of the Opus Dei, as a wealthy, elitist, fundamentalist and right-wing international sect of the Catholic Church, provokes a recontextualization of current dilemmas in contemporary institutionalized Christianity, especially concerning the corruption, secrecy and revelations of widespread abuse, related to the Catholic Church. Given Gibson's fundamentalist beliefs, it is hardly surprising that the reactionary politics of Catholicism, like the Opus Dei's extreme patriarchy, are reflected, in his film.

Hence, Gibson's version *The Passion* deflects us from alternative kinds of religions and spirituality, which embrace social justice and egalitarian praxis, as well as serious problems of institutionalized religion. Moreover, that an extremely unpleasant and widely upsetting film could become such a major cultural phenomenon calls attention both to the power of the culture industry and religion in the contemporary world. Despite centuries of Enlightenment, many people still adhere to fundamentalist religion, even in the Mecca of consumer capitalism and materialism, the United States. There are obviously unmastered social problems and conflicts that drive individuals and entire societies to find religious solutions to their deepest problems. Critical social theory and cultural studies thus has a challenge to decode major cultural phenomena like the worldwide success of *The Passion of the Christ* to unravel what it tells us about contemporary culture and society and what problems need to be confronted and dealt with to create a freer and happier world.

Notes

[i] On the "clash of fundamentalisms" between Al Qaeda Jihadism and Bush administration militarism, see Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*. London and New York: Verso, 2002. For detailed critique of Bush administration ideology and policies, see Douglas Kellner, Douglas Kellner, *From 9/11 to Terror War: Dangers of the Bush Legacy* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

[ii] See Anne Thompson, "Holy Week Pilgrims Flock to 'Passion.' Film is Selling Books, CD's And Jewelry, Too," *New York Times* April 12, 2004. The article also notes that part of the marketing strategy was to open the film on Ash Wednesday and keep up marketing momentum through Easter, to bring in big crowds during the Christian holy season.

[iii] The Internet Movie Data Base contains a variety of reviews, listing the most accessed and popular reviews at the beginning of its "external review" list (see http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0335345/externalreviews). Reviews by Roger Ebert and James Berardinelli affirm the film positively qua cinema, while *Guardian* reviewer Mark Kermode unabashedly affirms it qua horror film and example of extreme cinema. Almost 2,000 user comments are posted on the Internet Movie Data Base user comments board (see http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0335345/usercomments). These often insightful commentaries provide testimony to the tremendous interest in the film globally and the passionate controversies it has created. It was disheartening, however, to find so few cogent critiques of the film's theology from the Christian religious community, though we found one good critique from a Christian minister that noted its departure from scriptures; see The Rev. Dr. Stephen R.

Montgomery's review "The Gospel Truth" at www.explorefaithlorg. See also the critique by Fr. John T. Pawlikowski and Rabbi David Sandmel, "What Christians Must Watch for in 'The Passion'" at http://www.beliefnet.com/story/140/story_14030.html.

[iv] *The Exorcist* (1973), like *The Passion*, evoked extremely strong responses from its audiences who exhibited symptoms of hysteria and later attested to nightmares and anxiety attacks. The film used frightening sounds like bees buzzing, birds screeching, and children shrieking, as well as incantations of Satanic texts, spoken backwards or translated into ancient languages. On *The Exorcist* controversy and how it provided ideologies of rightwing Christianity and attacks on feminism and liberalism, see Douglas Kellner and Michael Ryan, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1988;

[v] See Seymour Hersh, "The Grey Zone," *The New Yorker*, posted May 15, 2004 at http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/?040524fa_fact and John Barry, Michael Hirsh and Michael Isikoff, "The Roots of Torture," Newsweek, May 24, 2004.

[vi] Professor John Pawlikowski, director of the Catholic-Jewish studies program at Chicago's Catholic Theological Union noted: "The main storyline of *The Passion* puts the responsibility for Jesus Christ's death squarely on a Jewish cabal led by Caiaphas [the Jewish high priest], who, at one point, is described in the script as 'bloodthirsty' and who succeeds in blackmailing Pilate into putting Jesus to death… We know from recent Catholic documents and from modern biblical scholarship that this was not the case, that Pilate was the bloodthirsty one and that he, rather than the Jews, played the central role in putting Jesus to death." See Lawrence Donegan, "Christ in the Crossfire," *The Observer*, September 28, 2003. On Gibson's distortion of history, see also David Remnick's interview with Elaine Pagels, "Passions, Past and Present. *The New Yorker*, March 8, 2004.

[vii] See Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004.

[viii] On the neo-conservatives in the Bush administration, see Douglas Kellner, *From 9/11 to Terror War*, op. cit., and other articles in this issue of *Logos*.

[ix] Interestingly, the latest in the series of Christian apocalyptic "Left Behind" series has Jesus returning to earth. See David D. Kirkpatrick, "In 12th Book of Best-Selling Series, Jesus Returns," *New York Times*, March 29, 2004.

[x] See Michelle Goldberg, "Mel Gibson: Arab World Messiah," *Salon,* April 6, 2004; "Mel's Passion too much for Georgia Couple," *The Guardian*, March 19, 2004; Scott Gold and Lianne Hart, ''Passion' Prompts Man to Confess." *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 2004: A17; and "Uproar Over Mel's Pride and Passion," *Globe*, March 15, 2004. The latter claims that an opening day viewer suffered a fatal heart attack; that psychiatrists reported that the film had induced nightmares and warned that viewers might suffer severe, long-lasting emotional problems; and that an Israeli leader called for Israel to put Mel Gibson on trial for slandering the Jewish people.

[xi] See Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*. New York: Doubleday, 2003. The novel has been a publishing phenomenon, selling over five million copies and heading the *New York Times*_bestseller list for almost a year. A search through amazon.com reveals that there is already a small library of at least fifteen books commenting positively or negatively on *The Da Vinci Code*, attesting to the contestation of Christianity currently underway. Interestingly, critics of the book are the same rightwing Christians who are embracing *The Passion*¸ so that Gibson's film and Brown's novel represent two sides of the popular in the battle over contemporary Christianity.TT

Recalling Werner Cahnman: On The History Of Jews And Gentiles

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Wandering in the "great maze" of Werner J. Cahnman's writings in German and English, one comes away with the understanding that his historical bent, his respect for the multitude of data, his sociological sensitivity and personal experience were all at work in order to enhance our understanding and knowledge of the past and more recent times. As his friend and mentor, Joseph B. Maier, put it: Cahnman's lifework "mirrored his fate as a wanderer between worlds and cultures and as a mediator between them."[i]

When we met in the late 1970s, we had no inkling that one day we would be asked to nurse his last unpublished manuscript on the historical relationship of Jews and Gentiles into print. Our long talks and especially the lecture of some of his published and unpublished essays were revelatory. One autobiographical essay relating his short but terrifying experience at the Dachau concentration camp dealt with "life in the Camp" and showed not only his talent to espy the sociologically significant aspect but also his analytical bent—not forsaken even in an existential situation. He talks here about the morale of the Jewish prisoners with shades and grades, of course, and the fact that "on the whole, intellectuals and persons from the upper class, as well as persons from the laboring classes, stood the test better than the middle classes. . . . The petit bourgeois simply did not understand what was happening to him. . . . People from the laboring classes, on the other hand, were helped by their sturdy physique and by a culture pattern which was less individualistic and more inclined toward mutual help." He attributes the strength of the "intellectuals and persons from the business elite" to "their inner resources and their keen grasp of the situation."[2] Similarly, he observes and establishes types and characteristics even among the SS overseers. As he put it: "There was a whole range of types, from the all-out bloodhound to the contemptuous sadist, and from the moral monster to the man who appeared to merely do his duty." He is aware of the dangers of generalization though, and adds that "the exception is as important as the rule."[3]

While not yet a sociologist, the young Cahnman had it in him to become the scholar who would undertake the ambitious and demanding project, to write the social history of Jews and Gentiles. Judging from several writings—published or unpublished—the intent to write a "comprehensive, yet concentrated, account of Jewish-Gentile relations" seemed to go back to the early 1930s when the unfolding social, political and intellectual crises in Germany compelled young Cahnman to engage in political and social activities and Jewish learning. His family history, lively social life and connectedness to Munich's business, artistic and intellectual circles, his studies at Munich University and his intense community concerns aided him greatly in this undertaking. Indeed, to know about Cahnman's early years in Germany and his life as a refugee scholar in America are important to the understanding of his life work,

and, especially, his approach to this problem.

Werner Jacob Cahnman was born in Munich on September 30, 1902, the scion of an old German Jewish family. As recounted by him, his father's village roots represented a rustic and folksy Judaism, sentimentally attached to community and family but no Jewish learning. His mother's family, on the other hand, belonged to the *haute bourgeoisie*; they were bankers, jurists and industrialists, living in Munich and Nuremberg. They were patrons of the arts, interested in philosophy and literature; their Judaism was of a free-thinking sort. As Cahnman recalled in the 1970s, his mother revered Spinoza and Mendelssohn and her religion had an ethical orientation. "The main idea of my mother," he said, "was that everybody, but especially a Jew, should promote justice in the world. She died in Piaski, in Poland, in unimaginable circumstances and in a situation of utmost injustice."[4]

Cahnman has inherited from his father the perspective of participant observer, the emotional attachment and feelings of unquestioned belongingness to a *Gemeinschaft*. He listened to his father's stories of village life told with historical enthusiasm; he interviewed older relatives and collected family-related data from them and from archives. Such early activities informed his 1974 typological study of "Village and Small-town Jews in Germany," for example. Since his parents' house was a meeting place of notables of all persuasion, he encountered Zionism and socialism, heard discussions of women's problems and present day social problems of the Munich community. Although he was exposed to a variety of Jewish, political, and intellectual viewpoints, Cahnman claimed that on the whole, the Jews of Munich were bourgeois liberals. Already as a teenager, Cahnman became interested in demography; he collected data and read up on baptism, intermarriage, birthrates, and generally, the growth, decline or change in the make-up of Bavarian Jewish communities. He became interested in the Palestinian settlements but when the Great War broke out, his "German patriotism" was aroused, as he said, and he stayed put. His university studies in Munich and Berlin followed where he majored in economics, history, political science and sociology, concluding with a dissertation at the University of Munich on Ricardo in 1927. There followed an absorption into Jewish learning, and Jewish political activity.

Cahnman evaluated the years of the Weimar Republic as a time when exciting things happened, teeming of intellectual and artistic fervent and controversy, but also a time when public life showed discouraging signs. In Germany, the 1920s also witnessed little hope for meaningful political action and the collectivities' inward turn. Thus, the 1920s saw a revival of Jewish consciousness and as Cahnman noted, "Jewish themes pure and simple came to the fore." The *Centralverein* had many new members, the Jewish *Lehrhaus* movement exploded, and publications abounded on the essence of Judaism. Cahnman read avidly the works of Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig et al., accompanied by the reading of the varied philosemitic as well as anti-Semitic literature of the time. He regarded Buber as his main guide and influence in the development of his own characteristic combination of elements in his work: historiography, Jewish ethnicity, romantic philosophy and political democracy. Thus, it may also be safe to assume that *Jews and Gentiles* had been germinating ever since.

Cahnman's intellectual preoccupations were soon supplanted by varied activities which he called his "social work" period. He moved from being a research associate of the Berlin Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Institute of World Economy to become the *Syndikus* for Bavaria's *Centralverein* (1930-1934), the major defense organization of German Jewry. He then became a teacher at the *Juedische Lehrhaus* and a member of the *Kulturbund* in Munich until his escape in 1939. In the meantime, he started work on the reasons for the rise of the Jewish national movement in Austria, centered around the person of Adolph Fischof, which he was able to finish only in the 1950s in the United States. Similarly, he started but finished only in late 1969 a study on the presence of "Three Regions of German Jewry," which was to demonstrate that a unified and uniform German Jewry never existed. Cahnman's activities included many clandestine missions on behalf of his beleaguered people, undertaken in several countries. After 1934, as a "leader of an illegal organization" he was briefly thrown into the Munich police prison, giving him a first-hand experience with the "New Order." According to Cahnman, it was his erstwhile classmate at the University of Munich, Rudolf Hess, who was instrumental in his release.[5]

After Cahnman's escape from Germany, he entered the United States in 1940 and soon after partook in a summer seminar for foreign scholars and teachers at the Brewster Free Academy in Wolfsboro, New Hampshire. Here he first encountered the sociologist Robert E. Park, of the University of Chicago, and Herbert A. Miller who evaluated Cahnman's background and designated him as a "race and cultural specialist" in sociology, with a recommendation for a Visiting Position at the University of Chicago. In due course, as he recalled, he became a "Chicago sociologist," in close contact with Everett Hughes, the anthropologist Redfield, and, above all, Park, who greatly influenced his thinking. The relationship with Louis Wirth was more complicated. In spite of their common interest in things Jewish, their perspectives differed: Cahnman had a strong survivalist perspective, meaning the survival of ethnic groups from both normative and empirical viewpoints, while Wirth maintained a strong assimilationist outlook, that is, the inevitability of the absorption of the Jews, as any other ethnic group, into the mainstream of the larger society. While trying to find his place in American academic life proved to be a long and arduous process, he was similarly not too successful in finding outlets for his earlier work. From Germany, he brought with him sets of data on Jewish life and/or emigration as well as Herzl's relation to German Jewish communities. He was adamant not to let the German Jewish communities go under "without a song" and constantly tried to place his studies—with more or less success. But he found his "home" in American Jewish life only when he was asked to join the editorial board of *The Reconstructionist* magazine. To the end of his life, he faithfully contributed to the journal and some of his articles reflect his brand of thinking, such as, "Intercultural Education and Jewish Content," (1948), "The Tercentenary Conference on American Jewish Sociology" (1955), "Religion in Israel" (1956), "Attitudes of German Youth" (1965), "The Interracial Jewish Children" (1967) or "New Intermarriage Studies: A Critical Survey"(1967). Interestingly, a public figure, Mario Cuomo, acknowledged Cahnman's shrewdness as participant observer and the astuteness of his analyses and called him "a sociologist friend from Forest Hills," whose insights he made use of for his 1975 book, *Forest Hills Diary—The Crisis of Low Income Housing.* In turn, Cahnman reviewed Cuomos's book and some of his comments there help to explain and evaluate his concerns and

writings from the 1930s. He wrote:

> I am a Forest Hills (instead of Munich) resident, a sociologist who is a race and intercultural relations specialist, and I am active in Jewish life. It goes without saying that I am aware of the complexities of urban living. I believe I know of the needs [of the newcomers] as well as the aspirations of the neighbors in the midst of whom I live.[6]

Indeed, Cahnman's choice of themes—community and family history, Jewish history, Jewish leaders and thinkers, the once-existing German-Jewish symbiosis, and last but not least, Jewish-Gentile relations—attest to his deep understanding and awareness of the complexities and problems involved in such relations. As to why he devoted a considerable part of his life and scholarly work to the examination of all aspects of these themes, Cahnman's answer was that it was the times and themes that chose him.

As Cahnman put it, he had been "finally rescued for sociology," when Joseph B. Maier, then chair of the Department of Sociology at Rutgers University's Newark Campus, brought him there in 1961; he retired from Rutgers as full professor in 1968. According to Maier, Cahnman was respected but he never became part of the "inner circle" of the faculty there on account of his being too fastidious in his ideals and standards, too set in his habits, too German, too Jewish, too much himself. He was seen by others and he regarded himself to be a "stranger," and it is no accident that he devoted much time to the conceptual clarification of the term as used by Simmel, Brentano and Toennis. Cahnman's preference was for the term "intermediary" (*Vermittler*), not meant microsociologically as in the case of Simmel but macrosociologically in the Toennisian sense, that is, as a commercial and cultural intermediary within a social structure. The macrosociological bent was more pronounced in Cahnman's last scholarly period when there emerged a systematic concern with the historical perspective in sociology. This approach resulted in the 1964 volume *Sociology and History*, which he edited with Alvin Boskoff. With his friend, Joseph B. Maier, Cahnman was instrumental in establishing a Historical Sociology Section in the American Sociological Association, which he chaired. In his essay, "Historical Sociology: What it is and What it is Not" (1976), Cahnman showed how typological devices as well as the use of comparative materials can be enormously useful in producing scholarly works which are sociologically oriented and historically relevant.

Cahnman's early practical and activist tendencies reemerged in the 1970s when he branched out from scholarship to promote intercultural relations and preservation of Jewish past. He called upon his peers to establish the Rashi Association for the Preservation of Jewish Cultural Monuments in Europe. He acted on his deeply felt conviction that after the obliteration of Jewish communities and institutions all around Europe, it was imperative that still remaining, visible testimonies of the past be saved. He singled out Germany as the first place of activity because the "aim of Hitler to obliterate all traces of Jewish life from German soul must be frustrated." It was just as important for him to salvage the sites and cultural artifacts as links to the future. Cahnman thought that the visible signs of Jewish continuity would have a significant educational and psychological impact: Gentiles in all these countries would be made

to realize that Jewish history was part and parcel of their own, their country's history. Just as in his hometown back in the 1930s, for Cahnman community concerns, scholarly endeavors and Jewish activism always and everywhere went hand in hand. When I visited the first such enterprise helped along by the Rashi Association, the Martin Buber Institute at the University of Cologne, and saw there young German students engaged in learning Hebrew and writing papers on Jewish culture, I could witness how the vision of Werner Cahnman became reality.

The last, most philosophical and most elaborate essays of Cahnman, entitled "Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling and the New Thinking of Judaism," deals with an old theme of his: the German-Jewish symbiosis. As one appreciative critic, Selma Stern put it, the essay addresses the problem of "elective affinity," or the state of affairs when "the Jews achieved some sort of synthesis between Judaism and European culture."[7] As the title indicates, Cahnman goes back to the early nineteenth century, after the waning of the kabbalistic beliefs due to the collapse of the carriers: the Sabbatian and Frankist movements, and their subterranean influence. He traces its re-emergence in the "garb of romantic philosophy," as evidenced in Schelling's 1815 lectures on "Philosophy of Mythology" and the "Philosophy of Revelation," The Schellingian influence on the thinking of the representatives of the second Emancipation in Germany is thus emanated from kabbalistic sources. The line reaches the twentieth century in the persons of Franz Rosenzweig and Hermann Cohen—up to the writings of Max Horkheimer and the Frankfurt School, where Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* shows through their critique of science and technology.

For years, Werner Cahnman sought to see the publication of his last full-scale work with the provisional title, "Jews and Gentiles: The Historical Sociology of Their Relations" without success. He wrote letters and sent out the synopsis of his manuscript as follows:

> I have been working on a comprehensive, yet concentrated, account of Jewish-Gentile relations for a long time. I believe that a scholarly conceived yet fluidly written account of these relations is essential for the self-understanding of the present generation. The topic of the Jewish experience among the peoples in the midst of whom Jews live is not identical, although it is overlapping, with the usual history of anti-Semitism. If the focus is on anti-Semitism, Jewish history is made to appear as if it were a record of unmitigated hostility against the Jewish people and of passivity on the part of the Jews.[8]

However, as Cahman demonstrates in his study, Jewish-Gentile relations are far more complex. There is a long history of mutual contacts, positive as well as antagonistic, even if conflict situations continue to require particular attention. He points out that the account follows a historical sequence, but it is sociological in conception. The main question addressed is whether there are recognizable patterns, common to most ages and places in which Jewish history has been enacted. At the same time, while general patterns may be recognizable, modifications and combinations of patterns are assumed to have occurred.

Cahnman's historical account runs from Roman antiquity through the Middle Ages, into the era

of emancipation and the Holocaust, and finally to the present American and Israeli scene. To be sure, as far as the "present" American and Israeli scene is concerned, the account appears unfinished as well as dated. But the basic similarities and dissimilarities throughout history are laid out and analyzed. He tests the theses of classical sociology implicitly, yet unobtrusively. For example, he traces the socio-economic basis of human relations emphasized by Marx and others, and considers Jews as "strangers" and "intermediaries." He disagrees with Max Weber in that for him Jews were not "pariahs" although he finds a remarkable affinity to Weber's Protestantism-capitalism argument in the tension of Jewish-Christian relations emerging from the bitter theological argument over usury, where the antagonism between Jews and Gentiles took on a pronouncedly socio-economic rather than religious character. It is depicted how the nineteenth century added a nationalist dimension as well as the distortions of biology and race, with fateful consequences.

For Werner Cahnman, the sociological study of Jewish-Gentile relations were of importance for more than one reason. For one, he held that the preservation of past history "must serve as pillars of the new Jewish consciousness which is to arise out of the memories of the past." And similarly to his promotion of intercultural relations that guided his establishment of the Rashi Association, he counted this time too on the psychological and educational impact of the examination of Jewish history that proved to be part and parcel of Gentile history. Finally, it attest to Cahnman's self-understanding as a sociologist and a student of Jewish life. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, he was asked about his approach to Jewish history. His answer? An approach from the vantage point of the historical sociologist, and a scholar who is not chiefly concerned with "isolated phenomena but with relations between phenomena." In fact, he continued,

> When I came to understand that the trader and the peasant live in symbiosis and conflict, I was relieved. . . . The Jewish people dwells among the nations, whether in Israel or in the Diaspora, and the tensions between intimate symbiosis and bitter conflict remains a guiding theme of Jewish history. [9]

In sum, for Cahnman the primacy of Jewish-Gentile relations in all their complexity and variability seemed essential for the understanding of Jewish social and political history. While it is evident that the history of post-Emancipation German Jewry and of the Holocaust aftermath has received considerable scholarly attention, the study of Jewish life in the Diaspora, or the migrational movements has been somewhat neglected; Cahnman clearly was intent to fill the gap. His research data, his personal experiences, and historical view combined resulted in a scholarly life-work that should constitute an important element in any future large-scale historical account. Reminiscencing of Martin Buber, Cahnman makes a confessional statement in this regard: "I shall try to testify . . . in the belief that what I have to say will stand for the truth which, while it becomes manifest only in personal experience, nevertheless transcends it."[10]

Werner Jacob Cahnman died of cancer in Forest Hills, New York, on September 27, 1980.

Beside the unpublished manuscript of *Jews and Gentiles*, he left behind an even more ambitious work on ”The History of Sociology.” With all his other papers, they were preserved by Dr. Gisella Levi Cahnman, the widow of Werner, in shared executorship with Joseph B. Maier, and later, with the editors of the present study. This volume is dedicated to the memory of Cahnman’s close friend, mentor and fellow refugee scholar, Joseph B. Maier, the last member of the Frankfurt School, who died November 22, 2002.

Notes

[i] In J.B. Maier and C. I. Waxman, eds., *Ethnicity, Identity and History. Essays in Memory of Werner J. Cahnman* (New Brunswick, NJ:

Transaction Books, 1983), p. 4.

[2] Werner J. Cahnman, “In the Dachau Concentration Camp: An Autobiographical Essay,” in J. B. Maier, J. Marcus and Z. Tarr, eds. *German Jewry. Its History and Sociology. Selected Essays by W.J. Cahnman* (New Brunswick, NJ-Oxford, UK: 1989), p. 155.

[3] Ibid., pp. 157-158.

[4] Quoted in *Ethnicity, Identity and History . . .* , p. 2.

[5] Quoted in *German Jewry . . .,* p. XIV. See also Cahnman, “Rudolf Hess; or, An Introduction to the Emergence of German Geopolitics: An Autobiographical Account,” in Werner J. Cahnman, *Weber and Toennies. Comparative Sociology in Historical Perspective*, ed. By J.B. Maier, J. Marcus and Z. Tarr (New Brunswick, NJ and London, UK: Transaction Publishers, 1995), pp. 319-336. There exists also a completed, unpublished manuscript entitled, “Rudolf Hess as a Symbol.”

[6] See Cahnman, “The Forest Hills Experience,” in *The Reconstructionist*, 12, no. 2 (March 1975): 25.

[7] Selma Stern’s statement comes from her book, *The Court Jew*, translated by Ralph Weinman (Philadelphia: 1950), p. 241.

[8] See Cahnman’s notes published in the *Newsletter* of the Association for the Sociological Study of Jewry (1975), pp. 20-21.

[9] Quoted by Ira Eisenstein, “Werner Cahnman at Seventy,” in *The Reconstructionist* (June 1973), pp. 24-33.

[10] See Cahnman, “Martin Buber: A Reminiscence,” in *The Reconstructionist,* 31, no. 12 (15 October 1965): 7.
This article is the introduction to Werner J. Cahnman’s Jews and Gentiles: A Historical

Sociology of Their Relations *edited by Judith T. Marcus and Zoltan Tarr to be published by Transaction Publishers, summer 2004.*

The Logic Of The Israeli Left: A Response To Menachem Klein

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

Several months have now passed since the official launch of the Geneva Accord at a glitzy ceremony in Geneva. Between October when the Accord was signed in Jordan and the first few weeks of this year there was a flurry of opinion pieces and articles about the document. A wide variety of views have been expressed ranging from indifference to outrage, and from enthusiastic praise for a valiant effort for peace, to angry condemnation of the betrayal of the national cause.

By far the most interesting and revealing piece was written by Menachem Klein, one of the Accord's negotiators, in this journal earlier in the year.[i] In that article he outlined in detail the premises on which the Accord was based, and the aims it is intended to fulfill. In this response to Dr. Klein, I intend to briefly discuss some problems with the arguments he presents for the document's stipulations, and then touch on larger issues surrounding the context and aims of the initiative and those who produced it.

Devilish Details

I found much of what Klein had to say about the details of the Accord to be highly contentious, but for reasons of space I will only discuss a few of the most problematic arguments he offers. Firstly there is the ubiquitous question of "security," meaning of course security for Israelis. Klein makes the standard case that peace, and land for the Palestinians, must be premised upon security for the Israeli people. However it is customary when making such arguments to stress what are considered to be "genuine" dangers and real "existential" threats. Klein however, makes this quite extraordinary remark,

The Palestinians … could not understand how it is that this regional superpower perceives such a deep threat to its security. After all, the Palestinians are the weak side in the conflict and have suffered at the strong arm of Israel over the years. As the side that has incurred the heaviest losses, they were amazed by Israel's deep-rooted sense of an existential threat to its security.

And later on,

In the end, the Palestinians understood that they must show consideration for Israel's psychological needs in the security sphere

No attempt is made by Klein to analyze this argument in any detail. Why should Palestinians "show consideration" for Israel's *psychological* security concerns, when doing so entails

serious restrictions on the sovereignty of the proposed Palestinian entity? He implies that although Israel faces no real threat from the Palestinians, Israelis *think* that they do and hence the Palestinians must respond to this. But why should they, and since when have legal treaties been founded upon "psychology" rather than political realities?

He argues that the Palestinian entity will have "full territorial sovereignty," but in fact the lack of an army, the lack of full control over its borders and ports, and the presence of foreign troops on its soil (including the Israeli Army) are clearly a serious infringement of its independence. Furthermore, having acknowledged that it is the Palestinians and not the Israelis who have suffered most from external aggression, this begs the question of why the Palestinian entity should be demilitarized and not the Israeli state. After all, it is the latter which has proven itself to be the greatest source of regional instability as even the most cursory glance at the history of the last fifty years conclusively demonstrates.

The second issue is the fate of Jerusalem. Klein describes Israel's illegal distortion and "Judaization" of the city since its complete occupation in 1967 as "accomplishments". He also claims that Jerusalem is already divided, and that what seems to be a plan to pull one organic, integrated city into two entities (for which there is no positive precedent anywhere in the world), is in fact a proposal to complete the separation of two independent urban spaces. He argues that,

The divide between the two cities runs deep, and only a small number of Palestinian workers cross the ethnic lines for a few hours a day. It is in the interest of both the Israelis and the Palestinians to partition the city in order to allow both cities to develop in their natural space.

The fact that few people genuinely think of Jerusalem as really being two cities is evident from Klein's confusion in the last sentence where he mentions "*the city*" and then refers to "*both cities*." Which is it, one city or two cities? Ethnic and economic factors divide many cities in the world, but it does not follow that the solution to this is to pull them apart into two new urban entities. The fact that extensive cooperation in the form of joint municipal committees is envisaged further implies a high degree of integration. If Jerusalem is really two cities, why the need for such bodies?

There is also the question of whether splitting the city is really going to help the Eastern, Palestinian districts develop. After all it seems somewhat counter-intuitive to claim that extracting the less economically successful parts of the city from potential markets and sources of employment will somehow help them to become more prosperous. Add to this the fact that Klein envisages a "fence" dividing the city, and the argument seems even more tenuous. He claims that East Jerusalem "faces the West Bank", but in reality, the West Bank faces Jerusalem which is the gateway to jobs and a better economic future for destitute Palestinians.

Klein also seems to be oblivious to the warnings that history provides with regards to dividing up cities with walls. The fate of Berlin should be instructive in this case, but Klein is apparently not interested in whether or not Jerusalem will be a better place to live and a more viable city

for all its residents after this barrier is constructed. Klein claims his Jerusalem fence will be (unlike its West Bank counterpart) “user and environmentally friendly.” Given that its function is essentially the same, i.e. to keep Palestinians locked away, what does this actually amount to in practice? Perhaps he means the fence will be biodegradable.

He also fails to clarify where exactly the fence will run, which brings me to the other major problem with the Accord’s “Jerusalem solution.” Pulling the city apart into two entities might possibly be feasible if in fact that was what the Accord was calling for, but it isn’t. In reality the Accord envisages creating a Palestinian canton *within* Jewish Jerusalem, one which is to be isolated from the rest of the city and partly cut off from the Palestinian “state.” The reason for this is the Jewish settlements East Jerusalem, constructed with the aim of encircling the Arab districts and preventing any realistic prospect of unity between them and the West Bank.

The Geneva Accord acquiesces to this reality and calls for the settlements to be annexed to Israel. This creates two problems. Firstly the East Jerusalem settlements are not like the isolated fortresses of the West Bank and Gaza, they are much more like neighborhoods, intermingled with Palestinian districts. Separating them is like carving up a city, dividing its neighborhoods one from the other. How will this work in practice? Will Klein’s fence encircle these settlements too, and if so what will that mean for the Palestinians?

This relates to the second problem which is that dividing the city up in this way cannot be beneficial for both sides at the same time. The Accord wants to maintain continuity between the areas belonging to each community, but clearly, given how interconnected these districts are, one side can only achieve territorial unity at the expense of the other. And this is of course what has happened to the Palestinians. For example, the road (which will be Israeli sovereign territory) connecting the settlement of Ma’ale Adumim to West Jerusalem will severe the link between Palestinian Jerusalem and Ramallah, making it much harder for northern West Bankers to reach the capital. It will also disrupt the north-south link between Bethlehem and Ramallah. This does not apparently constitute an obstacle to the growth and development of the putative Palestinian capital.

Finally I want to touch upon a remark Klein makes about the Accord’s solution to the refugee issue. Klein admits that the Accord offers the refugees nothing concrete with respect to their right to return to their homes in Israel as stipulated in international law. He acknowledges that it will be up to a future Israeli government to decide the precise numbers who will be allowed back home, and it is entirely possible that the number they choose will be zero. The refugees, Klein says, must “hope” that a future administration is feeling disposed to fulfill their rights. Given past experience one must admit that this is not very encouraging.

But the most remarkable comment comes later in this section of his essay when he discusses Israel’s admission of its guilt for what happened in 1948. Klein says this:

In order for the popular Israeli narrative to change and conform with the findings of academic research, Israel needs reassurances with regard to its fear that the outcome of the 1948 war

will be overturned. Only when Israel is confident that its darkest nightmare will not come true will the time come for it to apologize for its role in creating the refugee problem.

In other words, Klein seems to be saying that Israel *is* responsible for the dispossession of the entire Palestinian nation, but Israelis will only admit that fact when they receive concrete guarantees that nothing will be done to rectify such an injustice. This is rather like a murderer telling his lawyer, "I'm guilty, but unless the judge assures me he won't send me to prison, I won't admit it." Klein's comments are perhaps a clear indication that Israelis see the existence of their state as taking precedence over justice for the Palestinians, and indeed the two are viewed as (and quite possibly are) incompatible.

Fending off the "Hordes"

There are several other areas of Klein's treatment of the details of the Accord which I could take issue with, but instead I would like to turn to the conclusion of his piece. Here he discusses the philosophy behind the Accord and the premises upon which negotiations were based. He tells us that "absolute justice" cannot be achieved (a remark that Yasser Abed Rabbo has also made, perhaps as a way of excusing himself) although as far as I am aware the Palestinians aren't asking for *absolute* justice, merely *some* justice.

Klein also tells us that in past negotiations "Israel saw only its own interest" and "only its own interests … determin[ed] what the other side [i.e. the Palestinians] will receive", implying that the Geneva Accord has bucked this regrettable trend. However Klein undermines his own argument only a few paragraphs later. He tells us that the Geneva Accord "does not create equality between Israel and Palestine", and points out that the new state will be founded upon little more than a fifth of the original Palestinian homeland. Furthermore it will be beset by social and economic problems, all of which raises the question:

What … will prevent it from striving in the future to correct the "historical injustice" and cancel the agreement it was forced to accept out of a position of weakness?

A fundamental question, indeed. Fortunately we don't have to wait long for an answer. Klein reminds us in the next paragraph that the huge military imbalance will remain between the two states. Furthermore he tells us later on that although the section of the Accord dealing with economic relations has not yet been written, if and when its articles are written they "are not expected to create economic equality between Israel and Palestine." Of course this may simply be a decision to acquiesce in the face of huge economic disparities, rather than a deliberate scheme to keep Palestinians impoverished. However Klein then tells us that

In brief, the large economic and military gap between Israel and Palestine will remain. Even if the radical Islamic forces come to power in Palestine, they will be unable to realize their dream.

Klein seems to be saying that the economic gap is a *necessary* feature of relations between the

two states as a means of protecting Israel against Palestinians who are angry at the unjust "solution" that has been forced upon them. How else should one interpret such a statement? He is quite openly telling us that Palestine will be an impoverished entity on a fraction of the land with no means of defending itself against its aggressive neighbor.

Klein's assertions leave us in little doubt that, despite his claims to the contrary, the Accord is yet another attempt to perpetuate Israeli hegemony and to deny the Palestinians even a modicum of justice. It goes without saying that no Palestinian (apart perhaps from those who chose to sign it) would willingly embrace such a plan, and as Klein admits in the above quote they would only do so in the future out of weakness and a lack of alternatives. After all why should Palestinians accept a future of economic misery in a giant ghetto, simply so that Israel's status as an exclusively Jewish state on as much of the land as possible is assured? There is of course no reason why they should and Klein is wrong to believe that even in a weak position they would choose to do so.

The uncompromising arrogance of individuals such as Klein, who are desperate to make the two-state solution work in order to fend off the Palestinian "hordes" that threaten to undo Israel as a purely Jewish state, but not desperate enough to offer real concessions, is likely to finally bury this option as a genuine possibility. Increasing numbers of leftist Israelis are beginning to realize that the two-state solution is on its deathbed and that if Israel was genuinely interested in it concrete action should have been taken a long time ago. The Geneva Accord is highly unlikely to change this reality and, I sincerely hope, it will help to usher in an era where we focus solely on one-state models.

A thorough reading of the Accord and Klein's commentary would seem to confirm the view that the Israeli Left shares the Right's maximalist and survivalist outlook; maximalist in the sense that it seeks to concede the minimum possible amount of land, and survivalist because of a desire to protect the Jewish majority in Israel at almost any price. The difference between them amounts to where they choose to draw the line between what is acceptable and what isn't. No one in mainstream Israeli politics is considering the best interests of the Palestinian people, which is fine of course except that it is only a matter of time before the latter release that their interests are far better served by a solution which is not compatible with the existence of an exclusive ethnocracy.

For the Palestinian Geneva team, Klein is an unwelcome intrusion on their attempts to market the agreement to a skeptical Palestinian public. Klein's brazen honesty threatens to undermine their claims that the Accord is in the best interests of Palestinians, and indeed threatens support for the two-state non-solution in general. Already it is clear that the two teams are marketing the Accord in very different ways, with maps of far greater detail being made available to the Hebrew-speaking public. This is inevitable given the inequity of the agreement. The real question though is why the Palestinian team, some of whom are supposedly independent people of integrity, chose to sign this document in the first place.

Notes

[i] Menachem Klein, “The Logic of the Geneva Accord,” *Logos* Winter 2004.

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A Reply To Nick Kardahji

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

The Geneva Agreement succeeded to demonstrate an Israeli-Palestinian final status agreement that is close to an optional "real game." Therefore it evoked critical reviews form both sides. Interestingly, both Palestinian and Israeli critics of the Geneva Agreement use the same leading argument: the signers sold out everything for almost nothing in exchange, due to their weaknesses either as negotiators, or their poor national commitments [for a typical Israeli critic from a leftist and former member in the Israeli peace team see Moti Cristal, "The Geneva Accords: A Step Forward in the Wrong Direction?" *Strategic Assessment, Jaffe Centre for Strategic Studies*, Tel Aviv University, Vol. 6 No.4 February 2004. A summary of the Palestinian debate can be found in "Palestinian Reactions to the 'Geneva Understandings'", *MEMERI, Inquiry and Analysis* No. 154, November 11, 2003.

Nick Kardahji's critical review falls into the same category. Indeed his arguments are part and parcel form the domestic Palestinian debate over the 1988 and 1993 historical compromise of the Palestinian national movement, as he admits at the end of his reaction to my article.

It may be bootlessly to debate with him on details, since his guiding principle is one state while the Geneva Agreement is based on the two state solutions based on the 1967 lines. One can not understand why Kardahji is blind to the dividing factors in Jerusalem between Israeli Jews and Palestinians [in religion, language, culture, history, social belonging, ethnicity, neighbourhoods, education and transportation systems, citizenship, political participation and representation, allocation of resources by the central authorities, communication and media, commercial centres and relation with the hinterland], until he or she reach the end of his article where Kardahji express his alternative. One state calls for having one capital and perceiving Jerusalem in a similar way to the Israeli rightist view: one un-dividable entity.

The principle of one state leads him also to ignore a main political foundation of all the peace processes between Israel and its Arab neighbouring countries-Security Council Resolution 242. Based on the principle of land-for-peace, 242 enjoys an international consensus and provides international legitimacy to the demand for Palestinian self-determination.

Looking around in Israel and in occupied Palestine I can not see that the two states solution is on its deathbed as Kardahji argues. The will of Israelis and Palestinians to have each its respective ethnic nation state is stronger then ever. The brutal Intifada and anti-Intifada operations show this almost on a daily base.

The debate in Israel between the far left and the Geneva Agreement people is not on the national goal of a state with Jewish majority and domination, but whether the Israeli occupation over 1967 territories is reversible. I and the people who signed and support the Geneva agreement conclude that evacuating most of the settlements and ending the Israeli occupation

over 1967 territories is not only reversible option but a must. The vast majority in Israel is unwilling to give up its self determination as a Jewish state. Continuing the occupation means turning Israel to use “Spartheid”–a combination of Greek Sparta security measures with South African Apartheid system. But unlike the later the Israeli discrimination will base on ethnic origins rather then skin color. There is no real option of turning Israel to a bi-national state that is either totally blind to ethnic origins of its citizens or divides its institutions in parity between Jews and Arabs. Given that, it is realistic to assume that in a “Spartheid” state the deprived Palestinian people will revolt for its self-determination over the part of its homeland where it enjoys demographic majority. In other words, we will return to square one with more bloodshed and sorrow. The supporters of Geneva Agreement hope to cut this short for the sake of the two people.

A Conversation With Studs Terkel

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

With Kurt Jacobsen

Studs Terkel, born in New York City in 1912, moved at the age of eleven to Chicago where his family, among other things, ran a boarding house. He earned a law degree at the University of Chicago in the inauspicious year of 1934. Law did not appeal to him anyway; show business, beginning with the Chicago Repertory Theater, did. The Depression Era Works Progress Administration's Writers' Project provided him with his opportunity to get into radio. For more than four decade he worked at WFMT radio in Chicago as a disc jockey and as an interviewer. A lifelong champion of social reforms, he was blacklisted in the 1950s for refusing to name names.

His international reputation is based on his memorable "memory books," as he dubs them. These mesmerizing oral histories include *Division Street* (1967); *Working* (1970); *Hard Times* (1974); *American Dreams: Lost and Found* (1980); Pulitzer prize winning *The Good War* (1984); *The Great Divide: Second Thoughts on The American Dream*; (1988); *Race: How Whites and Blacks Feel about The American Obsession*; *Coming of Age* (1995); *The Spectator* (1999), *Will The Circle Be Unbroken?: Reflections on Death, Rebirth and Hunger for a Faith* (2001) and now, *Hope Dies Last* (2003). He also scribbled a memoir, *Talking To Myself*. (1995), and a tribute volume, *Greats of Jazz* (1975).

Show biz credits include his pioneering but short-lived TV program "Studs' Place" over 1950-3, stage appearances in plays such as Arthur Miller's "A View From the Bridge," a creditable cameo performance in John Sayles 1989 film *Eight Men Out* as Hugh Fullerton, the Chicago reporter who broke the story of the 1919 Black Sox scandal; the narration of the *Good Fight*, a documentary on the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil war; and an appearance in a PBS television production of a musical based on his book *Working*. We first met at his WFMT office in 1992, several weeks after four police officers were acquitted of beating Rodney King, and race riots erupted in Los Angeles. I interviewed him again in November 2003 during his book tour for *Hope Dies Last*. Acquaintances say that Terkel, with his phenomenal memory, remembers everyone he meets. It's true.

When we last spoke, the LA riots of 1992 had just happened. Do you see any progress in race relations since your book* Race *appeared?

Yes and no. The answer is ambiguous. Are we in some little ways better off ? There is a black middle class that wasn't there before. But you pick up the magazines [catering to them] and it's just bullshit, the same as the others. Harold Washington's election played a role in changing Chicago but at the same time the [minorities] may be worse off now in that people are saying, you had your chance', you know? There are all the attacks on affirmative action. You go to

Jackson, Mississippi today and you got black and white people in the restaurant. But the great many haven't got the buck – or the ten bucks or fifteen bucks – to go in. So the right is there to the toilet. The right is there to go into the hotel. But is the wherewithal there for the great many? No.

Civil rights never meant you must be better off economically.

We think that we made progress but are little better off so far as amenities are concerned. In terms of the economics, we're probably worse off. Now, we're not starting again from scratch. No. You know the hymn, "We are climbing Jacob's ladder"? Every rung is higher and higher – but there's two steps forward and one step back. Sometimes it's two steps forward and three steps back. It's a long haul. It's not an overnight thing. The racial situation is a rough one. When it comes to economics we've fallen down on the job.

How do you compare Mayor Daley Jr. to Daley senior?

Daley [senior] loved power. He bent toward powerful people and he had disdain for those who did not have power. That's why he was unique as a city boss. It wasn't the dough, it was power. Richard M. Daley – no more silver-tongued than his father – was elected Mayor in 1989. The manner of speech is similar but never would the son do what his father did. He uses power in his own way but not in the outwardly brutish way Daley Senior did in 1968. It's different now although there still is police brutality as we well know.

He's not the same as his father because the situation is different. When the old man was Mayor it was the post-World War II boom period and any Mayor pretty much had it made at the time economically, you see. Now we come to Chicago. It changed overwhelmingly when Harold Washington won in 1983. Until then it was plantation politics. [Daley Senior] owned the black vote. He had an overseer named Bill Dawson, the [black] Congressman of the First ward. So there was Daley, head of the plantation. But then came Harold Washington. Harold died too soon. He would have been fantastic. If he were alive today the country itself would have been affected for the better by him. There's no question in my mind. Harold was brilliant, funny and heads above the others.

Daley junior is not brutal like his father. I'm not saying he's nicer than the old man. The brutality is in the situation. Things have altered to some extent. So it's not the same and it's just the same. The trouble is there is no organized opposition. When the older Daley was Mayor there was a core of dissenters.: Len Depres and Dick Simpson, and others. Now there's no dissent; there's cooptation. There's a few who say no. [Chicago Alderwoman] Helen Shiller, who is in the book, has to make compromises to survive. Gentrification plays a role in her neighborhood and she has to allay the fears [of her incoming middle class residents] while maintaining her principles, and she is doing a pretty good job.

Just six months ago it seemed that we were descending into an Orwellian pit where Bush had everything his own way. Now it looks like all the deceits are unravelling. When we last met, I asked if a Democrat could beat the Senior Bush, how about

beating Bush Jr.?

Ever since Reagan, the Democratic Party – thanks to that Democratic Leadership Council that has to be kicked out on its ass – has been moved to the Right. [Senator] Joe Lieberman is a case in point. If I were Karl Rove, the Rasputin of Bush, I would immediately draft Lieberman as my VP candidate to run with Bush. [Lieberman and Bush] agree on all the major issues. The Democratic Party is the story of the betrayal of the best of the Roosevelt administration, the best of the New Deal. It's been under attack ever since Reagan. Then, after those [Reagan-Bush senior] years, you thought, well, [progressive policies are] going to come back. But even before 9/11 there was nothing much. The welfare reform program that Clinton put forth in 1995 was a complete cave-in.

I remember a gathering for an anniversary celebration of the 1960s. It was about a month after the welfare reform bill went through and Clinton was running for reelection against Bob Dole. Bella Abzug, Tom Hayden, Norman Mailer, and Vic Navasky were there. *The Nation* was sponsoring it. Bella Anzug said, Clinton's got to be reelected. It was my turn to talk. I said Clinton has to be criticized. But I didn't say all that I should have said then. Since Reagan and the counterrevolution there was a complete perversion of our language. Where going toward the Right is described as going toward the center, where Lieberman is described as a moderate. A Moderate! In fact, George W. Bush is described in some quarters as a moderate conservative. I wrote a little piece way back for FAIR, Jeff Cohen's organization. I called it The Brass Check. You know the Upton Sinclair book of that title in 1916 ?

Don't know that one.

In the old days when a guy went to the brothel he paid two dollars and the madam or the pimp gave him a brass check and then he handed the brass check to the girl. At the end of the day the girl cashes in her brass checks and she gets half a buck a piece. And so Upton Sinclair was talking about the brass check artists where [he identified] the reporters and publishers. They were whores. Take Teddy Roosevelt, an overrated president. The trust-buster. Here we go again. Teddy Roosevelt loathed the muckrakers. It was a derogatory term used by him against Lincoln Steffans and Ida Tarbell. Later on, George Seldes came along, and Izzy Stone. With the exception of the muckrakers, there were these brass check artists who played a tremendous role in the language becoming perverted bit by bit by bit. As a result, the American public reads what, sees what, hears what? – [media] run by fewer and fewer people. We know the most powerful media mogul today is that Australian Neanderthal Murdoch, who's become a citizen.

So where is the hope?

Here's the optimistic part. I like to read letters to the editor. I said to [*Chicago Tribune* editor] Bruce Dole who edits the editorial pages: "I see letters there about Israel, and about the Middle East and about Bush and a surprising amount are anti-Bush letters." And he says, it's fifty-fifty, and in fact it's a little more anti than pro. And this is the Tribune [a conservative

paper]! The tribune does not publish anti-Bush letters. They go the other way . There's a turn taking place. Of course the tribune is not the same paper it was under colonel McCormick. They have these columnists who appear once a week. Molly Ivins gets the most mail. Con as well as pro, More pro than con.

So something is popping. There's something underneath that's happening, but there's no umbrella organization. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, the "leftist candidate" who is in the book, is the one who gets the least ink, is always the last one mentioned of the nine candidates. He has no money and the organization is all in a mess. We know he's not going to win the nomination, but name recognition [matters]. Now only one in a hundred know his name. But if he runs third in Iowa, for example, name recognition would force the Democratic Leadership Committee to give him time at the National Convention that would be seen by multi-millions. That could be pretty exciting. So the big thing is name recognition.

What about John Kerry?

Here's Kerry. Long ago when he came back from the Vietnam war I interviewed him. I had a whole series on Vietnam, including officers who returned and he was one of them. I have a tape with him but I can't find it now. He was one of the officers opposed to the Vietnam and he was good. He was very good. But then he comes out for [Bush's resolution after] 9/11. It's a matter of guts. That's the big thing, whether you have the guts. He didn't.

How do you figure Schwarzenegger in California?

The victory of Schwarzenegger was not a Bush triumph at all. It was a vote out of frustration, out of anger, out of fury. They would have voted for W.C. Fields – who would have been wonderful, by the way. If the Democratic Party loses to George W. Bush, it must dissolve. The DLC have been urging it more and more toward the so-called center. Now the opposite has to be the case. I do run into all sorts of people, as you know, whether it be waitresses or cab drivers or CEOs. And everyone says, "This guy has gotta go.' So it's a question of the Democratic Party choosing someone who is militant, who is against Bush. People know what's happening with the tax cuts. Enron and the corporate accounting.

There's no end of rubbish spilling out of this administration.

You know I'm a hambone, a ham actor, and I ramble pretty good up on a platform. I go to a town in DuPage county, which is the only county in all of Illinois to vote for Goldwater in 1964. There is an audience of Republican women there from the Opera House and I'm talking about Bush. I start off, laughing, of course, " I'm 91 and I have my two martinis a day and I ask my cardiologist about it. He says, "At your age your cholestoral count is as relevant to you as truth is to George W. Bush." They erupt in laughter.

I go on in the same vein. I say I'm an alumnus of the University of Chicago. My fellow alumnus was John Ashcoft, and although I preceded him by 30 years he is considerably older than I am. I figure he is about 320 years old. You saw him in Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible." He was

the Reverend way up there, the Reverend Parris. I'm telling this to the women. Remember Salem, Massachusetts? The witch hunt? Those old women living in the town considered witches by the hysterical girls: they were the terrorist of their day. And here is this prosecutorial officer, the Reverend Parris: "If you're not with us you're against us. If you challenge me, you're consorting with the devil." That's John Ashcroft.

I also have great difficulty with my hearing. The volume [of my hearing aid] goes up but the clarity does not. So I say, "during our triumph in Iraq when we finally democratized the country" – the women are chuckling I hear the phrase "embedded journalists" continuously. But with my bad hearing it comes out "in bed with journalists." Of course I'm in the opera house and you know Puccini's *Tosca*, the story? And so I say my hearing is so bad when I hear "Justice Scalia," it comes out Scarpia.

Scarpia being the wicked villain of the opera.

At the end of that I get a standing ovation. And this is a Republican community! Next day I pick up the DuPage county paper, "Studs wows them. " and they quote the stuff in that Republican paper. Something is going on. Of course Bush can be beaten. Who ever had a president who had a war and a depression at the same time? See it was the Second World War that ended the depression even though the New Deal the WPA and everything – saved millions of lives. There were eleven million unemployed up until the [war started]. So then women get jobs in defense plants and guys go in the army. It was the depression that knocked off Hoover. Now we have a president with a depression and war, or I should say, wars, since he speaks of an axis of evil. Who's next, after Iraq? So if this guy would win, it's a one party country. All I want Dennis Kucinich to do is keep on going. In any event, we come back to reality. I'm pretty certain the Democratic Party will win. If they don't, then they must dissolve.

Have we shaken off the "me" generation, the yuppie hype?

Young kids now are so taken with trivia and with self. But they're bright; they're not dumb, many of these kids. That guy named Eminem, there's a remarkable article about him in the *New York Review of Books*. The kids are up on a lot of this stuff but there's no one organization – meaning a political party – that can really hit it. The Democratic Party is not really doing a damn thing but despite that there's more [recognition] that things are unraveling. It's clear even to people who can't spell "cat."

So despite everything I have said I feel hopeful. My old friend Pete Seeger says he sees crazy movements all around the world. You know with all the violence and the horrors, things are happening. Just picking up a fascinating article on Bolivia this morning, and look at what happened at Cancun with that WTO conference. So it's a question of finding the spearhead – what I call the umbrella that could cover these groups. I think the Democrats will win but I want them to win in a way that the country itself will know has a meaning. The key thing should be the United Nations which, of course, was the hope of the world. We are part of it. We are the strongest part, but only part of it. We have to blast this whole idea of unilateral action.

Our leaders' paranoia, or ulterior motives, decides what we as a nation do abroad.

In the book one of the most revelatory things is one of the most modest interviews, one with former Olympic winner Adolf Keefer. Keefer's a Bush man. I have these people in to mix it up. But it's his wife who says, "Why are we in so many countries today?" She represents, I think, the great, great many. What the hell are we doing in these places? And then there's Enron and those revelations. Who do you most mistrust? In the old days it was always car dealers and lawyers. Now it's corporations. In the polls big business is up there at the top. So these are the hopeful signs. My own feeling is one of what I call guarded hope. The key word is guarded. This sounds crazy to say, it sounds goofy and romantic but underneath there is a stirring.

A suburban lawyer once said to me, "isn't Studs an old fashioned New Dealer peddling obsolete ideas?" She herself was a Republican spouting market rhetoric straight out of the 18th century. Like many people, she doesn't know a new idea from an old idea from a good idea. People are very confused. I think Arlo Guthrie talks about that kind of confusion in your book.

We're suffering from a national Alzheimer's disease. There's no yesterday. Those who are against "big gummint" in heath, education, welfare – not the military are the ones whose very asses were saved by big gummint' in the 29 crash, and how they pleaded, please save us. So this woman suffers from national Alzheimer's disease. We live by the clichés of the day.

There are new clichés coming out every minute.

The other big obstacle is the trivia itself, the overwhelming trivia. It leads to Schwarzenegger again. Here's Oprah Winfrey with the largest women audience ever probably in the history of TV, the most powerful sales force. She has a kiss-kiss hour program with Schwarzenegger and his wife, Shriver's kid, during the campaign. And [Oprah] says we never talked about politics, it was only a good family show. An hour! No one of the opposition was on at all so no one can contest Schwarzenegger. It was just assumed [that it was okay]. He's on an hour and hundreds of thousands of women are watching. I see that most white women voted for Schwarzenegger.

Isn't this confusion-maybe a carefully cultivated confusion-again?

But the big thing is how it is so one-sided – even in the case of Oprah who undoubtedly would vote against Bush. Of course she will, but it doesn't matter. And talk about perversion of language. Talk about Liberal media ? Liberal media! [A term] which is an obscene assault on our intelligence.

That's a strong theme through many of your books.

9/11 was an obscene, horrendous event. But the far bigger assault is on our native intelligence, the assault on our innate decency. This I know about the intelligence of the so-called "ordinary person" – a term I dislike because it is patronizing – the anonymous many are capable of extraordinary things. We know there is an intelligence there. It's a question of the information

coming through to them. There's a great quote Tom Paine comes up with that fear causes you not to think. He didn't write those books just for freedom-loving Americans but for thinking people. It's always good when you make the audience aware that it is thinking. You know, "It is thinking Americans such as yourselves, such as yourselves . . ."

But aren't many people in your book talking about just holding steady? Not losing more ground?

It's more than holding steady. I think, despite ourselves, the changes are there and ready for action. The voices are there but again there's no umbrella. Take the word "activist" – to act, to do, to take part, to participate. Like this one writer in the book, she's a good writer. She says, "I'm not moved. I don't take part in those demonstrations. They don't hit me." And then she says, "I don't know why I have these headaches all the time."

Well, something I forgot to include in the book is a news item from England. A psychiatrist there says taking part in an action is therapeutic. When you take part in something, whether it is a peace march or a rally somewhere, it actually is medicinally good. It's good in that it lifts your spirits but it also makes you physically feel better. He had proof of it. So I'm saying to her the reason you have the headache is because you don't take part in these things. (laughter) But it's true. I wish I had that item now. I'm a slovenly guy, you know. I tear these things out of the papers and save them but I lose them. I don't know where it appeared now. It was wonderful. It was a health piece.

It's there. It's just waiting for more voices to be more articulate and more outspoken. And those who are in the book should be reaching more and more people. There has been such an unraveling of the deceit. How do you feel when you are being lied to regularly every day? I think there is hope provided there is this opposition that has a kind of umbrella and at the same time principle, backbone and some guts and has nothing to lose. And humor. Try to put humor in there if you possibly can.

You talk to a lot of young people in your new book. Do you think they are representative?

I'm not saying they are representative. I think they represent what could be, not what is. When Ralph Nader ran for President [in 2000] who do you think went to Nader rallies? They weren't old lefties; they were young people, So Willie Nelson and Eddie Veder from Pearl Jam were there, but would the kids have paid ten cents a head to hear Bush or Gore? The Illinois Coliseum was jammed. But they didn't vote. They didn't vote. It's a question of them [getting to turn out].

I wonder what they would make of an Abbie Hoffman today? A few years ago, a well-intentioned but very badly written film about him, called* Steal This Movie*, flopped.

I think Abbie killed himself because he was a romantic but a romantic in a good sense. He wanted to build a New Jerusalem. All his dreams, his romance with the future, were being

shattered. Along come the MBA kids, you know? He didn't live long enough to see the streets of Seattle and things of that sort. The sixties is always being put down because it was a moment when kids had causes outside themselves. A woman I know says the sixties is put down by those who delight in the failure of dreams. That's a wonderful quote.

Did you have to leave out anyone you really wanted in the new book?

Recently, four guys were pardoned by [Illinois Governor] George Ryan from Death Row. All were so obviously innocent it wasn't funny. Only one of them is in this new book. I wanted a couple more in there. Like Merle Haggard. This rough, gruff guy is changing. He has got this new song: "This is the news." I got a hunch he would have been very interesting. But it was too late to get him for this one. I love to get people in transitions, like that Klansman [in "Race"] who changed. They're the ones who attract me the most.

Rumor has it you have another book under way.

It's about musical artists I've had on my show. Opera and jazz and folk. It'll be the other aspect of my life. The musical aspect. I'll call it *They All Sang* and it's subtitled: *Guests of an Eclectic Disk Jockey*.

When do you expect to bring it out? Next year?

Oh who knows? I'm 91, you know. I'm working on a great presumption (laughing). A great presumption.

A Logos Conversation With Tribune Editor Mark Seddon

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

Before going further, perhaps you could share a bit of your political background and career with our audience.

Well, I joined the Labour Party at the tender age of fifteen as a schoolboy. I came from a very conservative background-my father was a serving officer in the British Army and both he and my mother were, and still are, members of the Conservative Party. Both sets of Grandparents were on the right and my uncle was an officer in his local Conservative Association. So my first instincts, I guess, were to rebel. I was sent away to school as my parents were often posted abroad and it was while I was there that I met a local retired farm worker who had helped set up the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers Union at the turn of the last century. His name was Mr. Elijah and very influential he was too. I joined the local Labour Party and went to my first big political meeting where the floor was stolen by a young Welsh firebrand called Neil Kinnock, who went on to become a leader of the Labour Party. As a student I was a fiery radical too-I was elected president of my Students' Union during the year of the great Miners' Strike in Britain in 1984. I spent a good deal of that year helping the miners and their families, going on picket lines and almost losing my job as the right tried to get rid of me-unsuccessfully-for all of the help we were then giving the National Union of Mineworkers.

After leaving university, where I studied International Relations and made good friends amongst fellow students from the PLO, the ANC and SWAPO, I moved to London. There I worked as a political lobbyist before becoming editor of *Tribune* at the tender age of thirty. I thought I would only be here for three or four years, but it has fast become a decade. In 1997-the year of Labour's landslide-I stood for election to Labour's ruling National Executive Committee, coming top of the poll in the first real challenge to Tony Blair and his "Third Way." I lost my seat a year later, regained it and have been a thorn in Blair's side ever since!

Perhaps the vision of Iraq is different from England: what do you see as the principle reasons for the English decision to back the United States?

The principle reason for backing the United States over Iraq was that Tony Blair believed President Bush and the Iraqi exiles when they said that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction. This is how Blair also persuaded the bulk of his MPs and popular opinion-at one stage claiming that Saddam's weapons could even hit British military bases in Cyprus. Blair told us at Labour's NEC that Britain could have an influence over the United States and that a successful campaign against Saddam would allow for the "Roadmap for Peace" to be given full support in Israel/Palestine. He vehemently opposed all three of my resolutions on the NEC over

Iraq-including the one that called for a second United Nations resolution before any action was taken.

Many people have asked how someone like Tony Blair, a man whose- shall we say- quality of mind differs so profoundly from that of our president, could find himself enmeshed in this kind of war? What do you make of this?

Blair is intelligent and a smooth operator, but he lacks depth and hinterland. His great success has been to cow the Labour Party, the cabinet and his parliamentary party into believing that he only he can win elections. Having dumbed-down political debate deliberately, there are very few opportunities to confront him politically on issues such as Iraq. Blair genuinely believed the WMD claim; he also believed, I think, that Bush could be persuaded into the "liberal interventionism" so beloved by him (Blair) and Clinton. He simply did not get the measure of the neo- cons, or even attempt to try and understand their agenda. Blair by nature avoids personal conflict and likes to be loved. He will have been deeply affected by the warmth showered on him by President Bush after September 11th and I believe admires those who are more powerful and wealthy than he is-hence his astonishingly craven attitude that now damages him more than anything else.

We have heard a great deal about the emergence of a new anti-Semitism in western Europe. Does this apply to England?

There is little evidence of a rise in anti-Semitism in Britain, but plenty of evidence of Islamophobia, which is becoming very serious indeed. The Far Right British National Party is expected to make major gains in the forthcoming European and local elections-and it runs on an openly racist ticket. However, at another level the pro-Israel lobby in Britain is certainly on the defensive and is losing influence rapidly as Sharon's extremism causes moderate Jews intense embarrassment.

Fifty-two diplomats have now, more or less, censured the foreign policy pursued by Tony Blair: isn't this a remarkable situation?

The letter from fifty-two retired diplomats was unprecedented, although they were subsequently dismissed as the "camel corps," by some around Tony Blair. The point is that the ex-diplomats were also speaking for their colleagues still in the Foreign Office, and recently the Foreign Office has begun leaking like a sieve. The Foreign Office has long experience of the Arab world and is appalled by the miscalculations around the war and the occupation. Tony Blair's footloose support for Bush and Sharon over the latter's promise to withdraw from Gaza, while allowing settlements to remain in the West Bank and Israeli control over the bulk of the area drove these same ex-diplomats and current diplomats to despair.

These have been disastrous times for the United Nations: the nightmare began with the bald-faced lying of our secretary of state, Colin Powell, before the world tribunal and the perceived impotence of this institution in bringing about an alternative policy on Iraq. How does the English left view the United Nations and how would you

envision its role in thinking about a new brand of foreign policy?

I recall that Colin Powell was a commanding officer at the time of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, which doesn't make him complicit but raises sharp questions over his judgment during the aftermath of the Cally trial. The UN is as potent as its members wish it to be-and without it, there would have been no arms inspectors in Iraq and no opportunity for those opposed to the coming war to put their case as France did. The UN has had its successes, most notably in East Timor and now in Liberia, but Iraq was no high water mark for the organization. The left in Britain is instinctively supportive of the UN, but would argue for more democracy and accountability-opening up the Security Council for instance to new members, sanctions against those countries that refuse to sign up to the new International Court of Justice and giving more power to the UN General Assembly.

Much is often said about the foreign policy of Tony Blair. We in the United States, however, know very little about his domestic policy. How would you describe it?

Tony Blair's domestic policy is broadly a soft neo-liberalism. We now have a minimum wage and some basic rights at work, but Britain lags well behind other European countries and Blair has sought to block a great deal of progressive reforming legislation from the European Union. And domestic policy is increasingly illiberal, especially when it comes to issues around asylum and immigration. The New Labour years have to some extent been an extension of the Thatcher years, although there is not the mass unemployment of the 1980s. To an extent Blair has been lucky with the economy, but much of its recent success can probably be laid at the door of his chancellor, Gordon Brown-who takes the long view just as Blair takes the short view.

Progressives in the United States have long been faced with choosing between the "lesser of two evils": what should the English electorate do in the next election assuming that the choice is between Tony Blair and the conservatives?

"The lesser of two evils" is a disappointing argument for progressives the world over-because it has us all simply as spectators when we can make a difference. Look at the Howard Dean campaign, for instance. It is possible, of course, that Blair may not be leader of the Labour Party come the general election, or that the conservative opposition could contrive to be the "get out of Iraq" party. That said, I will be voting Labour, because in politics nothing stands still-and I expect things to change within the Labour Party in the post-Blair era.

How difficult is it for you to remain in the Labor Party? What future do you see for the Labor Party?

So yes, it has been very difficult to stay active in the Labour Party since under Blair it has become increasingly dysfunctional. The left, for its part, has failed to come up with popular alternatives in Britain so not all blame can be heaped on Blair and "New Labour." Certainly if the Labour Party keeps on this political trajectory it will cease to be a political force within five years.

When* Logos *and your magazine,* Tribune*, decided to exchange links you mentioned that this might be of particular importance given the charge of "anti-Americanism" so often directed against critics of the Iraqi war and the foreign policy of the Bush administration. How devastating is that charge now and how real is anti-Americanism?

Anti-Americanism is a cheap jibe thrown at the left and peace campaigners by those on the right on both sides of the Atlantic. Now it is true that some on the left have become lazy and have come to see anything from America as inherently bad news-they forget the post-war role that America has played in Europe, your country's frequent generosity during times of economic crisis, your written constitution, tough monopoly and corporation rules and much else besides. But I think such people are largely a minority. Some commentators on both sides of the Atlantic on the right and who are apologists for the neo-cons such as Mark Steyn and Michael Gove from the *Times of London* argue that to criticize American foreign policy is tantamount to a heretical attack on all things American. Few people fall for this extreme, almost fascistic view however.

At *Tribune*, we are proud to have a number of columnists and contributors from the United States, including Professor Norman Birnbaum of Georgetown University and Professor John Mason of William Paterson University. I am very please that we have developed links with *Logos*, the Socialist Scholars Conference, the Democratic Socialists of America and a number of your labor unions. As for me, one day I should like to come and live and work in New England! I am very pro-American; it is just that I have problems with market fundamentalists and neo-imperialists whether in America, Britain or anywhere else.

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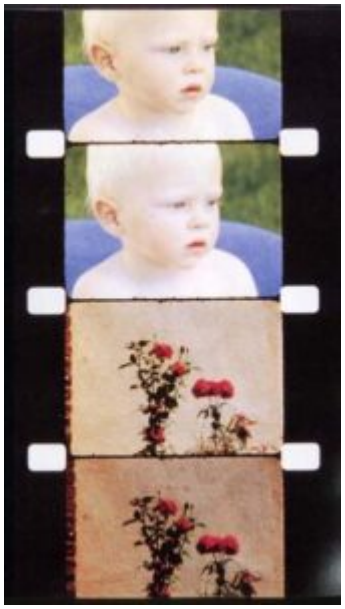
Just Like A Shadow

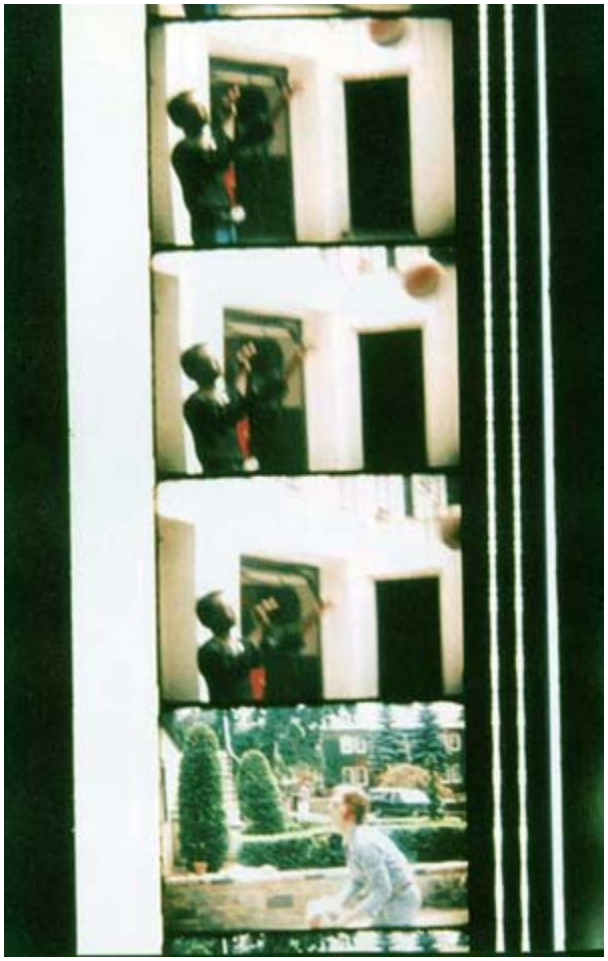
By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

As an exile, as a displaced person, I felt that I had lost so much, my country, my family, even my early written diaries, ten years of it, that I developed a need to try to retain everything I was passing through, y means of my Bolex camera. It became an obsession, a passion, a sickness. So now I have these images to cling to… It's all ridiculous, I think. Because what I have, after all, is already fading, it's all just like a shadow of the real reality which I do not really understand. When you go through what I went through, the wars, occupations, genocides, forced labor camps, displaced person camps, and lying in a looming potato field – I'll never forget the whiteness of the blossoms – my face down to earth, after jumping out the window, while German soldiers held my father against the wall, gun in his back – then you don't understand human beings anymore. I have never understood them since then, and I just film, record everything, with no judgment, what I see. Not exactly "everything", only the brief moments that I feel like filming. And what are those moments, what makes me choose those moments? I don't know. It's my whole past memory that makes me choose the moments that I film.

I usually film my friends, or my family. As it happened all the people who played a central role in the life of arts in New York, during those decades, they were all my friends. And, of course, most of them were not yet famous at all. We were all involved in the same thing. We were like a large family. We knew each other, we helped each other. And of course, sometimes we argued. It was an incredible period. Why did I film it all? I have no real answer. I think I did it because I was a very shy person. My camera allowed me to participate in the life that took place around me. My film diaries are not like the diaries of Anaïs Nin. Anaïs, whom I knew, she agonized about her psychological adventures. In my case, the opposite, whatever that opposite may be. My Bolex protected me while at the same time giving me a peek and a focus on what was happening around me. Still, at the very end, I don't think my film diaries are about the others or what I saw: It's all about myself, conversations with my self.



Sebastian, my son, New York, 1983 (From *As I was moving ahead occasionally I saw brief glimpses of beauty*) Elzbieta Mekas, my mother, Lithuania, 1971 (From *Reminiscences of a journey to Lithuania*)



Miles Davis and John Lennon play basketball, 1971 (From *He stands in the desert counting the seconds of his life*) Self-portrait with a girl, Cassis, 1966 (From *Notes for Jerome*)

John Kennedy Jr. tells a secret to Anthony Radziwill, his cousin, 1971 (From *He stands in a desert counting the seconds of his life*)

Jonas Mekas *is a writer and filmmaker. He is the founder of Film Culture and Anthology Film Archives in New York City. He also founded the film column of The Village Voice. His films include The Brig, He Stands in a Desert Counting the Seconds of His Life, Walden, Guns of the Trees, and As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty. He was born in Lithuania and immigrated to the United States after World War II.*

The text and images are taken from Just Like A Shadow published by Steidl Publishers.

Poem: Shalom, Salaam

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

Poetry

Shalom, Salaam

by
Jabari Jones

Shalom
may the bullets
go on strike
and study war no more

Salaam
may the bombs
fall in love
with the body
and refuse to blow

Shalom
may the agents of Mossad
step into the light of day
and pray to live again

Salaam
may the agents of Hamas
explode
into tears
and run home to their mothers

Shalom
may the bulldozers
break down the walls
that divide

Salaam
may the greeny stumps of olive trees
mark the path of return

Shalom

may the chainsaws
chew on stones

Salaam
may the oil princes
fall into their oil wells
like corks, stopping
the flow of corruption

Salaam
may indignant spit
turn into olive oil

Shalom
may bitter tears
turn into sweet wine

Shalom
may the leaders
go home
and curse each other
over the telephone

Salaam
may the people
meet in the streets
and drink a lot of wine
at each other’s parties

Shalom, Salaam
may the last candle
be saved to seal
the last gun muzzle

Shalom, Salaam
may the bloody earth
shut its many
grave mouths in protest,
raising trees like flags

Shalom, Salaam
may it be a young Israeli rabbi
who sings the Kaddish
over the body of the last
Palestinian fighter

Shalom, Salaam
when anyone speaks words in hate,
in the name of the One,
may their voices fail and fall,
like a divided house

Jabari Jones's *"Shalom, Salaam" originally appeared in Long Shot literary journal's recently released "Beat Bush Issue" (www.longshot.org).*

Poem: Elegy Before The War

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

I

All the photographs are lies, she looks
Normal in them, like other people,
Not mad, not spilling lava,

Her eyes are compelling as doe's eyes,
And she did not know this, and the worst of it is
She looks alive.

Putting the photos away, I keep thinking
How small and afraid she was in the hospice bed,
How light abandoned the hopeful eyes,

How the mouth gap with its gurgle from the sad
Lungs made us feel like Moses, allowed to see
God's backside from a cleft in the rock,

The mystery diminished not one grain,
The face and hands outside the cotton quilt
Soft, horrible, fine-

How the jaw tightened then fell open
Almost with a bang, and the aide nodded.
Everyone left, and then there was her silence,

A silence in which I stroked her moist forehead
Then patted through the nightgown her belly and breasts.
O I loved her and this was her response-

I keep telling her to come back sometime!
Come back! I wonder where she is gone
And I have always wondered.

II

My mother is dead two weeks

We were holding her hands and singing to her
When she let go. Very little pain, lucid

Almost to the end, correcting
People’s grammar
A week before
She died–

And we burned her and flew to Arizona
And the tanks roamed Ramallah and Nablus

I feel as if anything I have to say needs to be shaved down.
I want my language to be like the desert. My words and phrases
To be like ocotillo, yucca, saguaro. Prickly. Thorny.
Able to collect moisture enough to survive extended drought.

The air I breathe is materially tropical, spiritually arid. These are dry
Times in which one cannot even hypothetically construct an appealing
future for one’s species. Born to violence that steers the intelligence.

The air I breathe you breathe.
Just now, a molecule breathed by the Buddha
Might have entered your lungs.

Where is Shelley when we need him?
“An old, mad, blind, despised and dying king,
Nobles, the dregs of their dull race,”

He begins a sonnet after the Manchester riots in which
British soldiers shot their fellow citizens dead.
Where is William Blake, is he burning

Bright as the tiger in some grassy meadow of paradise
Does he beat a drum and shout “Holy holy holy
Is the Lord God almighty,” or, on alternate days,

“Exuberance is beauty,” and where is Walt Whitman
And where is Ginsberg, genius of kindness?
I beg my mother come back sometime.

The root system of the saguaro
Spreads shallowly underground as widely as
The cactus is high.

That of the ocatillo plunges.
The tanks roll, the missiles fly.

Greedy teeth smile at the microphone.

They know where the oil is. They have plans, big plans
To connect the imperial dots.

I beg you awesome ones lift yourselves off the page be with us
Blow through us like a hot desert wind please as if we were trumpets
As if we were saxophones. Beat on our membranes hard

And let us be drums. Artillery
Will always outshout us, testosterone explosions
Are more thrilling than anything, chain reactions

Brilliance between opposite poles accelerating
At the speed of hate, we do this
To you because

You did it to us first. Thrilling!
The bus explodes,

The shelled house collapses over the grandmother
And the gasping family, the tanks roll, the missiles fly

And perhaps the faster one dies,
The better.

*****

But it does explain something.

I too look at the images

Of cruel death in the newspaper and on the screen.
They taste good, I like them. You like them. They are their own
Best advertisement. We like to shudder at them. We like to blame.

We bravely deplore. We enjoy a bit of fury.
The nearer we get to death, the more
We feel alive.

War, that great stimulant,
let us drink to it.
Let us join our friends, Israel and Palestine.

Our friends who have been seduced by it.

III

Now that it is spring I open the window at night

I lie awake in my cave, my well of night
Pulsing like a bat
Making inaudible orphan sounds

Though the blinds stay down
Soft air seeps in, a few cars
Swish along the street

From the next house
Where gloomy faded shingles fall like leaves
And bedsheets hang in the windows instead of drapes,

I hear the man’s chronic unstoppable cough,
A poor man’s cough, and the wife’s hoarse voice
Coaxing their dog.

Gypsy. Stop it. Come here.
Good girl, good girl.
I can work on

Making music of that.

IV

Where is Auden now? Is he attempting to rejoice?
Is he happy that all he had was a voice?
Does he engage Merrill in contests of puns,
over in the heaven of the deserving ones?

V

Friday night getting smashed in America

Ignorant violence that stuns the intelligence.
Dear animal inside us whom in other respects
We cherish, is it you?

Whitman and Blake inside us, celebrants of war equally with peace, is it you?
Descendants of Homer? Is it our stars? Is it our cold reason?
Is there a devil? Will somebody pass me that bourbon?

I think this impulse to destroy
This need for an enemy

Has actually nothing to do with sex

It is simply a human characteristic
It has climbed the corporate ladder of the dna
It is on the board of directors.

A joke in the Soviet Union went like this:
Under capitalism man is a wolf to man.
Under Communism it’s just the opposite.

And there was that other one, about the economy:
We pretend to work, and they pretend to pay us.
Very funny, but because of low morale

The Russians have become ineffective soldiers
Like the Italians and the French.
Long live the Italian and French armies!

Long live the citizens of Prague
Whose twelfth century buildings stand
Because a Czech will fight to the last

Drop of ink! The trouble with America
Is that her morale is still too high.
She needs to be a bit more depressed

Before she starts behaving better.
The trouble with America
Is she is a big bully

And a big coward,
Also that she has no conscience,
Not enough cynics, they are all in Europe.

Now let someone discreetly put on
The Stones or The Doors or better yet
Jimi doing the Star Spangled Banner

Like a cry of absolutely
Pained rage, a train jumping the tracks.
I like this party.

Perhaps you on the other hand like ignorant violence that stunts,
Stints, stains, struts, standardizes, brutally strangles
The intelligence. Somebody must, why not you? Well,

Here we need a few anti-American jokes.
What are we afraid of?
Where are the comedians

When we need them?
Tucked in their cages
Like tame monkeys.

Where are the accountants?
Who will save us
From the mudslide of dollars?

VI

Blessed be the watercolorists
Who do normal mediocre meadows and lakes
As if the twentieth century never occurred
And blessed be whoever buys their paintings.

VII

She cried when she read Shakespeare

When I was young, she taught me not to hit or hate
Anybody, she thought education was the answer, she said most people
Were ignorant and superstitious but not us. No, we believed in liberty

And justice for all. I miss her hugs though they were like clamps,
I miss her voice though she often mysteriously screamed
With rage at us all, the shopkeepers, the neighbors.

What twisted and wasted her beauty and intellect, was it America,
The promised land of her fathers, land of bankers and lynch mobs
In her girlhood, land of brokers and bombs at her death,

Hammer to which everything is a nail?
Or was it her pretty mother with the golden voice
Not loving her enough, the way she claimed?

Or was it a tricky couple of cells?
Little magicians sawing the woman in half?
My mother’s secrets die with her,

The obsession with germs,
The obsession with money,

The anger at the world for cheating her,

Like stains that fade in the laundry. Where did she go,
My mother who promised we would overcome
The bosses and bigots? I want her, I want her

To come back and try again.

April 2002-February 2003

Alicia Ostriker's *"Elegy Before the War" originally appeared in Long Shot literary journal's recently released "Beat Bush Issue" (www.longshot.org).*

The White House’s Burden: Benjamin R. Barber, Fear’s Empire

By | 2004: Vol. 3, No. 2

Fear’s Empire is one of several scholarly responses to the portentous historical moment of 9/11 and its political aftermath. In this insightful book the distinguished academic and political commentator Benjamin Barber presents an impassive analysis of the unapologetically truculent turn in American national security policy. Besides seeking to show why the current objectives of the current White House administration are ultimately unsustainable, Barber also outlines a long term strategy for the maintenance of global security and, by extension, American power and influence: In place of the current policy of “preventive war” (the prerogative of *Pax Americana*), Barber proffers “preventive democracy” (the imperative of *Lex Humana*).

Tariq Ali in his *Clash of Fundamentalisms* has recently observed the way that many liberal American commentators, caught up in the current maelstrom of superpatriotism, are anxious not to appear out of step with the prevailing mood for fear of not being heard. In these doleful days, the Chomskys, Sontags and Vidals are sadly few and far between. Benjamin Barber’s *Fear’s Empire* also bears the marks of having negotiated this self-imposed censorship. By stating that his express purpose is to show how America’s national interest may be best served, and by not ruling out the use of pre-emptive strikes in the war against terrorism (but always as a last resort, and not against a sovereign state), Barber earns enough points to allow him to deliver a crushing ideological critique of the contemporary American right in what amounts to a defense of Enlightenment values against neoconservative romantic idealism.

Although his eye is firmly fixed on the lessons of recent international history, Barber’s warning is distinctly Ciceronian. When the *Pax Romana* was established, political intrigue and sectional commercial interests displaced the political virtues that had sustained the Roman Republic. The political corruption brought on by the Roman Empire is clearly a parallel for Barber’s depiction of *Pax Americana*. The American Empire attempts to assert the sovereignty of the center by pursuing a policy of unilateral military action. The justification for this policy is not humanitarian, or defensive, but *preventive*. Preventive war is the essence of *Pax Americana*, an instinctive conservative response to the sense of vulnerability and debilitation in the face of stateless, non-governmental predators like Al Qaeda. Of course, Barber reminds us that the war in Iraq was not solely a reaction to the rapaciousness of the terrorist Other and his presumed state sponsors. The Iraq war has as much to do with long-term geopolitical strategies in the Middle East as well as with George W. Bush avenging his father. But it is noticeable that Barber does not use the argument that says the purpose of the war is to manage the international oil supply. Perhaps this is because economic arguments for war actually make sense in a nation fearful for the future of its material security. By focusing on the rhetorical and ideological arguments surrounding current foreign policy, Barber wants to

argue his case on the ethico-political front.

Eagles and Owls

Barber's attack on the right is visible in his adroit reinterpretation of the metaphorical language of contemporary politics. In distinguishing between the supporters of preventive war and those that advise caution, Barber replaces the customary terms "hawks" and "doves" with his own images-"eagles" and "owls." The symbolism is clear; the predatory nationalism of the Bush faction is contested by the watchful wisdom of, not only the political opposition, but insiders like Colin Powell and many of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who, at least before the recent wars, emphasized the maintenance of America's interests through *interdependency* with the international community. According to Barber, the owl (also a bird of prey) seeing through the darkness of fear understands the lesson that Edmund Burke drew from the French revolution that violence is not the right route to democracy. America is mistaken to unilaterally assert its sovereign *independence* through a global reign of terror.

The eagle and owl metaphor also carries the sense that the warriors in the White House, in spite of their muscular, no-nonsense rhetoric are in fact Romantic idealists, an idealism with intellectual and cultural roots in the myths surrounding American exceptionalism. The owls, in contrast, are comprised of "aging old birds, strategic toughs and wary veterans," (and quite unlike the naive doves of the peace movement). They are the pragmatic realists. Barber illustrates this point by referring to a comment made by Powell to the secretary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before the war in Afghanistan was even planned. Upon hearing that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were already campaigning for an invasion of Iraq, Powell exclaimed, "What the hell, what are these guys thinking about? Can't you get these guys back in the box?"

Throughout this book Barber's particular critique of Bush's foreign policy is delivered alongside a general argument against the very essence of the conservative *weltanschauung*: "fear." Fear as a political rhetoric, it can be said, derives from a sense of vulnerability and weakness in the face of the fecund opponents of American power. It derives from a general pessimism about humanity and its fundamentally evil urges, that says a world without power and order produces anarchy. And perhaps it derives from deep psychic rivulets of historical guilt. The messianic idealism of the current administration is a mesmerizing way to overcome this false sense of hopelessness. Barber's political message, although couched in terms of pragmatism, is no less idealistic-or to be precise, optimistic. For Barber, America is the unassailable world power and terrorist attacks are "mere bee stings to a grizzly bear," and its unquestionable strength should be directed toward a global network of *interdependence*. In other words, America will serve its interests best by creating a world order in accordance with its own liberal-democratic values, and will win the respect and admiration that it increasingly lacks in the world when it is clearly seen to uphold them.

A Nation of Virtue?

Barber traces the roots of the "legitimacy" of preventive war to a distorted version of American

origins. When he states that “A Nation creates its past no less than its future,” Barber is acutely aware of the value of history in political thought. Not history as a collection of facts and fables, but history as communal self-knowledge and self-assertion. American self-identity, like that of many nation-states, resorts to a notion of exceptionalism. Exceptionalism is a powerful emotional resource that was exploited by the Puritan settlers and the fathers Madison and Jefferson, and was applauded by de Tocqueville. Exceptionalism remains the justification for America’s freedom to strike pre-emptively at any potentially hostile state, a right denied to any other sovereign power.

According to Barber, the historical source of America as an exceptional nation, blessed with virtue, can be traced to its foundation myth. Paradisical America was seen to be “empty” and this apparent (and clearly erroneous) fact, as Tom Paine naïvely said, allowed its people to “start the world over again.” Barber describes young America’s naked candor “as if the hypothetical innocence of Rousseau’s state of nature had been written into America’s actual beginnings.” History now agrees that this was a regrettable and presumptuous conceit, however, the image of American exceptionalism continues to be projected outward to the wider world. It is a self-image of virtuous Americans, unbaggaged by the histories of the barbarian lands across the seas. Literature epitomizes this attitude with Henry James’s “innocents abroad” and in the unsophisticated sincerity of Graham Green’s *Quiet American*. It is therefore no surprise that the Monroe Doctrine of isolationism served the interests of national sovereignty in a world of fear and evil. What does sound surprising and paradoxical is Barber’s argument that out of isolationism grew domination. Isolationism was a product of a sense of national virtue, and similarly more recent American foreign policy has approached the outside world with this same sense of virtue intact: The Cold War was a battle against an “Evil Empire” just as present U.S. policy is directed against the “Axis of Evil,” and Bush reminds us that the most serious threat to the “civilized world” are the “evildoers,” those terrorist cells that lurk in the dark beyond the talons of “Fears Empire.” It is for this reason, Barber seems to suggest, that the hallowed Monroe Doctrine becomes profane Imperialism as fear drives the State Department from isolation to domination, carried by a misguided sense of virtue.

The advocates of “America the Good” are of course not so churlish to rely on its messianic sense of destiny alone. The clarion call of the *Project for a New American Century* was a “Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity.” This relates to another of Barber’s criticisms of American self-identity; the belief that its knowledge and invincible technology can protect and “cocoon” the homeland, like the laughable “Star Wars” defense system and its much mooted offspring. It will be interesting to see how much the cost to the federal budget of the “techno-blitzkrieg” in Iraq will be received by the U.S. electorate in 2004.

Barber’s case is clear. These moralizing myths may persuade a perplexed electorate to embark upon a “righteous war against evil,” but it does not sustain a serious political argument about long-term global prosperity and security. His alternative is to reject the moral fig leaf that unburdens both Isolationism and Imperialism from responsibility and also to reject the techno-military straightjacket that puts a strain on the national budget. Instead, America should forgo its futile quest for independence and institutionalize its interactions with the world community

through cooperative organizations governed by international law. This implies giving up some degree of national sovereignty and in this Barber calls for a healthy dose of pragmatism. Perhaps to make his argument more amenable to the hardliners he should have drawn more attention to his footnote quoting Lord Acton who advised that "a nation has neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies, only permanent interests."

Exceptional Circumstances and Perilous Times

Barber is adamant that exceptionalism is the source of current U.S. foreign policy, the doctrine of preventive war. This doctrine, it is routinely argued by the hawks, is more suited to these perilous times post 9/11. However, Barber asks whether the events during the Cold War were any less perilous-during the Cuban missile crisis Kennedy was forced to consider a first strike against Cuba and in doing so risk a nuclear exchange. It seems then that the idea that preventive strikes on potential aggressors is more likely in an age where potential aggressors *cannot* strike back. And it seems more likely that the North Koreas of the world would want to obtain a nuclear capability if this is the lesson to be drawn. The enemies in these "more perilous" times are not nation states but networks of committed individuals that lie beyond the rule of law. The solution for Barber is cooperation between sovereign states, which subscribe to the rule of law.

The "National Security Strategy" of September 20, 2002, when Condoleezza Rice officially sanctioned the policy of preventive war, was a tactical victory for those in the administration who, in 2001, had advocated *active counterproliferation*. This, in practice, meant pulling the funds from programs like Nunn-Lugar which tried to buy up old Soviet nuclear weapons in the newly independent states. *Active conterproliferation* also meant an end to rigorously enforcing international agreements like the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and the Antiballistic Missile Treaty. Insteadm, *active counterproliferation* insisted on pre-emptive strikes against targets likely to be developing weapons of mass destruction-much like Clinton thought he was doing when he destroyed a Sudanese pharmaceutical factory in 1998. The logic of counterproliferation, of course, formed the justification for the war in Iraq. The logic of preventive strikes also contains within it a sense of an on-going mission-as Ariel Sharon said, "Imagine a brain surgeon penetrating the skull of a patient who has two malignant tumors and extracting only one of them"; the second tumor, of course is Iran. But why stop there? Why not Syria or North Korea and so on? It is conceivable that the American public would desire revenge for 9/11 but can any administration seriously sell a policy of ongoing active counterproliferation?

The policy of preventive war also has serious consequences for the international moral order. American exceptionalism allows the United States to conduct such a first strike, however this example will easily be emulated by other "exceptional" states. According to Barber, if the logic of preventive war becomes universalized in a Kantian way we may be faced with a world where, say, Pakistan could legitimately strike at India on the grounds that India may be about to attack Kashmir, or North Korea could attack South Korea for fear of an American invasion.

Power or Law?

In Barber's view, the advocates of preventive war have made a tragic theoretical error. They have wrongly interpreted the nature and relationship between power and law. The right-wing critic Robert Kagan, for example, evokes Thomas Hobbes when he suggests that the remedy for an anxious world of anarchy and fear is *power*. The solution, according to Kagan, is for a powerful America to stamp order upon a world of chaos and conflict. In response, Barber argues that this is an incorrect reading of Hobbes's intentions. He argues that Hobbes may be correct when he says that life in a world without political order is "nasty, brutish and short," but the solution is not "power." Power is what exists in the state of nature and is responsible for violence and vulnerability. The terrorists of 9/11 had learnt their lesson from Hobbes when they proved that even the weakest could use their power to harm the strongest in a world of fear.

Barber argues that Hobbes actually intended the solution to the "war of all against all" to be "law." Hobbes' social contract is not subjection to power but a positive agreement to live under the rules of political society; although it has to be accepted that power is required to guarantee the rule of law. To reject the social contract (which for Barber is synonymous with "interdependence") and pursue a unilateralist stance is to fight fear with fear and plunge the global community further into war. This is precisely what the terrorists intended and why they are successful. They have undone the social contract by provoking the most powerful guarantor of global order into a vague policy of systematic violence. This is true because it is being conducted without the will of the international community. The lessons of the League of Nations have yet to be learned. Again this strengthens Barber's argument that America can best serve the interests of global security (and therefore its own interests) by opting into a system of international cooperation. Interdependence, with its roots in Enlightenment political ideology, is basic to Barber's alternative to the doctrine of preventive war-preventive democracy.

Lex humana: Preventive Democracy

"Preventive democracy," as a national security strategy, "must overcome terror without paying a price in fear." To achieve this it requires two components. First, sophisticated military and intelligence services that are engaged in "non-state-directed preventive war." This refers to the targeting of terrorist cells, their networks and training and armament facilities. But the sovereign state where these targets reside are not violated and all action is taken with the cooperation of the national government in whose territory the terrorist targets reside (although he admits this is not always feasible). Because the targets are universally acknowledged as threats to international security the logic of these measures is defensive rather than preventive. Secondly, global organizations for developing democratic institutions within nations should be encouraged such as Barber's own project "CivWorld."

As an example of the first component Barber recalls the case of the Israeli bombing of the state-owned Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981. The Israelis delivered a single strike to the Osirak

plant because they feared it would be used to develop nuclear weapons. Yet it is questionable whether this example fits Barber's criteria of "non-state-directed preventive war" when the sovereign territory of Iraq was clearly violated. Also the tenet that military action is a last resort was also broken in the Osirak incident as surely the UN or some other body should have first been exhausted (in actual fact the UN and the U.S. had roundly condemned the attack, and before the bombing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had conducted inspections of the reactor bringing it under international surveillance). The level of detail with which Barber presents this example is such that a reader could infer that in the Osirak incident Israel was operating under the same sense of moral "exceptionalism" with which Barber criticizes current White House policy in Iraq.

A far better example is the Marshall Plan in post-war Europe and the system of International law (the UN) which together provided the political and economic environment for the re-development of civic institutions. Of course, critics would argue that these measures served as instruments for American domination in the post-war western world. The idea that America would reap political and economic gain through a system of active interdependency seems to linger over Barber's argument, perhaps as a bid to sell his idea in a superpatriotic climate.

The first part of Barber's alternative strategy stretches the definition of a "just war" in ways that would be difficult to apply in a real life situation, unless, of course, Barber commits to the idea that any pre-emptive strike should first receive the assent of the international community, on which point he is unclear. However, it is the second part of the strategy that reveals Barber to be more critically and theoretically coherent. A long-term scheme for perpetual peace requires a critical understanding of the process of globalization as well as a set of principles that underlay the construction of a civic republic. It is here that Barber outlines the *lex humana*.

It is a feature of contemporary political thought that commentators are unable to agree upon the exact character of late modernity. Some see the world becoming more homogeneous, like Fukuyama's assurance that we have arrived at the "End of History" signaled by the ultimate domination of the capitalist mode of production and the triumph of liberal democracy. Others insist that the world is becoming more fragmented, regionalized or de-centered. Samuel Huntingdon's thesis in his *The Clash of Civilizations* provides a classic example of the latter. Barber, however, tries to reconcile these two views. In his earlier work, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Barber describes the process of late (or post) modernity in dialectic terms: as global capitalism advances, regional nationalisms and fundamentalisms arise in response. In *Fear's Empire* he develops this argument in the light of Bush's foreign adventures. Barber argues that American democracy, as a complete political package, cannot be exported and expected to flourish in a different political and cultural context. Moreover, he maintains, that merely exporting capitalism and generating global markets will not create democracy. His central point is that the social identities "Consumers" and "Citizens" are theoretically distinct categories.

This brings us to the philosophical heart of Barber's politics of "Preventive Democracy"-the concept of *Citizenship* and the belief that the inhabitants of the world can be transformed into

Citizens through a process of education. (Barber's political principles are basically Rousseauian. This is made clear when he describes Rousseau as "Democracy's greatest historical prophet.") The creation of the *Citizen* as a particular kind of social personality within a strong civic society is the only long-term safe guard for global security. The modern individual is a "schizophrenic" creature possessing both private consumer logic and a public civic logic. This is illustrated by Barber in the way we distinguish between our personal desires and the requirements of the "common good," or as Barber neatly describes it, the difference between " me' thinking and we' thinking." Education is required to develop the sense of public spirit to combat the power of corporate culture. The role of civic institutions is essential in Barber's political theory because the public good is not, *pace* Adam Smith, the sum total of private desires. Strong public institutions are needed where citizens can actively assert their rights to govern themselves and resolve their differences. For this reason Barber insists that "Democracy is the mechanism by which private power and personal desires are accommodated to public goods and the common weal."

For this kind of civil society-democracy-to flourish Barber argues that we have to accept strong *public* institutions (which implies rational state bureaucracies) which may pose obstacles for corporate investors. Barber acknowledges that this may sound unpopular because the idea of the "public" has been out of fashion for many years now. This, he says, is because totalitarian Communism had grossly perverted the notion of public goods and public institutions (hence the relative ease with which the ex-Soviet states descended into gangster capitalism in the post-Gorbechev era). Similarly, confidence in the public sector has waned because of the relative dominance of privatization ideology since the end of the Cold War. Privatization ideology taught people ways to view the interests of corporations, particularly the free flow of capital, as bound up with their own.

The success of privatization ideology has not only put the public sector ethos on the defensive, but has legitimized the removal of power from public institutions which are transparent and accountable and transferred it to private corporations where it becomes the invisible and unchallenged possession of Enron-like bureaucracies. The impact of economic privatization on politics is to degrade the public spiritedness (civic virtues) of government. Barber seems to echo Marx when he describes how "National government now becomes an instructed instrument of the private sector rather than the participatory assembly of the public sector"- seemingly a modern day committee of the bourgeoisie. Thus it is part of Barber's strategy to radically unpick the concept of "market democracy" and to show that privatization and inward investment into states like Iraq do not amount to democratization. The neoliberal belief that consumption is the essence of social self-expression prompts Barber to warn, that "when the ethos of Disney becomes synonymous with the ethics of liberty and when consumers come to be seen as identical with citizens, genuine democratization is derailed."

Cultures of Democracy

Barber is also quick to warn the would-be state makers that "democracy" has a protean quality and can take on different forms in different places. Western democracy is the product of a long

history and contingent factors make for variations within the European and American traditions-English, French and Swiss “democracies” each display local distinctions. Indeed Barber’s view is distinctly Tocquevillian in that he agrees that the slow processes of “rational bureaucratization” were “prequels to real democratization.” With reference to plans for Iraq, it is plainly clear that democracy cannot be “imposed on a country at the point of a gun.” Rational public institutions need to be fully functioning before multi-party, and participatory or representational government can function securely.

On the specific subject of democratization in the Middle East, Barber takes exception to certain commentators like Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntingdon who see Islam as culturally adverse to democracy. Barber not only cites Amartya Sen who argues that Buddhist and Confucian traditions incorporate practices that would equate to western notions of freedom and toleration, but he reminds us that, historically speaking, the west only achieved “civil society” after overthrowing the domination of an authoritarian religious civilization. His argument is that the kind of polity which could emerge in Iraq and elsewhere should befit its local traditions and historical peculiarities, this means acknowledging the Islamic factor. For this reason there is no real reason why Frank Graham’s Christian charity, with its express ideological program, should be given encouragement in post-war Iraq. However, Barber acknowledges that religious values can and do clash with secular democracy-as he reminds us “Protestant fundamentalists inside the United States are as anxiety ridden by the secular culture of consumption as some of their Muslim brothers in Tehran or Cairo.” Yet Barber probably shares the same sentiments with critics like Huntingdon that *American* democracy cannot exist in Islamic nations. The cultural question, as Barber sees it, is that “fundamentalism” is primarily a reaction within communities that equate Americanization with secularization (despite the fact that Bush’s Manichean language of the “evil-doers” is no different in quality to the fundamentalists view of westerners as “infidels”). This view of American culture should come as no surprise when so much emphasis is placed on the promotion of American corporations and brands.

A serious attempt at democratization in Iraq would “factor in” the local cultural and religious dimensions. Of course, Barber concedes that the relationship between the sacred and the secular in civil societies is a complex negotiation (Latin America provides a contemporary example), but he believes that de-politicized religion can act as a social adhesive in a society undergoing transition. For this reason one cannot issue a “one size fits all” decree. Moreover, if western ideologues sincerely believe that diversity can exist *within* individual cultures then surely diversity can exist *among* different cultures. Here again, we see how Barbers model for civil society in the nation state can be applied at the international level.

Pragmatic Idealism

By deriving the actions of the Bush administration from the conservatives’ sense of fear Barber is concurring with other popular critics of the right. Michael Moore’s hugely popular (and therefore mainstream) *Bowling for Columbine* illustrates the vast gulf between the notion of liberty held by the “frontiersmen,” those militiamen of the mid-west, and that of the “civic republicans,” who are more at home in Manhattan. Each derives authority for their opinions

from the sacred texts of American history-the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Federalist Papers (although the latter may be perhaps regarded by some as apocryphal). The problem for people like Moore and Barber, who in very different ways court and command popular appeal, is to convince ordinary Americans that to trust in public institutions and embrace the civic ethos will provide advantage to all citizens, not just those whose personal power and prestige are directly connected to these organizations (namely academics and journalists). Opponents of the right are correct to want to present their arguments in plain, pragmatic language. (It seems that many on the American left now believe it will take a veteran general to do this.)

As Tocqueville observed, "Americaness" reveals a strong distaste for abstract theorizing and philosophical principles while displaying an instinctively practical attitude toward individual participation in the municipal spirit. This spirit of pragmatism is what Barber is hoping to utilize in the face of conservative romantic idealism. Barber agrees with Krugman's contrast between America and Europe as not being a comparison between the political economies of Adam Smith and Karl Marx, but rather a choice between Immanuel Kant and William James. For Krugman, the Europeans categorically demand "a clear set of principles: rules that specify the nature of truth, the basis of morality, when shops will be open, and what a Deutsche mark is worth." Americans, by contrast, are "philosophically and personally sloppy." For "sloppy" read "pragmatic." Conservatism has traditionally made sense to ordinary Americans because of its pragmatic, anti-ideology ideology. It is this pragmatic instinct that Barber seeks to exploit, but whether noble and worthy concepts like *interdependence*, "preventive democracy" and "CivWorld" can make any headway among voters remains to be seen.

Responsibility or Burden?

It is all too easy to criticize American foreign policy and its international political role. The sense of inequity and powerlessness around the developing world is clearly the source of this critique. Even in Britain where, despite a strong pro-American stance in national government, opposition to current American foreign policy is fairly prevalent. However, it is more difficult is to present a serious and constructive critique of America's unique international function. Benjamin Barber's *Fear's Empire* provides a useful starting point for this discussion. If Barber is saying that America must be *in* the world but America cannot *be* the world, he perhaps presents a practical long-term policy for strengthening global security. Stauncher critics of a greater America will say that Barber has produced what the historian J. G. A. Pocock would call the ideology of "liberal empire"-the grafting of the values of civic republicanism on to a fundamentally imperialist order.

However, Barber's mixture of pragmatism and optimism deserves to have a fair reading and his ideas should perhaps point the way for future national security policy once the "eagles" have flown. The owls, he says, understand that the rule of law frequently requires power to enforce it, but power as domination simply cannot work. Neither can isolationism. The vulnerabilities of the nation state in the open, globalized economy show that American foreign policy would reap better rewards for its citizens, their culture and their investments, if it saw its own interests as synonymous with the security and prosperity of the entire world's citizens. For the realist and

pragmatic owls, Barber maintains, “Interdependency” is not a coveted ideal but a practical means to maintain global order and stability. History has made America the hegemonic hyperpower and, as Barber says, has given it a “special responsibility.” And this brings us back to the question of the *Pax Americana.* Benjamin Barber’s *Fears Empire* asks the important question about how America should exercise its “responsibility.” When America was busy building its empire in the 1890s by assuming control of the Philippines in the American-Spanish War, the British imperialist poet Rudyard Kipling was inspired to write his famous *White Man’s Burden*. How far the language of “responsibility” is from Kipling’s idea of an imperial “burden” is for the reader to decide.

Daniel Dennett’s Choice

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For thirty years Daniel C. Dennett has been creating a body of work that explores the relation of mind and brain. Each part of his theory has provoked conversation and controversy along the way. His general method of inquiry requires adopting “the intentional stance”; this orientation is one of those debatable objects in his tool kit. Traces of all the components of his model are visible in his most recent work. With his new book, *Freedom Evolves*, Daniel Dennett has written yet another surprising and controversial work. His previous books have drawn a mixed audience of professionals and lay readers, and this new work is meant to do the same. Dennett’s earlier notorious books include *Brainstorms* (1978), *Elbow Room*; *The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting* (1984), *The Intentional Stance* (1987), *Consciousness Explained* (1991), and *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea* (1995).

Dennett’s general approach is to apply the empirical findings of neuroscience and the methods of evolutionary game theory to the explanation of human consciousness and cooperative social behavior. The reception of Dennett’s work is consistently not what he would prefer. Professional scientists and philosophers regard his summaries and juxtapositions of their work accurate enough but usually irrelevant in a deep sense to the issue at hand. They are slightly annoyed. The lay audience, on the other hand, is swept away by his breathless reporting of new scientific findings, his clever use of metaphor and thought-experiment, and with his mischievous irreverence. They are non-critical; they have no basis for evaluating his claims.

Neither response is satisfying. As any writer knows, it’s difficult to serve two masters. I fear Dennett’s latest book will fare the same with his readers. But readers there will be. He’s got a reputation.

Let’s begin with a note concerning the subject matter of Dennett’s books as indicated by its title, *Freedom Evolves*. On the evolutionary side of the equation, Dennett aims to show how evolutionary thinking can account for everything “from senseless atoms to freely chosen actions.” He doesn’t. To do so may be in principle a doable project, but it isn’t accomplished here. It is a sketchy sketch, at best.

On the freedom side of the ledger the reader must quickly realize that Dennett’s topic is free will, not political freedom or psychological freedom from one’s worries, or any of the other kinds of freedom that might legitimately be of concern. But free will is no little thing. On it hangs our humanity. If persons are not free in their choosing then they are not moral agents responsible for the intentions and consequences of “their” actions. In fact, without freedom of choice homo sapiens only behave; they do not act. And so they are not persons at all.

But here’s the rub: if evolutionary theory bases the life sciences on the non-life sciences such that human life is at bottom causally determined, how can there exist creatures with wills free

of those causal chains involving the familiar furniture of the world? How can a micro and macro deterministic world give birth to freedom?

This puzzle is an artifact of exaggerated notions of both free will and determinism, according to Dennett. And so he embarks on a mission of revision: we must deflate "hard determinism" and "radical libertarianism." (pp. 97-98) Dennett means to put us on a diet, get us to substitute new low-cal versions of these ideas for the overly rich ones we've been used to eating. But as anyone who has seriously attempted a diet knows, it's torture. And it usually doesn't work.

Dennett's prescription for intellectual health requires us to accept diminished definitions of determinism and free will-soft bagels and "lite" cream cheese. The revisionist versions of freedom and determinism are not what we want or need. We've been baited and switched. We feel cheated. We are already hungry again. And we are not amused. Dennett tries to reassure us; you've got free will (don't worry), but it's not the kind you thought you had. The modest kind you actually have "is all the freedom worth wanting." Get used to it. The freedom you are addicted to is not good for you. Learn to live with less. Less is more.

So now we know. We know what we are getting into when we let him get his foot in our door. Dennett's strategy is to substitute a "hermeneutical switch of perspectives" (heuristically adopting an intentional interpretation of "avoidance behavior" for the metaphysically and morally hearty choosers we think we are; and then he substitutes "caused as inevitable effects" as a definition of determinism. The second substitution may be more acceptable than the first.

Dennett is motivated to explain how free will could naturally evolve because he believes that the "false belief" that free will is impossible in a causally determined world is the driving force behind most resistance to materialism generally and to neo-Darwinism in particular. (p.15) On the contrary, Dennett insists: "Naturalism is no enemy of free will; it provides a positive account of free will," one free of superstition and panicky metaphysics. (p.16) And then comes the confession in small print, overlooked by some: "I can't deny that tradition assigns properties to free will that my variety lacks. So much the worse for tradition, I say." (p. 225)

When Dennett complains that our use of exaggerated definitions of free will and determination causes problems for empirical theorizing, we wonder this: does he have a genuine concern for morality, or is it science he really cares about? His answer, that "we are evolved animals without souls but with free will" is ambiguous in this regard.

Dennett thinks of himself as updating David Hume's laudatory attempts to make philosophy pay attention to science. Specifically, Dennett adds into the philosophical conversation facts of brain science and models of evolution. By doing so he causes us to rethink the meaning of choice, the value of morality, and how brains can sponsor minds how "nature has evolved choice machines."

The tenor of Dennett's writing can be traced to the influence of his Oxford teacher, Gilbert Ryle, who famously attacked Cartesian mind-body dualism in *The Concept of Mind*, dismissing its view of the self as "a ghost in the machine." Dennett is concerned with debunking the

ancient Greek belief in an immortal Soul without getting rid of the Self which possesses agency sufficient to create a personal "choice machine" capable of freely adopting identities and ideologies, not only able to invent action by intention. Most of Dennett's books viciously bash the Cartesian inheritors of antiscientific beliefs.

In his earlier books Dennett has come off as an evangelical scientist who is out to slay superstitious fools by "spreading the acid of Darwinian thought" everywhere. His presumption that his readers are ignorant and superstitious colors his rhetoric. He has, to be sure, softened his attack here a bit; no longer does he ridicule Cartesians for the "skyhooks" on which their ideas hang. (But see pages183-184 for new name-calling; he couldn't completely resist.)

Dennett's claims about the phenomenological contents of consciousness are less controversial than his claims about their roles in constructing consciousness in how this content constructs its own context. His desire to see evolutionary frameworks and methods applied to every issue is not so controversial. His strategy makes systematic use of Brian Skyrm's work in *The Evolution of the Social Contract* (1996). But his extension of evolutionary techniques to include multi-level selection theory, the "intentional stance" and memes, are highly debated methods on which to rely for an account not only of biology but, as he needs, of culture too. Here is where danger lurks, according to his cultural critics.

In *Brain Storm* (1998), a novel by Richard Dooling, which alludes to Dennett's *Brainstorms*, the author has Rachel Palmquist, an amoral, adulterous neuroscientist console her partner in sin (or maybe herself) by saying that humans do not have free will. (p. 228) She reports that in *Consciousness Explained*, Dan Dennett uses the cartoon analogy of Casper the Friendly Ghost to disparage belief in the soul and in the free power of will that is supposed by some to reside therein. This has peeved Dan. He intends to set the record straight in *Freedom Evolves*. A soul, no; free will, yes.

Dennett points out that Dooling gets his point dead wrong. In this work Dennett reiterates that free will is not a fiction (that's on page 222; but see elsewhere). Dennett says that he has "finally come to realize that many people like their confusion" about his issue. It's their cop-out. But two pages later (p. 224) he endorses Daniel Wegner's comment in *The Illusion of Consciousness* (2002) that "conscious will may be an illusion, but responsible moral action is quite real." Notice the creep between Dennett's two pronouncements. This sounds like a shell game to some-a bait and switch. Who likes confusion now?

And then Tom Wolf piles on. In *Hooking Up* (2000) Wolf lumps Dennett together with E. O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, Steven Pinker, and John Maynard Smith as wild-eyed "Darwinian fundamentalist" who have walked over the edge. They have wandered beyond the pale. (Stephen J. Gould and Leon Kass throw the same stones in *The New York Review of Books*, (December 6,1997, and August 23, 1998, respectively). The critics claim that in their earnest attempts to lead us away from one superstition, these bad boys lead us right into another-the belief that we have no free will, thus no morality and no humanity.

Of course our lovable mavericks deny the charge. Dennett does so explicitly in *Freedom Evolves*. (p. 97) But they waffle. They will not unambiguously state whether free will exists only as an illusion (even illusions are real, they say, in one sense of the word; and useful fictions can be well, useful). They point to concepts like those of "noble gas" or an absolutely straight line as examples. In *Freedom Evolves*, Dennett makes much use of ideas spread throughout David Wegner's *The Illusion of Consciousness*; and this makes people suspicious. But here we will not stoop to convict on the basis of guilt by association

Dennett, in his defense, says that whether free will is real or illusory depends on what you mean by "free will." As an aside he points out that, in either case, free will (when regarded as harm-avoiding behavior) could have survival value-reproductive consequences. But what we want to know is: can harm-avoiding capacity be free enough to make us responsible for what we do, responsible enough that we might come to feel bad about ourselves as the price of, hopefully more often, feeling good about ourselves? We want buck-stopping responsibility. And that requires "ownership" of our actions and attitudes. The measure of our bad-avoiding success is whether we freely chose the good. Freedom is not, as Dennett claims, merely "the capacity to achieve what is of value in a range of circumstances." Thermostats do that. What thermostats don't do is "own" the values they seek.

As one critic put it; to capture our humanity Dennett must account for more freedom than that of a chemically switched cell, a photographically responsive flower, or a clever rat. Even more freedom than possessed by smart dogs or chimps is involved in moral freedom-in ethical praising and blaming. Dennett's evolutionary psychology is not enough to account for moral freedom.

Behaviorism and neuroscience do not really eat away at the philosophical estate, as Dennett claims, because they do not take seriously Kant's arguments that to treat oneself as a rational agent (not just as a cognitive creature) one must assume that one's reason has a practical application or, equivalently, that one has a will. But one cannot assume a rational will in oneself without already presupposing "the idea of freedom," the free endorsement of warranted beliefs, including beliefs about one's own nature. So, to regard oneself as acting (not merely behaving) requires the actor to presume his or her freely chosen rational endorsement of beliefs, values, and actions. Morally accountable freedom is the form of the thought of oneself as a practically rational agent. If one were not practically rational, what would be the point of Dennett's worry-his book?

Although some reviewers of Dennett's past books regard him as a good writer, I find his writing problematic. First of all, his writing streams nicely, only to suddenly clot. He moves from small sections of breezy explanations full of homely metaphors and bizarre case studies-all designed to boost the intuitions of lay people-into close cut and trust with critics or into dense technical argumentation for readers of philosophical journals. Dennett himself points to an architectural structure in *Freedom Evolves* whereby the first chapters are meant for the preparation of amateurs and the second five chapters are offered up for the edification of professionals. For more than one reason I found the experience of the text jerky.

Dennett clutters his lecture in *Freedom Evolves* with long asides, explaining how altruistic behavior can become an evolutionary stable strategy for some organisms, or with compact recaps of what he argued in other of his books and fighting with their critics, or with a gushing over some new scientific report he's sure you haven't heard of yet. He fights flab whenever he finds it, even if it is beside the point. Absorbing his scatter-shot content, dealing with his in-your-face rhetoric, and following his bait and switch tactics presents a challenge for Dennett's readers. The confusion, the attitude, the tricks-all these will keep readers on their toes. Whether they are persuaded is another matter.

Dennett gets his idea to reduce "free choice" to "fate-avoiding behavior" from John Conway's computer simulated "Games of Life" developed in the 1960s (see W. Poundstone, *The Recursive Universe*, 1985). The capacity to avoid fate has been evolving for billions of years, Dennett reminds us. Through the operation of natural selection organisms evolve greater degrees of fate-avoiding freedom. A crude kind of fate-avoiding is already programmed into primitive organisms as a chemical switch that responds to danger. Sophisticated fate-avoiders operate with internal "hypothesis-considering" strategies; they take up an "intentional stance" toward themselves and others.

Primitive fate-avoiders are programmed with a single, direct way to avoid harmful effects of causes. Sophisticated choosers, on the other hand, can invent novel ways to avoid the usual effects of causes. There is no conflict, Dennett points out, between being an inventor of fate-avoiding strategies and the existence of determined causes of effects (which may or may not be avoided). Primitive "situation-action machines" have genetically programmed simple rules: "When P happens, do Y in order to avoid its usual consequences." Sophisticated "choice-machines," however have memetically learned hypothetical design strategies: "Would X, Y or Z best avoid an otherwise bad fate in this situation?" Such a reflective selection of a response to determined causes assumes a value posited for "best" and a prediction of the consequences of X, Y, and Z, among other things.

Determinism is usually defined as the thesis that "there is at any time exactly one physically possible future." (Peter van Inwagen, "An Essay on Free Will," 1983) This follows tradition. In 1814, the French physicist Pierre-Simon Laplace gave us our common image of determinism in what we now call "Laplace's Demon" an all-knowing mind who when given a complete physical snapshot of the state of the universe (showing the exact location, velocity, and direction of every particle) could by use of the laws of science, plot everything that happens in the future, for eternity. "Nothing would be uncertain for this Intelligence: the past and the future would be present to its eyes" (Laplace, "A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities." Note well, however, that this vision did not incorporate effect-avoiders.

The traditional, misleading notion of determinism is all over the place, even in the mouths of characters in contemporary novels like Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973): "You had taken on a greater and more harmful illusion. The illusion of control. That A could do B. But that was false. Completely. No one can do anything. Things only happen." (p. 34)

On the contrary, says Dennett. An effect can have several causes, and often it is the case that typical effects can be avoided. It depends on the nature of that which would suffer or enjoy the effects. Determinism is about sufficient causation, not about necessary effects. (p. 83) When fate-avoiding behaviors are over-determined (i.e., have a variety of causes) and sufficient causation does not lead to its typical effects because they were avoided, freedom has been exercised.

One well-done argument in *Freedom Evolves* is Dennett's explanation (pp. 108-122) of why the attempt to account for free will in the mind by attributing it to quantum uncertainties (of events in the brain's electrical and hydraulic systems) will not work. Here he bashes Robert Kane in the head (*The Significance of Free Will*, 1996; who follows Roger Penrose in *Shadows of the Mind*, 1994).

Freedom requires intervention (fate-avoiding). One cannot intervene what cannot be predicted. We cannot avoid what we cannot predict. That which is predictable is a product of statistically uniform causes. Therefore, consciously-chosen avoidance strategies depend on determinism, not on randomness. Luck, perhaps. But not randomness. A roulette wheel in our heads does not make us rational or free; it does not make us subject to being held morality accountable for our choices.

At the micro-level, quantum effects usually cancel each other out. And even when quantum uncertainties do lead to random neurophysiological events, they do not spawn free will. This only adds another causal factor-one that is random rather than nonrandom. A cause is still a cause even when unpredictable. The nature of the cause and its usual effect depends on whether the object which is subject to the effect can avoid it. This fact is independent of scientists. Not all things in the universe are fate-avoiders. Among those that are, there exist radical differences in degrees of freedom.

If our behaviors are completely unavoidable effects of other causes or they are completely random (i.e., not a response to anything), then we are not responsible for them-for their motives or consequences. Bottom line? Free will does not emerge from some "crack in the deterministic armor." To make such a claim is to misuse Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Dennett suggests that those who are thoroughly grounded in using evolutionary reasoning will avoid these extreme definitions and will discover middle-ground, realistic definitions that naturalize both freedom and determinism. Free will must co-exist with (1) external determinism; (2) internal determinism; and (3) luck. (p. 158) But in this case, free will is incompatible with "hard determinism" (p. 97) and "radical libertarianism." (p. 98)

According to Dennett, evolutionary neuroscience has not shown that there is no self, only that it is distributed (i.e., its pinpoint feel from a first-person point of view is an illusory result of neuro events). The self is spacious. (p.123) And (in a section called "A Self of One's Own," pp. 245-255) Dennett says that evolutionary neuroscience has not shown that there is no free will, only that its feeling of being a prime-mover is an illusory effect of a lag-time between brain activity and its registration in mental consciousness. (Dennett gets his "gap-theory" of will from

Benjamin Libet's *The Volitional Brain: Toward a Neuroscience of Free Will*, 1999).

The illusion of free will is compatible with real fate-avoiding behaviors, even "chosen" ones. The take-home message here? The facts that science describes and explains, the facts that technology implements, expand rather than shrink our freedom.

But both of these "facts"-the distributed but apparently pin-point self, and the lagging but apparently prime-mover will-are problematic for a regress-stopping account of self-forming actions, according to the "agent-causation" theory of selves. (See "Human Freedom and the Self," Roderick Chisholm, p. 32, in *Free Will*, ed. by Gary Watson, for such an account.)

For Dennett, "the self" is merely a metaphor for the unity of distributed neural events, which create the illusion of a punctuated consciousness with powers of invention. We have real illusions of being agents. But we're not agents. These illusions come from our genetically based and memetically nuanced ability to "take-up the intentional stance." The pathology of autism seems to result from a systematic failure to take-up the intentional stance toward oneself as well as others. (More on the "intentional stance" in a moment.)

Dennett claims that both neurophysiology and behaviorist psychology reveal the Self and its Will to be illusory by-products of other activities. Daniel Wegner's research disposes the self-as-object tradition; and Benjamin Libet's research destroys the self-as-agent myth, according to Dennett. Real brains; fake selves and wills.

Earlier, in *The Content of Consciousness*, Dennett had characterized selves and their will power as "heads of minds" and "virtual captains" of their fate. In *Freedom Evolves*, although not eliminated, our concepts of these phenomena are further "deflated"; now humans are "choices-machines" composed of "robotic parts." (see Dennett's Philosophy, ed. by D. Ross, A. Brook, and D. Thompson, 2000, pp. 369-370). Evolution has made it impossible for humans not to think of themselves as free agents, even though they're not. We should adjust ourselves to both facts, says Dennett. Acknowledging all this will lead as to "a stronger, wiser doctrine of freedom."

Dennett does not squarely address the issue of whether the twin illusions of the "object-self" and its "prime-mover" powers are results of direct or indirect trajectories through evolutionary design-space. In the past Dennett has joined the "Darwinian fundamentalists" in saying that the contents of consciousness are not mere by-products of Mother Nature seeking a solution to some other design problem. The impression left by *Freedom Evolves* is that evolving nature has directly "sought" free will as a sophisticated solution for avoiding fate. (For the opposition the "coincidentalist" see the famous paper by Steven J. Gould and Richard Lewontin for their critique of the "adaptationist program," in "The Spandrels of San Marcos," 1999.)

According to Dennett, there are three explanatory stances one can take toward phenomena: the physical stance, the design stance, or the intentional stance. (He ignores the moral stance.) From a view already oriented toward physical problems we can explain the structure and behavior of something in material and (statistically) mechanical terms. From an orientation

toward design problems we can explain a subset of physical phenomena as genetically heritable, metabolic and sentient activity that solves functional problems of reproduction within trophic opportunities and constraints.

From the intentional stance we can explain a subset of living phenomena as engaging in intentional activities memetically heritable practices, reflectively, and freely endorsed-as if in conscious pursuit of its "own" goals.

Just how the fate-avoidance behaviors of squirrels historically emerged naturally out of the earlier absence of such avoidance behavior in rocks is not explained. Also not explained is the transition to the fate-avoiding behavior of humans from the earlier absence of agency in chickens. (For an attempt to answer these questions see John Maynard Smith and Eors Szathmary, *The Major Transitions in Evolution*, 1995.) The intentional stance reveals illusory experience in humans, Dennett claims, but the illusions themselves are real. Our sense of an object-self with inventive power (even though there is no such self or power) is a real feeling.

The three nested kinds of explanation, ordered by emergently different kinds of object, lead to an ordered set of tasks. First, describe behavior as conscious goal seeking. Second, eliminate the intentional reference and explain the same behavior as naturally selected design solutions given internal and external ecological constraints and opportunities. Third, eliminate those teleological references and explain the same behavior as materially and mechanically possible in the brain and its environments.

The intentional stance has the great advantage of simplicity. Instead of worrying about thousands of casual relations (the concern of the physical stance) or hundreds of functional rules and their qualifiers (the concern of the design stance), all we have to notice is a single goal, desire, or belief that motivates a behavior.

But this simplicity comes at a cost. The assumptions are costly: we must assume minds, not merely brains. We have to assume mental goals (beliefs that X is valuable and worth pursuing). We have to assume mental means (motivations and calculations for getting X). Mental values, desires, and strategies must be assumed or else the intentional stance does not get off the ground; we cannot turn around and use the intentional stance (goals) to test its own presuppositions (goals). The simplicity of the intentional stance is purchased at the cost of substantial assumptions that can only be posited. The intentional stance itself must be freely adopted as rational if it is to be a legitimate filter for our observation and explanation.

Just what is the epistemological status of a metaphysical claim that free will is a felt illusion? If the epistemological claim is warranted only if freely endorsed upon reflection, can that freedom be rational if the freedom exercised while endorsing the illusory status of free will is itself illusory? What is the ontological status of an illusory source of fate-avoiding behavior? Bewildered? Now I understand Dennett's recent admission to critics that his ontological intuitions about intentional capacities are "in happy disarray." (*Dennett's Philosophy*, 2002) Dennett's "deflation" of the "folk psychology" of the cheaper classes is a bust. His illusions

bear little metaphysical or moral weight.

The eagerness with which some scientists and philosophers go after the soul, freedom of will, and God in order to show their nonexistence, betrays their deep misunderstanding of symbolic phenomena-of positing ideal measures of value. All three concepts, Soul, Will, and God, circle around value, not being. They are not purported to be things to be discovered as existing or not existing (as real or illusory); but rather they are values (goals) to be created or killed.

This is the same point that shallow readers of Nietzsche miss. His madman does not discover the nonexistence of God, but rather he declares that a "murder" has taken place that value, not being, has been destroyed. Dennett might understand neuro-physiology without correctly understanding its implications for being human. This would be so if our humanity, though evolved, is invented by certain kind of regard-a "moral stance" rather than by chemicals. If so, what we have here with Dennett's new book may be a murder, not a scientific discovery. Dennett claims to have discovered that morally free will-as necessary to secular ethics as it is to religious ethics is missing. But in fact, he killed it.

Philosophy In A Time Of Terror: Dialogues With Jürgen Habermas And Jacques Derrida By Giovanna Borradori

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Emerging from the shock waves of 9/11, this book itself is something of an event. For the first time, philosophers Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida appear side by side answering the same questions about the same topic: the philosophical and political consequences of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Habermas is known not only as the founder of a theory of communicative action, but also as one of the most outspoken defenders of the-admittedly unfinished-"project of modernity." Derrida, on the other hand, invented and enthusiastically practices the "deconstruction" of philosophical, scientific and any other presumably coherent theory and discourse, unraveling their implicit meanings. For Derrida, there cannot be a discourse or rhetoric that is not guilty of unreasonable simplification, of more or less violently reducing the complexities and ambivalences of reality. No wonder then that Derrida is classified as the supreme advocate of postmodernity, attacking the dark side of Western history and domination as the outcome of its inherent hegemonic, monolithic and exclusionary style of thought and, at the same time, singing the siren song of cultural relativism.

Habermas and Derrida usually are perceived as theoretical and-inasmuch as they themselves do not distinguish the two realms- political enemies: the former as an enthusiastic representative of late Enlightenment thought, the latter (depending on one's perspective) either as an infinitely open-minded or irresponsible exponent of anything-goes analysis. For many readers of the book-maybe even for Habermas and Derrida-it will come as quite a surprise that, beyond ostensible differences in style, their respective interpretations of 9/11 and views are very close.

Apart from a short introduction on the Enlightenment tradition and the inherently political character of modern philosophy, the book consists of separate lengthy interviews with Derrida and Habermas, plus two essays by Giovanna Borradori (a philosophy professor at Vassar College who also has published a collection of interviews with American philosophers) in which she recapitulates the main arguments and relates them to the writings and the philosophy of the interviewees. Borradori's essays are balanced, understandable and well written introductions to the oeuvres of Habermas and Derrida. However, skipping them, especially for those who are barely familiar with Habermas's and/or Derrida's books, is no crime since the theoretical context of the philosophers' views on the "reasons" for and consequences of 9/11-at least as far as such a context is necessary-is clear enough in the interviews themselves. Moreover, Borradori's repetition of the arguments makes reading the essays a bit redundant. Nevertheless, the parallel interviews, conducted only a few weeks after 9/11 in New York, are

appealing and intriguing documents.

What Derrida and Habermas say is not always original, but their deeply engaged and, at the same time, cool critical styles distinguishes these interviews from the bulk of the often hastily sketched commentaries pouring out after 9/11. First, the volume shows not necessarily that philosophy alone is the only light to orient oneself in the dark but that philosophical reasoning-the attempt to mold one's times in concepts-still contributes to recognizing the traps of false and counterproductive reactions like declaring a "war on terror," and to finding politically responsible answers. Second, it demonstrates that characterizing Derrida as a shady anti-modern thinker is substantially wrong; that, on the contrary, the philosophies of Habermas and Derrida are inspired by and dedicated to enlightenment, i.e., liberation from any form of dogmatism, the ideals of individual and collective self-determination, and the aim of social justice.

What, then, is the meaning of 9/11? What can be done? What shall "the West" do to react? What do the terrorist attacks mean for sovereignty and the international law? What exactly is terrorism, and has it a political content? What has 9/11 to do with globalization? Are we facing a clash of civilizations? Are there chances of stimulating or even institutionalizing intercultural communication? These are the guiding questions Borradori poses, and, astonishingly, Habermas and Derrida come to very similar conclusions.

Although both rightly decline to give 9/11 a definitive meaning-not only because they do not want to legitimize terror, but because a meaning always only can be assigned in retrospect-the former seems more forthright in assuming that 9/11 will demarcate the beginning of a new epoch. This is a global post-Cold War era in which the U.S.- after thwarting any political order that prevents the market's free reign- becomes the sole arbiter of power or, as Derrida phrases it, "the universal creditor of the world order." Yet, on the other hand, the stability and thus the prospects of that same order are clearly fragile and bleak. It is not the sheer number of casualties that makes 9/11 a major event-every day thousands of people die in undeclared wars which no one cares about-it is the fact that the real and symbolic power centers of the world were attacked, the media coverage of the event, the dissemination of the news that "the king is mortal" and thus the foreboding that worse is still to come. The impossibility to predict whether or when the next attack on U.S. predominance and Western culture in general will be executed, shakes and erodes confidence that our way of life will last.

Habermas and Derrida agree that the terrorists who planned the attacks of 9/11 do not have a positive political aim for which they are fighting. Obviously, there is no message in the attacks other than to spread fear, undermine trust and provoke exactly the kind of overreactions that-presumably-were undertaken to counter "terrorism." Both warn that the ubiquitous use of the word "terrorism" by governments and the media to identify an unknown danger-a threat that exists but that cannot be quelled by means of arms-all too easily serves to justify extralegal state action. In other words, what is important is that to understand and withstand the sinister process that the depoliticization of terrorism-dissolution of the link between "terra" and terror which was typical for partisans who often did turn into politicians-is followed by a further de-

legalization of politics.

The only responsible legal response to the attacks-here again Derrida and Habermas agree-is the strengthening, differentiation, institutionalization and enforcement of international law. The answer emphatically is not the fierce return to national power politics by the Bush government, which pretends to enhance respect for law; the right course is legal self-restriction of overwhelming political, economic, military and technological power, the recognition of existing and the creation of new supranational organizations, the universal acceptance of their judgments and decisions and, of course, their transformation from mere deliberative organizations into bodies capable of political and military action to help to create a new world order in which material inequalities can be offset, in part, through assuring equal national rights. Only a West, as Habermas says, that has more to offer than the ideology of consumerism, only a West that revives its universal normative ideal of self-determination and formal equality as means to allow differences in culture and personality will be able to overcome the deep-rooted resentment of (especially Arab and Muslim) non-Western peoples at having been materially expropriated and culturally corrupted.

One partly successful experiment which might serve as an example that it is possible to do without national sovereignty while gaining political influence on other states, of integrating (more or less) different cultures, is the European Union or, rather, the idea of “Europe” not as a huge free trade zone, but as a geopolitical space that institutes norms and procedures for negotiating conflict resolution, instead of “solving” conflicts through force.

Given the obstacles to achieving an “European” international order- the resistance of the great powers (including European nations), slow change of old institutions, the implementation of new ones-it is unlikely that a new international code of law can be attained without the existing situation-which already is the fertile ground for terrorism-getting worse. Therefore, Habermas and Derrida argue, globalization, which has increased the total of wealth while widening the gap between the rich and the poor, must be complemented by a new global social policy, by global welfare programs that elevate the impoverished and culturally deprived masses. As capitalism in the 19th and early 20th centuries developed, it was only on the condition that the market was politically channeled, that the proletariat-yes, there still is such a marginalized collective because of its dependence on other’s means of production-was given enough “unearned” support to participate in the political struggle instead of resisting such narrower forms of development. If the West wants huge parts of the global population, those who will never make it across its borders, not to turn a deaf ear to its normative and secular lessons, it has to stop the involuntary and far greater “terrorism of letting die.” Habermas and Derrida, believing in the universal validity of communicative action and deconstruction, acutely appreciate that neither the attempt to begin a critical cross-cultural discourse nor the humble gesture of deconstructing the implicit “x-centricity” of Western conceptual schemes will have the slimmest chance of being accepted if the exclusion of so many from leading a decent life remain a brute fact.

However unlikely it is that the course of events will lead us in the direction Derrida and

Habermas hint at, they hope that democracy, secularization and the effective rule of law will extend as far as possible. But whereas Habermas is convinced that the project of modernity can prevail, Derrida is more skeptical about the probability that his wishes will come true. Deconstruction, he says, is not only a method or discursive strategy, but the political reality we are living in. I agree. But even he seems to be too optimistic that the West-or “Europe”-somehow can cease its unreflective and self-destructive “auto-immune reaction” against the terrorism of 9/11. The stumbling block I see, to enact an answer to 9/11, is his, as well as Habermas’s, as well as our inability to understand what it means to believe

Habermas distinguishes a modern from a fundamentalist mode of belief and argues that Westerners in their complex and violent history learned to internalize or “bracket” their faith. For the sake of stable relations with “others,” religion eventually had to be separated out from formal politics. Derrida, on the other hand, deconstructs “religion,” by showing that the religious reality behind the concept is diverse and that, beyond the “Abrahamic” tradition (including Judaism, Christianity and Islam), politics and belief do not necessarily interfere with one another in malicious ways. So he advocates the creation of preconditions under which they would not have to clash at all. I wish both philosophers were right, but I do not think they are. Is enlightenment really an indispensable ingredient of any form of modernization? Are there really any “primitive” or polytheistic lessons a fundamentalist is willing to learn? (Ask a born again Christian.) I neither see that history tends to repeat itself, i.e., that secularization is an inevitable trend nor can I imagine that deconstructing religion anyhow prevents us from religious destruction.

Hellfire Nation: The Politics Of Sin In American History By James A. Morone

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It takes little more than a cursory glance at American politics to recognize that notions of morality and sin, right and wrong, basically set the process in motion and determine which policies move forward and which languish. Religious and moral fervor of one sort or another influence policy decisions regarding medicine, cell research, public health, civil rights, health care, social welfare, and countless others. While the U.S. constitution clearly delineates a separation between church and state, in practice the line frequently blurs. To the question, "Why wasn't God mentioned in the constitution?" Alexander Hamilton is said to have sarcastically replied: "We forgot." (p. 5)

The propensity to place God on one side or another of partisan arguments is a cornerstone of American politics. Yet the question remains: What is the impact of moral frenzy on American democracy? "What happens when our pragmatic, commonsense, split-the-difference American politics turns righteous?" James Morone asks in the introduction to his new work, *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History*, a study of U.S. politics as a response to sin, from Puritan Williamsburg to Prohibition. (p. x) For Morone, the answer is simple enough: checks and balances become little more than nuisances, easily manipulated with hysteria to shift public opinion. Compromise disappears; in its place lynchings, witch-hunts, get-tough laws, and race riots often follow. Women on public assistance become "welfare queens." Labels, demonology, and zero-sum arguments win the day as political players are divided between "us" and "them," and panic takes precedence over reasoned discourse.

Psychoanalysts describe such impulses in terms of hysteria, sociologists frame them in terms of moral panics and mob behavior, and historians consider the unique contours of generational red scares. Morone, a political scientist by trade, approaches the discussion of the moral panic impulse in American political history as a study of broad themes and patterns that unfold over and over, generation after generation. (p. x)

"Panic spread across the nation," Morone begins as he describes the conditions for the white slave panic of 1910. The author outlines the episode as a paradigmatic study of the politics of panic taking precedence over the use of evidence or actual data to verify that a problem actually exists. "Dangerous young men prowled across the country side. They lured girls into ice cream parlors, wooed them off to the cities, and sold them into sexual slavery," he recounts. As things progressed, popular literature reported that some 60,000 women were disappearing into that sex slave trade each year. The papers printed warnings urging young women to stay away from German skating rinks, Chinese laundries, Italian fruit stands, and anything run by the Eastern European Jewry. President William Howard Taft demanded action. Congress,

which generally considered crime a state issue, saw no way to ignore the social problem of slave trafficking. With little or no data to verify the substance of the claims, Congress outlawed taking women across state lines for illicit purposes in 1910. Enforcement was left to the little-known Bureau of Investigation, later renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As funding increased, so did the agency's power.

Yet the story does not end with the new precedent set for law enforcement. "When the moral champions finally marched into the sex districts, the enslaved maidens laughed at them," Morone explains. "There were no iron bars on the brothels, no Jews skulking behind the doors, no sixty thousand perishing country girls." (p. 2) But even after the mistake was recognized, federal power never receded. Instead, a familiar schema was set in place: 1) stir up a moral frenzy; 2) identify a demon; 3) mobilize interests; 4) increase police powers.

It is a model that unfolds in countless variations throughout the ensuing chapters of the book, from the Puritans encountering pestiferous Quakers, to Know-Nothings struggling over the strange customs of Catholics newcomers with their faith in an all-powerful despot in Rome, and so on. Immigrants arrive; social flux follows. By 1910, census reports confirmed what was already apparent to most Americans: the United States was becoming an urban nation, its cities filled with immigrants and their exotic ways. Urban mores posed threats to traditional ways of life. Vice thrived, political machines expanded, power shifted, and the culture changed. Profound anxiety helped translate social and economic flux into a moral crisis. Immigrant villains lurked on the streets and calls for police intervention intensified. "Fearful Americans did not have to make much of a leap to a white slave panic. Stolen or not, country girls flocked to the cities, where they saw and did things they never saw or did back home." While foreigners were not exactly stealing girls–or anyone else for the matter–they did bring new ways, which were seen as a threat to Anglo-Saxon values. "Even the label, white slavery,' emits a racial jolt," Morone concludes. (p. 2)

For Morone, the white slave panic offers a variation on a familiar American epic: innocents falling prey to sex monsters of one predatory sort or another. Witches, smut peddlers, black men, savage Indians, polygamous Mormons, Irish priests, queers, Internet providers, and any number of "others" have all taken their place in this rich cavalcade of threats. Get-tough measures–sometimes constitutional, sometimes not–are usually the ultimate solution. The patriarchal state moves in, and freedoms are lost in the name of safety and security. In the case of the white slave panic, nothing less than American civilization itself was thought to be at stake. When Congress acted, the Baptists cheered the victory. "Panics and witch-hunts are an American classic: nothing stirs the people or grows their government like a pulpit-thumping moral crusade against malevolent dastards." (p. 3)

The political repercussions of the ongoing struggle between a redeeming "us" and a reforming "them" ripple throughout the generations. To read American political development as a series of reactions to moral crusades and the resulting social controls is to challenge conventional assumptions about U.S. government and politics. Consider the much-propounded notion that America has a small federal government. In terms of health-care delivery, this is an apt

argument: the burden is placed on the private sector. But turning to moral controls, one finds an intrusive federal government, constantly expanding and investigating, regardless of which party is in power. It is difficult to suggest that a weak state would enter the 21st century with some three percent of its population in jail, in prison, on parole, or on probation. (p. 3)

In countless cases and in many ways, morality propels the American government to act. Changes in demographics, economics, and social or sexual trends are accompanied by fears of moral and cultural decline. The wind of modernity threatens traditional communities. Someone cries out, "Thou shalt not!" An institution, congressional committee, religious group, or community board directs that anxiety toward a recognizable demon. If the target is new immigrants, they are often viewed as lazy or overly sexual, ready to corrupt the country. In other cases, a new group seeks to change the rules. Broadly defined political parameters invite various interests to participate, and they change the playing field. Some move in, while others are pushed out. Upward and downward social mobility invites status anxiety. Racial and gender politics are renegotiated. Such battles date back to 1636. "All those blurry lines between us and them, privileged and repressed, strong and weak, keep getting rewritten as the boundaries between good and evil." (pp. 3-4)

This moral impulse plays out in different ways in terms of the American policy-making process. With regard to social welfare policy and social movements, it creates a cultural backdrop against which actors can designate a worthy "us" and a dangerous "them." Given enough fuel, this moral fervor unleashes racial panics and witch-hunts, as purported moral inferiors–the witches, drinkers, slaves, and crack users watch their rights being stripped away. To win back those inalienable rights, Morone contends that those facing oppression merely need to cry out that good people are facing injustice, and the process will reverse itself. (pp. 3-5) If only it were that easy. Unfortunately, he documents far more cases in which moral fervor has been used to deprive groups of their rights than cases in which rights are recovered with this argument.

Yet Morone is correct in suggesting that moral fervor cuts both ways. Certainly, moral impulses have propelled reform movements as well as moral panics. While the author emphasizes that Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the abolition movement were as much influenced by the Gospels as the Puritans, his work highlights the rich and devious contours of moral attack, while merely summarizing the social justice agenda. Dante is said to have given the best lines to the rascals in the deepest rings of his Inferno. Morone does much the same with American history. But perhaps that's the point. While communitarian and the liberal readings of American history fill the libraries, Morone highlights the hellfire alternative as a central narrative of American politics and culture. To this end, his reading of American history is convincing. "If moral fervor stirs our better angels, moral fever spurs our demons . . . The nation develops not from religious to secular but from revival to revival." (p. 3)

Competing notions of justice offer both constructive and destructive uses of righteousness in political discourse and action. Morone traces these threads from the colonial era through revolutions, civil wars, reform movements, and moral crusades, as opposing camps label each

other devils, drinkers, and so on. On the one hand, moral conviction has played a central role in debates over abortion, abolition, voting rights, and suffrage. On the other, the same impulse was used to propel Prohibition. Yet to suggest that the moral impulse was behind the pro-slavery and abolition movements is tenuous at best. More importantly, Morone strives to illuminate the competing impulses behind the Gospel-based reform tradition and the Victorian propensity to ban that which was most fun. Take the temperance movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The driving force behind this movement was the desire to stop men from beating their wives and children. The result of this simple, reasonable impulse was both the promise of Progressive Era reforms and the danger of the Prohibition Era.

The rich contribution of Morone's work is his delineation of the dynamics of the moralist attack and his outline of the patterns of their presence over the years. "The registries of moral flaws fall into a distinct analytic patter . . . each dangerous other threatened us with variations of the same four sins. Abolitionists pinned them on slaveholders, nativists on the Irish, and contemporary Jeremiahs on our own underclass." (p. 16) Un-American "others" are typically resented because they are viewed as lazy and condemned for maintaining habits that are different from the status quo. That was Cotton Mather's argument. Additionally, the "others" may drink alcohol or take drugs. From Prohibition to today's War on Drugs, this charge has spurred increased incarceration of these "others," helped support underground economies, and encouraged social and political violence in an effort to stem the continued supply of illegal and highly desired goods. Such are the ironies of struggles against the "other"–they often provide what the market economy demands. This in turn inspires resentment and calls for social controls, often of profitable markets. This leads to the third item in Monroe's outline. The "others" are also typically blamed for being involved with "violence." Even if the "others" are defending themselves against social or political attacks, charges of violence usually inspire further social controls and increased funding for police and prisons. (p. 16) "Panics pump up honest fears and project them onto entire groups. Suddenly, good people face a race of monsters. Cotton Mather's army of devils rises again." (p. 17)

Yet all the trouble related to the first three sins: laziness, drugs, and violence pale in comparison to the fourth: sex. "Here lies the central moral theme and the most unsettling bundle of questions. For starters, sexuality challenges the fundamental Puritan precept: control thyself." (p. 17) Mixed in with debates about gender, the politics of sex involves struggles over abortion, divorce, queerness, women's rights, and much more. "When the larger political economy grows tumultuous, some Americans try to find order by asserting control over the little commonwealth,' the family and children." (p. 17) Each generation worries about its youth, especially those considered delinquent and those from non-nuclear families. "Poor parenting bodes big trouble down the line. Finally, sex and marriage mark the intimate frontier between us and them." (p. 17)

Responses to these sins tend to fall into solutions based on pledges (such as virginity until marriage or abstinence from drink), restrictions (such as curfews and limits on reproductive services), increased funding for police and prisons, and even more get-tough laws¾all designed under the proverbial "Thou shalt not!"

In terms of social welfare policy, Morone's reading of the use of sin as stigma is powerful and telling. For example, the author points out that many of the characteristics that made witches targets¾laziness, unconventional ways, and failure to adhere to conventional family mores¾have also dogged another group of stigmatized women, "welfare queens." Morone describes the interrogation of Sarah Good during the Salem witch trials of 1692: "She is usually described as the perfect stereotype of a witch–a quarrelsome, pipe-smoking hag." A more modern stereotype might fit even better: "welfare queen." She had no fixed residence, was a beggar, was pregnant, and dragged her young daughter wherever she went. (p. 88) As with many "others," the central crime committed by most of the women accused of being witches was one of sexual compulsivity. (p. 90)

For Morone, the "welfare queen" is one of countless ancient stigmas that run through contemporary narratives about public assistance, teen pregnancy, violence, and drug use. People are poor because of bad morals. From Salem onward, attempts to control moral inferiors played out again and again. It's an old story, yet it continues to divide a righteous "us" from an immoral, predatory "them." "The formula goes back long before the American Revolution. Project moral fears onto an entire group and do something to control them . . . It is about the United States and how we divide our society into friends and enemies. At every historical turn we will find a racial oppression embedded in a moralizing frame." (pp. 21-22) Which may help explain why, while the United States lags behind most other Western nations in terms of social welfare, it is an international leader in government control of its people.

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