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Voting And Voters

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A good many liberals and progressives are shocked at Bush's victory. Republican gains in the Senate and House only make it worse. It is not that we were unaware of the Republican advantages. We knew that the Bush campaign constant talk of the war on terror stirred fear and excitement among many voters that worked to Bush's advantage, as did the so-called morality issues of abortion and gay marriage that evoked the peculiar American obsession with sex. And then there was the Republican propaganda machine, run by skilled and ruthless operatives, whose messages were amplified by networks of evangelical churches, and dutifully trumpeted by a sympathetic corporate media.

Still, many of us expected the Democrats to win, or at least we expected Kerry to win. We thought we could overcome Republican advantages by bringing new voters to the polls. The conventional wisdom has it that non-voters are preponderantly low-income, minority, and young, all groups that favor Democrats. But while that is broadly true, the pool of non-voters is vast, and voter get-out drives inevitably target only specific groups in the pool. So, the Republicans could launch a voter drive too, and they did, targeting suburban and rural areas, and drawing on networks of fundamentalist churches to widen their reach. State constitutional amendments against gay marriage also helped draw right-leaning voters to the polls. The turnout effort on both sides was remarkable, and in the end, it was probably a draw.

The underside of the voter turnout campaign was the Republican effort to bar likely-Democrats from actually voting, by obstructing the registration of new voters, by placing challengers at the polls, by issuing false warnings of the risks of voting, or simply by making sure the lines at the polling places in Democratic districts were insufferably long. And then there were the efforts by state and local Republicans to distort the vote count. Reports abound of voter registration forms discarded, of provisional ballots not counted, and of suspicious tallies by electronic voting machines with secret codes and no capacity for a recount. We may never know what actually happened in the belly of these machines.

So, what have we learned, and what to do now? The usual lessons are that we should try harder next time or vote harder, as one wag said recently. And we should promote an agenda of democratic reforms that make vote suppression and outright stealing less likely. I am for those things, but we are unlikely to win them unless we first win some elections.

In any case, I think there is another lesson in the failure of our efforts in campaign 2004. The democratic and egalitarian victories in American history were not won with voter guides and get-out-the vote campaigns. Nor were they won by Democratic Party initiatives. When we restrict ourselves to these conventional forms of electoral politics we cannot match the money and propaganda, the voter guides and get-out-the vote drives, of the right.

Electoral politics by itself doesn't work for the left. Or rather it only works in the context of great upsurges of popular protest. This is the lesson of the mobs of the American Revolution, of the abolitionist movement that preceded the Civil War, of the labor movement of the 1930s, and the civil rights and poverty rights movements of the 1960s. The drama and disruption created by these movements gave them communicative power to match the propaganda of party operatives. The issues the movements raised also drew people to the polls in numbers far greater than voter drives can do. And because the movements were disruptive, because they impeded the functioning of major institutions, politicians were forced to respond.

So, yes, we should work on our agenda of democratic reforms, including a national right to vote, a national voter registration system, the implementation of the National Voter Registration Act, Election Day a holiday, non-partisan election officials, and so on. But we have to do more. Everything we know about the Bush regime argues they will be reckless and aggressive, in Iraq and perhaps Iran, and at home with their tax and spending policies that threaten dire economic instability, and with social policy initiatives that are both cruel and short-sighted. The time when mass protest is possible will come. We should be ready and receptive, obdurate and bold. The hip-hop voter registration campaign had a slogan, "vote or die." They were on the right track.

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It Happened Here: The Bush Sweep, The Left, And The American Future

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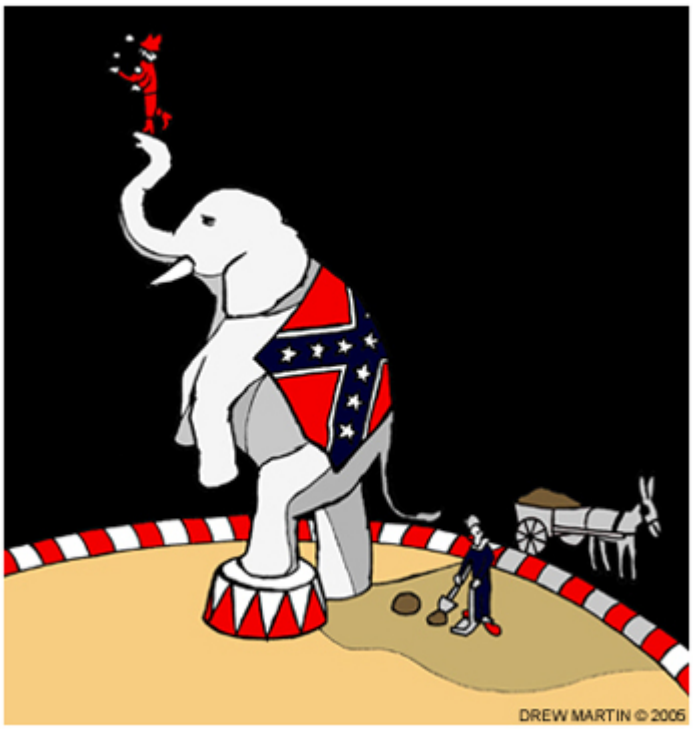
Political commentary is always replete with exaggerations: it fits the need of the culture industry. Even the greatest thinkers like Karl Marx and Theodor Adorno tended to take the



experience of a crucial historical moment and extrapolate its most dramatic implications into the future: it's a natural inclination. But the victory of George W. Bush in the presidential campaign of 2004 is pregnant with the most ominous economic, political, and ideological developments. The onus does not simply fall on "capital" in an election that cost nearly $4 billion and in which roughly the same amount of cash was spent on both sides. Enough elite sectors were suffering from a damaged economy and were appalled by the blatantly incompetent handling of the ill-fated and immoral invasion of Iraq. Republicans proved themselves masters of the smear campaign and, most likely, there was ballot-fraud in the two crucial swing states of Ohio and Florida.[1] But 2004 is not 2000.[2]

President George Bush defeated Senator John Kerry (D-Mass) by three and a half million votes and voting reached record highs of nearly 60%; not merely a plurality but for the first time since 1988, when George Bush the Elder beat Michael Dukakis, a majority of American voters made a dramatic political choice. Staring into the abyss in the aftermath of a sweep, which has resulted not only in greater Republican control over the Senate and the Congress, but what is being presented as a new right-wing ideological mandate, the left must now look in the mirror and reflect upon first principles. It must consider what strategy the Democratic Party

employed, what the right-wing zealots are planning, what the role of the left might be, and what outlines its resistance should take under conditions in which it should not be forgotten the country remains virtually as divided as it was in 2000.

Dealing with Differences: Could a different candidate have produced a better result? Perhaps, but probably not: outside of Howard Dean, who would have received little support from the careerists within the Democratic Party, and whom the right-wing media would have shredded, none of the other candidates inspired much enthusiasm. Differences between the Republican and Democratic camps were also apparent and, in spite of a relentless and hideous right-wing media blitz against the challenger, the lying and incompetence of the Bush Administration became public knowledge. But it is not that simple. Belief once existed in the willingness of the Democratic Party or, at least, certain minority segments of it to stand for certain principles with respect to foreign policy as well as domestic reform. That belief was probably never fully warranted: the Democrats have been the party of aggressive, liberal nationalism for most of the twentieth century. Especially now, however, it has become clear that if the party is to serve as an opposition then pressure must come from outside or what might be termed "the street."

While the Republican Party ran an explicitly ideological campaign predicated on "mobilizing the base" by highlighting the threat posed to moral values, raising the specter of terrorism, wrapping the invasion of Iraq in the flag of national interest, and invoking the fear of higher taxes the Democratic Party was guided by exactly the opposite strategy. It too, of course, wished to bring out its base. But its campaign was driven less by "liberal" principles let alone "socialist" beliefs, which was claimed by various reactionary and religious demagogues in the Mid-West and the South, than by the "realism" of the pollster and the "pragmatism" of the party professional. They believed it was enough for John Kerry to appear as the "anti-George Bush" just as, in the primaries, he had served as the "anti-Howard Dean." It would seem from the results that the wise guys among the Democrats weren't as smart as they thought they were.

Asking whether a different candidate would have done "better" then is, actually, the wrong question. More important is to reflect upon whether this candidate left any kind of legacy on which the Democrats might build down the road. That is where the problem lies. Senator Kerry presented his party as a somewhat less noxious version of the Republicans and assumed a reactive, rather than a proactive, stance on the major issues of our time: social issues, the economy, nationalism, and the war. To his credit, Kerry did unequivocally state his support for Roe v. Wade, indicated he would not appoint reactionary justices to the Supreme Court, and spoke about extending health care to the 43 million people who need it.[3] It should have been enough of a reason to vote for him.

But elections are decided less by issues than the mobilization of constituencies. Kerry said little about the declining conditions of the elderly poor and he did not offer much more to those African-Americans who would prove his most loyal supporters. Senator Kerry was also outflanked on the matter of gay marriage: he opposed the constitutional ban on it demanded by President Bush only to watch in horror as Vice-President Dick Cheney, surely to soften the

hard-line stance of his boss, stated publicly that he didn't see the need for an amendment. The Democrats never articulated the vision of a nation steeped in tolerance and acceptance of the "other," and ready to meet the needs of social justice in an age of globalization.

As for the economy, Kerry was content to oppose "tax cuts" for the rich, but not for the "middle class"; oppose the "outsourcing" of jobs but not put forward a plan for mass scale job creation; oppose privatizing the social security system but not speak about raising benefits. Intent upon developing "business friendly policies," Democrats split the interests of working people from those of the "middle class" families with incomes around $60,000. They also refused explicitly to accuse the Bush Administration of engaging in class war even though it had redistributed income upward from the poor to the rich more radically than at any time during this century, constricted union political activity and the right to strike, and opposed raising an already pathetically low minimum wage. Too little was made of the way in which, for the first time during a war, programs for poor and working people were actually eliminated.

For the Democrats, it was always less a matter of challenging elites or reinvigorating the welfare state than engaging in what Bill Clinton liked to call "triangulation," which involves standing just a wee-bit further to the left on economic issues than the Republicans. Kerry publicly evidenced the inner conflict of a man burdened with an exceptionally "liberal" voting record in the Senate while feeling the "pragmatic" necessity of running against it for president. During the last week of the campaign, indeed, he ultimately spoke less about a plummeting economy than the loss of 350 tons of munitions in Iraq due to the incompetence of the administration.

To continue: what was true in terms of social issues and the economy became even more embarrassing in terms of dealing with the culture generated by 9/11. Much is made now about the role of religion, and the inability of Democrats to deal with the faithful, but actually the number of voting evangelicals remained roughly what it was in 2000 and it was among non-regular churchgoers that President Bush increased his vote.[4] Most voters were concerned, especially in the swing states, with "national security" in the face of a terror attack and the conduct of the Iraq War. Indeed, while religion and "moral values" surely played a role,[5] it was the inability to deal with the insecurities associated with the post-9/11 climate that sent the Democrats to defeat.

Senator Kerry was effusive in his nationalism and preoccupation with making the country more "secure" throughout the campaign. Rather than appear as the decorated veteran that he was, in fact, he sought to turn himself into a war hero. Kerry threatened to "hunt down" and "kill" Osama bin Laden and the rest of the terrorists with as much fervor as President Bush. The only difference was that Kerry did "flip-flop" on his past as a resister to Vietnam, remained ambiguous on the Patriot Act, and unrealistically argued for ending the Iraqi occupation by sending in more troops while maintaining that he could persuade the United Nations and our economically strapped former allies whose citizens overwhelmingly opposed the invasion from the beginning to provide "help." The Democrats were simply not as convincing in their obsessions with security, militarism, or nationalism as the Republicans.

Maybe they were not quite as obsessed. This only makes sense since, for right or wrong, the Democrats were considered the party of opposition and they were supposed to offer an alternative. That was, after all, their rationale in the election of 2004. It was a rationale, however, which they neither fully embraced nor fully discarded. Senator Kerry criticized the set of lies that legitimated the invasion, but never called upon the United States to exit Iraq. Until the end of September, near the conclusion of the campaign, he said that he would have authorized the war even had he known that Iraq was not harboring weapons of mass destruction. Kerry lambasted the President not for waging a useless and immoral war, but for the incompetence with which it was being waged. This stance left him open to the charge of not believing in the legitimacy of the invasion while, simultaneously, engaging in Monday-morning quarterbacking: Kerry's catastrophic ambivalence on legislation calling for $87 billion to further finance the war, which he apparently supported while voting against the bill, was symbolic of his entire take on the conflict. That the invasion of Iraq was misguided from the beginning in principle and in practice never, ironically, became part of the electoral debate. And for good reason: most of the Democrats along with a new set of left wing "fellow travelers" took the bait and especially when it looked like victory was near fell over one another in expressing support for the Iraqi war. That the cheers turned to criticism once victory was no longer at hand looked hypocritical though, tactically and pragmatically, the shift in opinion only made sense.

Senator Kerry shied away from proposing a new approach to foreign policy or dealing with the need for a planetary politics in a planetary age.[6] The doctrine of "pre-emptive strike" was never subjected to criticism and the loss of the "street" in so many nations, the squandering of sympathy and support that the United States had gained due to 9/11, was never linked to the pursuit of a unilateral foreign policy in favor of an explicitly multilateral one. Again and again, Kerry disclaimed the idea that any foreign nation or organization would hold a veto over American actions under his presidency. The problem therefore was not that the Democrats refused to embrace nationalism, fiscal responsibility, the feelings of the religious right, or the war effort; it was that they did not do any of this with the same degree of conviction and consistency as their Republican opponents.

Advisors to Senator Kerry like Mary Beth Cahill and Bob Shrum along with the "mainstream" associated with the Democratic Leadership Council wanted to be "pragmatic," "realistic," and slick. They were. But the result was merely a watered down version of the campaign that they opposed. The contradictions and vacillations over foreign policy became ever more glaring. The Economist was not wrong when, while supporting Kerry, it claimed in its election issue that the presidential race involved a choice between "the incompetent and the incoherent." The real lesson of this election is not merely that the former appeared less noxious than the latter, which it did, but that the only hope for progressives now irretrievably on the defensive is to recognize that competence requires coherence and that progressive interests must be linked to progressive principles.

* * *

Republican Plans: President Bush actually put the matter well when he stated in his victory address that he had now earned some "political capital" and that he was willing to spend it. What's coming will be, if possible, an intensified version of what has been. The political trajectory for the administration over the next four years was set during the electoral campaign and it will revolve less upon what campaign strategist Karl Rove termed "mini-ball" than the "big" issues with respect to foreign and domestic policy. When seeking to understand this ideologically driven Republican Party, when constructing an image of neo-conservatism, more is subsequently involved than discrete issues like privatizing social security, eliminating taxes on inheritance and savings, introducing radical tax cuts, or even repealing the Wagner and the Fair Labor Standards Acts. Such policies would undoubtedly increase the deficit. But man does not live by bread alone. This would make it possible for the Republicans to justify eliminating state programs though, naturally, not those concerned with "national" security or further bloating an omnivorous military budget.

Shrinking "big government" was never actually the aim of neo-conservatives. Bush's deficit in 2004 was $413 billion and his military budget will run to $419 billion. Roughly $4 billion per week will be spent covering the costs generated by Iraq and Afghanistan and the partial privatization of Social Security could reach $146 billion by 2009. A $258 billion budget is projected for that year without even considering the further costs of the war in Iraq.[7] The point is plain enough: only in terms of cutting welfare programs and this often as a "stealth issue" were neo conservatives ever intent upon, in their parlance, "starving the beast." They were always more than willing to expand the size of the military and the intelligence agencies.

"Laissez-faire," wrote Kevin Phillips, "is a pretense."[8] The government is now part of the economy: the real question involves the priorities it should set. Ideology is necessary in privileging one set of priorities over another. Viewing the state in terms of a family budget helps provide a basis for provincial thinking about the "fiscal responsibility" while the vision of an imperiled community, strengthened by the incessant terror alerts, creates the justification for building an ever-stronger military capable of enforcing a foreign policy consonant with imperialist aims Those wishing to confront the Republican Party will thus have to deal with the connections it has forged between imperialism, militaristic nationalism, a new provincialism, and the waging of an economic class war.

Many now speak about the dangers of American intervention spreading to Iran, Syria and other states that are included, or might be included, in what President Bush called "the axis of evil." That phrase is now already almost forgotten but it remains important for making sense of America's role in the world. More is involved than the particular flashpoints for potential crisis or even the seemingly unending attempt to read the present back into the original response to the attack of 9/11 and the assault on the Taliban. Generally ignored have been the basic nationalist and unilateralist assumptions underpinning the invasion of Iraq that were presented by Republicans now even more than before as a line of demarcation between "us and them."

More than 56% of Americans now doubt whether the Iraqi War is worth the costs. That number is steadily rising along with the dead and wounded. But the election of 2004 suggested what is

actually at stake is less Iraq than the self-understanding of the United States as the predominant world power with the God-given right to intervene where it will. Hard to ignore is the way in which America has lost the moral standing it acquired in the aftermath of 9/11. Republicans turned this in their favor. Former allies opposed to the Iraqi invasion and the international forum in which the Bush administration suffered its most embarrassing public setback, the United Nations, became targets of unrelenting criticism. The need for self-reflection by the United States and developing new forms of western unity were transformed into an unthinking nationalism, resentment against the rest of the world for its ingratitude, heightened preoccupations with "security," and feelings of cultural superiority for leading the "war against terrorism." The same hot air, the same propaganda, is now filling the trial balloons concerning the threats to our national security posed by Iran and Syria. Why not? Such talk helped the Republicans generate a new provincialism within the American polity.

The Democratic Party had no response to the wave of sentiments and attitudes reminiscent of the great character fashioned by Sinclair Lewis: Babbitt. The new provincialism reflects the overlapping consensus between the "middle class and the depressed rural elements of American society. It exhibits not only a fear of criticism, but of expanding individual choices and legitimating different life-styles that challenge communitarian norms and religious strictures. It evokes the Bible thumping of the half-literate preacher, the attempt to introduce creationism as an "alternative" to evolution, and the thought that stem cell research and biological engineering will alter "human nature."[9] The new provincialism is the neo-conservative response to what Norman Podhoretz called the "adversary culture" of the 1960s. Grounded in the basic concerns of the moment abortion, gay marriage, and the right to own a gun (any gun) this parochial and reactionary ideology is ultimately intent upon challenging the most basic elements of the progressive tradition: cosmopolitanism and tolerance, civil liberties and social reform, and above all the attempt to constrain the arbitrary exercise of institutional power.

Abortion was cleverly pitched in terms of a "culture of life" for the Republican base even while George W. Bush largely focused on "partial birth abortions" in the presidential debates. But there is little doubt that the Bush Administration will attempt to mitigate or even reverse Roe v. Wade with the appointment of possibly three new justices to the Supreme Court. The popularity of the new provincialism also provides justification for those who deeply resent abortion in principle and seek new conservative legislation. Newly elected Senator David Vitner from Louisiana has called for banning abortion in all instances while Tom Coburn, the newly elected Senator from Oklahoma, actually has called for arresting doctors who perform abortions and trying them for murder should that procedure become illegal. Similarly, the newly elected Senator from South Carolina, Jim De Mint has made the modest proposal that neither gays nor unmarried pregnant women should teach in public schools.

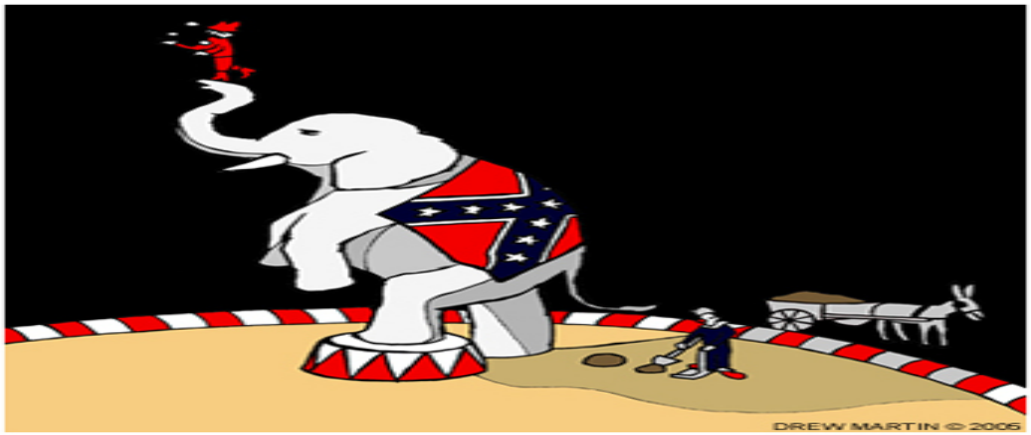
As for gay marriage, of course, it was a stroke of political brilliance for Republicans in eleven states to place bans on gay marriage on the ballot: they were universally successful. But it remains an open question whether President Bush will fulfill his campaign promise of seeking a constitutional ban. The price would be very high. What is not an open issue, however, is the

question of guns. Rather than take on the National Rifle Association, whose supporters would most likely vote Republican anyway, the Democratic Party simply concentrated on the importance of retaining the existing ban on AK-47s. Cries of "USA! USA!" directed against outsiders and unbelievers, however, did not vanish. And for good reason: The forest was missed for the trees. Ignored was the political role of ideology in favor of a narrow understanding of economic interests. Only by bringing ideology back in is it possible to glean hints of what will surely prove important not merely for Democrats winning the next election, but for combating what must be understood as a more general "distortion of democracy" that pervades the American landscape. The Bush Administration has already begun packing the lower courts with conservatives. Three new reactionary justices on the Supreme Court could have a devastating impact on civil liberties no less than social issues like abortion. Then there are the various "anti-terror" intelligence bills along with the Patriot Acts I & II. They give new powers to the federal government with respect to issuing subpoenas, denying bail to those accused of terrorism, instituting the death penalty for terrorist crimes, developing "enhanced surveillance procedures," sealing off borders, and "removing obstacles to investigating terrorism."

But the threat to democracy, no less than democracy itself, is not simply a formal matter. It is not merely the direct assault on civil liberties through legislation, and various attempts at censorship, which is crucial. Just as important is the spirit of intimidation and the self-censorship generated in what is becoming an ever more militaristic and provincial climate of opinion. The belief is growing ever stronger not only that the United States has been divinely endowed with the right to exert its power when it wills, but that intellectual activity is an affront to religious faith, that the political exercise of democratic rights is an impediment to national "unity," and that the concern for economic justice involves an assault on the individual. Neo-conservatives are bent upon strengthening the military, waging imperialist wars abroad and intensifying a class war against the least fortunate at home under the cover of a hyper-nationalism.[10] Cultural reactionaries and religious fanatics, advocates of the new provincialism, are intent upon contesting the practice of liberty and the progress of knowledge. Support exists not for Nazism, or for old-fashioned forms of racism and anti-Semitism, but for a new American form of authoritarian populism.[11] That is bad enough.

* * *

What Now? : Not since Richard Nixon defeated Senator George McGovern (D-South Dakota) in 1972 have the hopes of the left been so thoroughly dashed. The greatest voting registration drive in American history, the most remarkable fund-raising effort ever, seems to have led to nothing for the Democrats. They were out-mobilized by the Republicans. Even worse: evangelical fundamentalists and those threatened by the more liberal and cosmopolitan elements of modernity, seem to have voted against their immediate economic interests and in favor not merely of a radical redistribution of wealth upwards, and an old-fashioned class war directed against programs of benefit to working people and the poor, but of a costly and unnecessary war in Iraq. The country seems to have been driven even farther to the right and it appears to stand more divided than ever before.



If the map above has any validity, however, the present divide is not quite as “new” as it would seem. What becomes evident is a general division between rural areas seemingly threatened by modernity and urban areas intent upon embracing it. This translates into a conflict between the class and groups embedded in rural existence with its religious and cultural traditionalism confronting the class and groups embedded in urban life with its secularism and multicultural dynamism.[12]

Interestingly enough, however, there is nothing new about that either.[13] Just as capitalists generally harbored an affinity for the free markets and civil liberties associated with classical liberalism, and workers historically identified with either Marxism or some form of social democratic thinking, the middle class sought refuge in the security of traditional values while pre-modern groups including farmers and small entrepreneurs and the like tended to identify with pre-modern ideologies. And they did so precisely because the modern world both in its secular liberal and socialist theory as well as in its capitalist industrial and technological practice is imperiling both the existential and the material foundations of their pre-modern way of life.

Herein is the source of the new provincialism. Nostalgia for the power and glory of the American imperial past, which was questioned during the Vietnam War, inclines rural and pre-modern groups towards embracing nationalist propaganda even in what is manifestly a failed cause. Fear of the outsider, in this case the Arab not the Jew, similarly predisposes them to appeals concerning “security” in the face of a looming terror attack. Ironically, if such an attack should occur, it will most likely take place not in some small town, but in precisely the kind of major urban area whose citizens vote “left.” Nevertheless, the new provincialism does not merely speak to issues of foreign and national security: it also bleeds into domestic concerns.

Most important, perhaps, is the rejection of a rights based culture in favor of the “community.” The decline in “family values” is bemoaned without the least sense of the way in which “the culture industry” is undermining them. The preoccupation with “creationism” as an alternative to evolution by the rural, religious, parts of the citizenry complements their anxiety over complex scientific developments like stem cell research. All of this reflects the deeper perhaps unconscious and totally legitimate insight that the small town is anachronistic for the modern

world. Herein is the source of the oft-noted “rage” and “resentment” that these groups direct toward “liberals” and “socialists.”[14] They appear as the cause of their distress, and this mistaken perception leads to contradictions in which the poorest counties of a state like Kansas will vote Republican, citing religion and the like, even though Republican policies are doing nothing for them and, actually, are keeping them poor. But simply citing the irrationality of such beliefs, even while understandably calling for a new economic populism, misses the point. Privileging “reason” or utility in dealing with social problems is itself a function of modernity. This part of the citizenry may be voting against their material interests, but not their existential ones. Thus, when the question arises “What’s the Matter with Kansas?”[15] The answer is: nothing at all.

Political finesse does not ultimately help in dealing with this paradox. Something serious is at stake that becomes even more serious in periods of crisis when religious or mythical and traditional or reactionary appeals generally assume heightened importance for precisely these groups. To be sure: in America during the 1930s, when they were offered something in terms of legislation that would manifestly better their lives, the faithful and the rural poor briefly aligned with the labor movement and urban immigrants.[16] The great divide was also bridged at other moments in American history. It is only necessary to consider the “New Nationalism” of Teddy Roosevelt (R-NY) or the elections of Democrats like Woodrow Wilson, FDR, Harry Truman, and Lyndon Johnson. More recently, of course, there were the presidential victories of Governor Jimmy Carter (D-Ga) and Gov. Bill Clinton (D-Ark.).

But it is important to remember that these electoral successes were built upon maintaining a racist political structure in the South and, with perhaps making an exception of FDR, essentially employing a rank nationalism that brooked no opposition in the realm of foreign policy. Once President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1964 and mass opposition to the Vietnam War began, which resulted in a “trauma” born of nothing more than the desire to render foreign policy decisions accountable to the citizenry, the “solid” South dutifully moved from the Democratic into the Republican column. It only returned when Jimmy Carter began the retreat from the achievements of 1968 and Bill Clinton, after running a smart campaign against George Bush the Elder in 1992, introduced his strategy of “triangulation” and welfare reform.

Such compromises, however, are no longer acceptable. Or, better, it is now the task of progressives to block the Democratic Party from entering into compromises that would sacrifice the interests of their base people of color, women, unions and the poor in order for careerists and party professionals “to get elected.” Many, of course, see things differently. Mainstream Democrats, who so heavily contributed to the ethical collapse of their party during the onset of the Iraqi War, are now already demanding that it shift even further toward the “center” in 2008. Given that the “center” has gradually inched ever further to the right since the 1990s, however, such a strategy can only intensify the identity crisis of the Democratic Party. It can only further diminish its appeal for traditional constituencies, and enable the Republican Party to fashion an even more reactionary politics. Such a strategy of “appeasement” will surely legitimate the anti-democratic and know nothing elements of the

new provincialism.

That doesn't seem to be a problem for the noted columnist of The New York Times, Nicholas Kristoff, who in the wake of defeat has called upon the Democratic Party to temper its support for abortion and gay rights and its battles for gun control and against symbols like the Confederate flag. But why stop there? Perhaps Northern liberals can even be induced to buy pick-up trucks, hang their guns and flags inside, and then drive those always-willing people of color and poor women to the voting booths where they can cast their ballots for the always-deserving Democratic Party. But Kristoff is not alone. Another of the "great compromisers," changing somewhat a phrase from Nietzsche, has an even better idea. Steven Waldman, editor in chief of Beliefnet.com, insists that Democrats should now empathize more deeply with how "Christians" unlike the working poor or gay people or people of color let alone Arab-Americans feel "misunderstood and persecuted." It doesn't seem to matter that not all "Christians," but rather the religious zealots the missionary advocates of the new provincialism are the ones who feel themselves alienated from the Democratic Party. Perhaps those degenerate secularists on the coasts should start building a new coalition with them by insisting upon re-opening the Scopes Monkey Trial.

Chipping away at the right-wing allegiances of pre-modern sectors in American society is possible, even necessary, but "winning them over" through talk of a "new nationalism" or a "liberal nationalism" contemptuous of multiculturalism and the achievements of the social movements is an illusion.[17] Obviously points of common interest and even solidarity can bind the most divergent groups: perhaps progressives should support "faith-based initiatives" when it comes to the homeless, AIDS victims, and even prisoners so long as it doesn't involve privileging a reactionary alternative to left-wing forms of community organizing. But it is equally obvious that conservatives can find reactionary ideological points of unity and fashion deep and sustainable alliances with reactionary constituencies more easily than progressives. And conservatives need not qualify their support.

Dealing with pre-modern groups and classes, which the media likes to define simply as "religious and rural" or "middle class" voters, is again not simply a matter of political finesse. Snapping military salutes, wearing goose hunting gear, and loudly identifying with religious values as Senator Kerry did won't do the trick. It evidences only condescension for small town voters with strong religious and traditional values. They sense it, too. That is an important reason why the Republicans were successful this past election in identifying "religion" with evangelical fundamentalists and the most reactionary elements of the religious community. As for the pragmatists and compromisers in the Democratic Party, those who hold so little sympathy for ideological conviction, the suspicion will always exist among those "red state" voters that they are panderers and hypocrites.

Despite the crowing by fundamentalist groups like Focus on the Family or The Christian Defense Coalition, however, they do not represent the religious community of America. African-Americans and Hispanics are both deeply religious constituencies: 89% of the former and 53% of the latter voted for the Democratic Party in 2004. Then there are the Quaker organizations

like the American Friends Service Committee, radical groups within the Catholic Church, and other religious institutions were all once committed to building on the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Most remain committed to fostering progressive domestic legislation and a humane foreign policy. Rather than speak about compromising with religious fanatics, or adherents of the new provincialism, it would be much more practical and principled for secular progressives to highlight their connections with the progressive elements of the religious community.

The purpose of parties is perhaps "to get elected," but getting elected especially over the long haul — often depends upon the party acting as a vehicle for "protest." That is the situation today. Economic divisions in the United States will become worse, a spiteful culture of intolerance will further harm the democratic discourse, and the domestic "war on terror" has no end in sight. The rush to the center, which will be presented as benefiting "us" not simply the party regulars, is precisely what will lead to papering over the gravity of these developments. It is what progressives must resist. Reinvigorating the Democratic Party is possible only by reinvigorating its base. Or, to put it another way, providing core constituencies with proposals and ideals that working people, women, minorities, progressive religious institutions, the poor, and the young can be enthusiastic about.

President Bush and his followers promulgated an ideology concerned not merely with fostering imperialist ambitions but with rolling back the policies and values associated with the most humane traditions of economic, political, and social reform. And ideology, as Max Weber reminds us, is not like a taxi that can be stopped at will. Can the Republicans veer even further to the right? Is that possible? It is if we on the left let the obsession with "security" justify the constriction of civil liberties and a centralization of intelligence and police agencies. It is if we let an arbitrarily defined "axis of evil" and the current contempt for international law go unquestioned. It is if we forget about the lying and the distortion of democracy that have shaped the American landscape. It is if we accept the right-wing identification of religion with fundamentalist zealotry. It is if we don't link the war abroad with class war at home. It is if we let a momentary mandate appear as a fundamental consensus. A new authoritarian populism is possible, in short, if progressives don't stand up to defend the values that have informed our best traditions: economic justice, political liberty, and cosmopolitanism.

Notes

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[1] Greg Palast has estimated that Republican chicanery at the polls probably did not cost the Democrats more than 1 million votes and it is important to consider that, after waiting hours presumably checking the print-outs, Senator Kerry obviously reached the conclusion that counting the "provisional ballots" in the crucial swing state of Ohio would not have changed the result.

[2] Douglas Kellner, Grand Theft 2000: Media Spectacle and a Stolen Election (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).

[3] "The number of people with health insurance rose by 1.5 million between 2001 and 2002, to 242.4 million, and the number of uninsured rose by 2.4 million, to 43.6 million, the U.S. Census Bureau reported today. An estimated 15.2 percent of the population had no health insurance coverage during all of 2002, up from 14.6 percent in 2001, according to the report, Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2002. The proportion of insured children did not change in 2002, remaining at 64.8 million, or 88.4 percent of all children." The situation has only gotten worse since these figures were published in the U.S.Department of Commerce News (September 30, 2003). For the full report see www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2003/cb03-154.html

[4] www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A31003-2004Nov6_2.html

[5] A Zogby Poll conducted for the Catholic Peace Group Pax Christi, the New York based civic advocacy group, Res Publica, and the Center for American Progress found that 42% of voters cited the war in Iraq as the most pressing moral issue and 31% cited "poverty and economic justice" as against 13% who cited abortion and 9% who cited same-sex marriage. See: www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A38001-2004Nov9¬2.html.

[6] Noted the anthology Planetary Politics: Human Rights, Terror, and Global Society edited by Stephen Eric Bronner (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

[7] Jonathan Wiesman, "Analysts Call Outlook for Bush Plan Bleak: too Much Deficit, Not Enough Revenue" in www.washingtonpost.com November 5, 2004, pg. A08.

[8] Kevin Phillips, Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich (New York: Broadway, 2003).

[9] Such primitive fears are given sophisticated forms in Francis Fukuyama, Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution (New York: Picador, 2002).

[10] Frances Fox Piven, The War at Home: The Domestic Costs of Bush's Militarism (New York: New Press, 2004).

[11] When Sinclair Lewis wrote It Can't Happen Here (1935), which dealt with a fascist takeover, that movement with its anti-Semitism was a salient reality and also international in its appeal. By contrast, exaggerating reactionary possibilities, manipulating the frisson of Nazism through continuing references to the 1930s, employing the old anti-Semitism in new conditions, both misrepresents the primary potential victims and distorts the real threat of the present. Note the vastly over-praised novel by Philip Roth, The Plot Against America (New York: Houghton Miflin, 2004).

[12] Note the map of states broken down into red and pink, blue and baby blue, counties in the website of CNN; http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/president/

[13] Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" in Karl Marx and Frederick

Engels, Selected Works 3 volumes (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969) 1:394ff.

[14] Pre-modern class formations have traditionally served as the mass base for fascism in Europe and other right-wing authoritarian movements in the United States like the Ku Klux Klan. The classic analysis is by Ernst Bloch Heritage of Our Times trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pgs. 97-148.

[15] Note the fine study by Thomas Frank, What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004).

[16] Instructive, in this regard, is the preacher Jim Casey in The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck. See the internet article by Mark Solomon, "What's Next? Let's Build The The Mother of All Coalitions'" in moderator@portside.org on November 12, 2004.

[17] Michael Lind, The Next American Nation: The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution (New York: Free Press, 1996) and also his Up from Conservatism: Why the Right is wrong from America (New York: Free Press, 1997). Not merely a less opportunistic, but a more coherent position is offered by Charles Noble, The Collapse of Liberalism: Why America Needs a New Left (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

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How Bush Won

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

Is it really the case that, as the British tabloid the Daily Mirror famously put it, nearly 60 million Americans were simply too "dumb" to understand the implications of reelecting George W. Bush? It seems so. Even though few Americans had personally benefited from the regressive social and economic policies of the president's first term, and few were likely to benefit from his imperial ambitions, a majority of voters saw fit to give Bush four more years to make their lives even worse. But as appealing as it is, folly does not constitute a sufficient explanation of the 2004 election.

One alternative account can be summarily dismissed: contra the Republican spin, there is little evidence that most of these voters were endorsing a conservative policy agenda.[i] Bush's approval ratings were low on the eve of the election and have remained low, hovering around 50%, a remarkably weak endorsement for a just reelected sitting president. While there were certainly millions of voters enthusiastic about Bush's program of economic reaction and social atavism, most were not. Voters themselves reject the idea that Bush was sent back to Washington to continue his good works: in a late January 2005 Los Angeles Times survey, 43% thought the country was "worse off because of George W. Bush's economic policies" than better off (only 26% who thought things had gotten better) and nearly three quarters thought that Bush did not "have the mandate from the American people to push through his agenda." So much for "political capital."

History reinforces the point. Compared to the sixteen other incumbent presidents who had run successfully for reelection (or for a second term after having become president due to the death or resignation of their predecessor), Bush's 3.5 million vote (2.9%) margin was exceedingly small. In fact, every other president who had run for and won a second term (with the exception of Harry S. Truman in 1948), did far better, beating their opponent by at least 6%. Bush's margin of victory in the Electoral College (6.9%) was equally tenuous the second lowest since 1804.

Nor do Congressional elections indicate that the long feared Republican realignment has finally happened. The Republicans did pick up four seats in the Senate and six in the House. But House Majority Leader Tom DeLay's (R-Tx) successful, if highly irregular, effort to redraw the Congressional districts in his home state accounts for nearly all of the Republicans' net gain in the lower chamber. Outside Texas, the GOP gained just two seats. The Republican bump in the Senate was also regional, based on GOP victories in all six open seat races in the South. Nationwide, Democratic senatorial candidates outpolled Republican candidates by 3 million votes.

But Democrats can take little comfort from these facts. There are also clear signs that the party

is in deep trouble. Despite an almost perfect storm of bad news from the debacle in Iraq, to the precipitous decline of America's standing in world opinion, to an economy that was working only for a privileged few Democrats could not close the deal. Herein lies perhaps the most important lesson: unless the Democratic Party does a far better job explaining to voters what it is about and how it would make their lives better, it risks permanent minority party status.

Fear and Loathing in America

Bush's success was based in part on turnout and in part on a very effective campaign to manipulate fear and loathing fear of terror, and loathing by social conservatives of the kind of cultural changes that are transforming the American landscape. Skillfully exploiting these issues, Bush was able to add to the traditional Republican coalition enough independents and wavering Democrats to become the first candidate since 1988 to actually win a majority of the popular vote.

Turnout first. Despite an unusually intense effort by the Democratic Party, organized labor, and allied groups like Americans Coming Together to mobilize voters, Republicans did a much better job getting their supporters to the polls. While turnout increased everywhere, it increased far more in "red states" (up 5.7% from 2000) than in "blue states" (up only 1.3% from 2000). This increased Republican turnout in red states accounts for about one-third of Bush's margin. Equally important, whereas Republican turnout increased in both battleground and non-battleground states, Democratic turnout increased mostly in battleground states.

Increased Republican turnout was partly a result of effective organization including close and highly coordinated contacts between Republican party operatives and Christian churches and partly the result of Bush's very effective use of cultural issues to talk to these churchgoing Americans. Culture proved particularly important to evangelical Protestants who had previously not participated in politics or who had shown divided political loyalties. Once thought to be natural Democrats because they tend to be poorer and less educated, these Americans saw the 2004 election not as a referendum on Bush's economic policies (which had so harmed them) or even the war in Iraq, but as a chance to publicly defend traditional social, particularly religious, identities against secular culture and, in particular, changing attitudes about sexuality.[ii]

But even on cultural questions, claims of a mandate are wildly exaggerated. While it is true that exit polls showed that 22% – a plurality had chosen "moral values" as the one thing that mattered most to them in the election (and 80% of these voters chose Bush), 20% of voters in the same exit surveys chose the "economy/jobs" and 19% chose "terrorism." In fact, a *smaller* percentage of voters cited "morals" in 2004 than in prior elections.[iii] And when asked shortly after the election to select the one issue that might have mattered most to them in deciding how to vote, the largest number of respondents 25% – chose the war, not morals. 14% chose the economy and jobs. Only 9% chose morality.[iv] Still, while sixty million Americans didn't vote to take Darwin out of the schools and gays and lesbians off of TV, the culture war did help Bush to sell himself to enough working class voters to win.

Bush also succeeded in convincing half the electorate that Iraq was either directly or indirectly linked to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and that the U.S. had a compelling reason to invade and occupy it. 55% of voters said that the Iraq war was part of the war on terrorism and 51% approved of Bush's decision to go to war. Voters who believed these things were almost certain to vote for Bush.[v] Most damning for Kerry, nearly six in ten voters – including Kerry voters – said that they did not trust the Democratic candidate to handle terrorist threats. In other words, despite daily disclosures of duplicity, blundering, and callousness among the president's top military and security advisers, even after the Duelfer Report's widely publicized conclusion that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, millions of people thought that Bush, not Kerry, would be a better custodian of national security.

What Kerry Could Have Done Differently

Many antiwar Democrats have argued that Kerry should have been able to turn public unease about Iraq in his favor. After all, a majority of voters (52%) thought that things were going badly for the U.S. in Iraq and that the war had actually made the U.S. less secure. In poll after poll before the election, clear majorities showed little enthusiasm for Bush's unilateralism and great interest in working closely with allies and the United Nations.[vi]

Why couldn't Kerry capitalize on this discontent? To a significant extent he did. Americans unsettled by the war and its impact on national security were far more likely to vote for him. The problem was that these voters weren't quite as loyal to Kerry as were the war's supporters to Bush. Bush won 90% of those who thought the war was going "well;" Kerry won 82% of those who thought it was going "badly." Bush won 90% of those who thought that Iraq war had made the U.S. more secure; Kerry won 80% of those who thought it had made America more vulnerable. While these are not large differences, Bush's electoral victory was constructed out of just these sorts of small margins. The bottom line for Kerry was that the war on terror proved the "most important" issue to more people than did the war in Iraq, and Bush got most of these people's votes.

Certainly, Kerry bears some responsibility for letting Bush get away with this. Kerry's tortuous effort to explain his own decision first to authorize and then to oppose the war did little to reassure the public about his steadfastness in a time of great fear. But as the challenger, Kerry had fewer options than many believe. The fact that the U.S. had not been attacked since 9/11 may have proved more decisive than anything either candidate said, reassuring many people that Bush was getting the job done, even if they didn't know (or care to know) exactly how. More than half of all voters said that America was safer in 2004 than it had been in 2000, and four out of five of these chose Bush.

Rather than devote the Democratic National Convention to a slugfest with Bush over their respective military credentials, Kerry would have been far better off shifting the debate to the economy. Not that he didn't try. But there was something horribly amiss in how he went about it, even after Bush had prepared the ground for him. In the January 2005 LA Times poll cited above, Americans made clear that they distrusted Bush's class instincts: 51% thought that he

cared more about “rich people” than everyone else; 62% thought that he cared more about “protecting the interests of large corporations” than “ordinary working people.” But Kerry did next to nothing to capitalize on that sentiment. This is truly remarkable given the economy’s anemic economic performance. Even with yawning budget deficits, and clear signals that Bush wanted to undo social security, on Election Day more voters (49%) thought Bush was better able to handle the economy than Kerry (45%).

It’s not that Kerry didn’t have lots of things to say about jobs, health care, and other bread-and-butter issues. It’s that he proved unable or unwilling to clarify the organizing principles that animated his long list of concrete proposals. In contrast to Kerry, Bush was the visionary, a compassionate conservative who wanted to turn America into an “ownership society.” On Bush’s watch, everyone would own a piece of the pie. Kerry wanted to…. Even now, after the dust has settled, it’s hard to finish the sentence. When asked why they had voted for Bush, his supporters said that they liked him, his leadership, his values, and his goals. Kerry’s most fervent supporters struggled to name what the candidate stood for. Asked why they backed their candidate, Kerry voters were much more likely to name what they hated about Bush, from his dishonesty, to the war in Iraq, to the regressive economic and tax policies. Fewer could say what they liked about Kerry himself, other than that he wasn’t Bush. The problem for Kerry was that in America, as George W. had learned from his father, it’s better to stand for something, even if it’s wrong, than to be seen as standing for nothing at all.

Where to Now?

There has been a good deal of hand wringing since Election Day about the Democrats’ prospects. There should be. Karl Rove and Grover Norquist intend to use Bush’s second term to lock in Republican control over the federal government. That’s the point of privatizing social security, eliminating the progressive income tax, restricting union organizing, expanding medical savings accounts by killing off the welfare state and fatally weakening unions, the Republicans intend to eliminate the institutions and organizations that support the Democratic Party. Unless Democrats figure out a coherent and compelling counter strategy, Rove and Norquist may succeed.

Predictably, the party’s centrists, notably Al From and his Democratic Leadership Council, have sought to capitalize on Kerry’s defeat by hauling out the oft-repeated but still to be demonstrated argument that Democrats lose because they run too far to the left. The DLC thinks that the Democrats should stick to programs that expand working and middle class families’ access to things like health care and education *without* significantly increasing federal spending, taxes, or business regulation. Free trade figures prominently in their strategy precisely because it gives multinational corporations what they want while promising to raise American standards of living. Now that Bush has shown that culture matters too, these centrists also want the Democrats to take “morality” more seriously: talk more about God, even rethink the party’s historic stand on choice.

While it's not a bad idea to be respectful of other people's cultures and values, particularly if you want them to listen to what you have to say, the DLC analysis and strategy make very little sense. For one thing, apart from Walter Mondale in 1984, it's hard to figure find a liberal heading up the ticket since 1976. And while the DLC is correct to point out that Bill Clinton won as a centrist in 1992 and 1996, three other centrists Jimmy Carter, Michael Dukakis, and Al Gore lost. It's also important to remember that Clinton's 1992 victory owed as much to Ross Perot's appeal to independents and even to disaffected Republicans as it did to Dick Morris' strategy of "triangulation." As far as Kerry goes, only a willful misreading of his voting record allowed the Republican National Committee to label him the Senate's "most liberal" member. He was much closer in instinct and on policy to the DLC than From admits.

In any case, it's not clear how much a "Republican-light" strategy would buy and at what cost. A less fundamentalist version of Republicanism might appeal to southern moderates and swing voters in the battleground states of the Midwest. But it might also alienate a significant part of the Democrats' base, resulting in little if any net popular vote gain. As for "morals voters" in the battle ground states, it's hard to believe that a sudden religious conversion by the Democratic Party is going to convince many on the Christian right that the devil's spawn have finally found the light. Keep in mind that many of these voters are more than willing to criminalize abortion even if, as Bush's "partial birth" abortion ban would have done, criminalization puts the very life of the pregnant woman at risk. More likely, these people will see the Democrat's death-bed conversion for what it is: pandering.

As important, by shifting even further rightward, the Democratic Party would find it that much harder to do the very things that the party needs to do in order to make a lasting impression on voters: clarify what it stands for and, once in office, deliver the things voters want, including accessible and affordable health care, high quality, low cost education, and well paying jobs. Ironically, in worrying so much about being seen as too extreme, the Democrats are ignoring the most important lesson that the Republicans learned after 1964. Radical ideas are not necessarily a liability if, in promoting them, the party projects a clear, even exciting message about change. Republicans are winning elections as visionaries with a radical reform program, not as defenders of the status quo. Bush won in 2004 despite being widely perceived as significantly to the right of the mainstream because he convinced a fair number of Americans that he would not only protect them, but change America in important ways. In the end, and not surprisingly given the public's lack of attention to issue specifics, Americans like their candidates to promise big things.

Which brings us to the one real option that Democrats have, the one that they seem intent on not trying: economic populism. As much as most of the party's insiders refuse to admit it, the Democrats need to push hard for a substantial reformation and rehabilitation of government's role in the economy, including frankly redistributional tax and spending programs to reduce economic inequality, a frontal assault on corporate cronyism, and regulatory programs that protect Americans from the human and environmental costs of free market capitalism.

The Republican edge in turnout in 2004 remains a great shock and disappointment to the left.

It has always been the conventional wisdom that those Americans who stay home on Election Day are or at least should be part of the Democratic base. Even Republicans have thought that true until quite recently. That's why they have spent so much time and money trying to suppress the vote and erect barriers to registration. But, as Rove knew, some non-voters, even the downscale non-voters thought to be natural Democrats, could be convinced to vote Republican with the right issues. But there are still many potential Democrats waiting to be mobilized and a straightforward appeal to their economic interests appears to be the only way to do that.

Certainly, as the party's moderates warn, this is "old fashioned" class struggle. Exactly, and there is ample evidence that it still works. On poll after public opinion poll, Americans endorse populist economic reforms, from increasing the tax burden on the rich to fair trade policies that protect jobs and the environment. Indeed, whenever the public is presented with clear choices – to privatize social security at the cost of reducing guaranteed benefits, or to more strictly regulate health care providers in order to increase access and lower costs, for example – they reject the free marketeers preferred solution. Why not offer these voters what they want: a vision of economic justice in which Democrats champion the interests of working people against corporate interests?

Unless the Democrats force the economic issue back to the top of the agenda, culture will continue to dominate it. Republicans focus on "morals voters" not only because there are votes to be gained on this ground, but because the tight focus on culture keeps the conversation off the economy, the one place where Rove and Norquist fear the Democrats. They know that cultural issues trump economic issues in the minds of middle Americans because Democrats haven't forced economic issues back on the agenda. Yes, Kerry offered dozens of position papers on the economy. But voters who checked out www.Kerry.com for a compelling story about economic decline, reconstruction, and structural reform were left with little to hold onto and certainly nothing that could have competed with Bush's biblical drama about cultural sin and religious redemption.

But would economic populism really win elections? Would it allow the Democrats to take back the White House itself? For all the centrists' fear about alienating the middle, a close look at Kerry's electoral (as opposed to elite) coalition suggests that little would be lost by moving to the left on the economy. It's hard to believe that Democratic voters in Democratic strongholds such as Oregon, Washington, Minnesota, Illinois, New York, California, and Massachusetts would defect from the party because it demanded a more equitable economy, more corporate accountability, universal health care, low-cost college tuition, and strict environmental regulation. Nor are core Kerry constituencies well educated, upscale urban professionals, racial and ethnic minorities, union members and their families, young voters – likely to be scared off by progressive economic policies.

The Midwestern working class might be similarly impressed by an appeal to their class interests. While white working class men broke for Bush by 25%, white working men *in unions* broke for Kerry by 21%.[vii] Clearly, union members had a different perspective on the

election, most likely provided by the unions themselves, which poured millions into educating and mobilizing union households. The Democrats might be able to play a similar role for non-union working class voters if those voters believed of Democrats what union members believe of unions that they are willing to go to bat for them. In fact, several Democratic electoral victories in 2004 lend support for this view. The party actually did quite well among downscale voters. Montana a red state – elected a populist economic governor. There are several very liberal senators from the Midwest, including Bryon Dorgan of North Dakota and Richard Durbin of Illinois.

Still, economic populism is not likely to solve the southern problem. The South is and will remain particularly difficult for Democrats no matter what they do. Republicans are now successfully appealing not only to southern white conservatives, but to Southern white moderates, including younger white southerners. Bush proved unstoppable in the South, winning 58% of the popular vote in that region (and all of the region's electoral votes) and an amazing 1064 of 1154 Southern counties. Considering that Bill Clinton won 510 of these same Southern counties in 1996, this was truly an impressive feat.

Clearly, many white southerners have found in the Republican Party's hyper-patriotism, militarism, opposition to affirmative action, patriarchalism, and religiosity something that speaks to their sense of self as much as to their pocketbooks. Given this, an economic populist strategy is unlikely to deliver the region. But it could help chip away at Republican margins, particularly in House and Senate elections that Democrats must win if they are to take back the Congress. In fact, there are reasons to believe that states such as Virginia, North Carolina, and Arkansas, and maybe even Tennessee, Kentucky and Georgia, are within reach. In each of these states, a program of social liberalism and economic populism could appeal to those college-educated professionals who think it important that their children learn evolution in school, and working class voters who think it important that there children go to college.

Embracing economic populism would cost the Democrats dearly with one significant constituency: the corporate elites and business PACs who, for various reasons, have helped fund the party. Ironically for a party of the people, the Democrats have come to rely increasingly on deep-pocketed millionaires and business interests to finance their campaigns. This was former DNC chair Terry McAuliffe's sorry legacy. By encouraging Democrats to fish in the same waters as Republicans, he discouraged them from doing what Republicans had done: develop a network of small donors willing to give over and over again because they believed in the party's mission.

But 2004 showed both the limits of McAuliffe's strategy and the wisdom of the Republicans decision to rely more on grass roots supporters. Faced with a Republican candidate so shamelessly pro-business and a Congress so firmly under the control of free market ideologues, corporate PACs saw no reason to fund both parties. The Democrats continued to receive money from investment bankers and multinational corporations that preferred one or another aspect of Kerry's plan, or wanted access to him just in case he got lucky. But unlike recent election cycles when corporate PACs hedged their bets by giving generously to both candidates and

parties, the biggest spenders among them gave overwhelmingly to the GOP in 2004. But thanks to Howard Dean and to groups like MoveOn.org, the Democrats discovered that their grass roots supporters would also send money even do fieldwork for them – if they had a reason to. It's obviously time for the Democrats to give them one.

Notes

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[i] "Americans Remain Polarized Over Bush." *Los Angeles Times*. January 19, 2005, A:1

[ii] 61% of the 41% of voters who said that they attended church at least once a week voted for Bush, as did 78% of the 23% of voters who call themselves "white evangelicals" or "born again" Christians. Culture helped Bush win even outside of traditional conservative strongholds Turnout, for example, increased 6.5% in the eight red states with a gay marriage ban on the ballot (compared to 5.7% nationally). Unless otherwise noted, all poll numbers are from 2004 exit polls. These can be found at http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html.

[iii] 35% in 2000; 40% in 1996. "The Triumph of the Religious Right." *The Economist*. November 11, 2004.

[iv] The results of a Pew Research Center survey, reported in Charles M. Madigan. "It Was the War." *Chicago Tribune*. January 2, 2005.

[v] 85% of those who approved of the war voted for Bush; as did 86% of those who said that terrorism was their most important issue.

[vi] See for example, "While Strongly Endorsing the Iraq War Public Rejects a New US Role Marked By Unilateral and Military Approaches." (College Park, Md.: University of Maryland, Center on Policy Attitudes and the Center for International and Security Studies, Program on International Policy Attitudes. April 29, 2003).

[vii] David Moberg. "Lessons for Labor." *The Nation*. December 27, 2004.

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Tin Foil Hats, The Msm And Election Mischief

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Was the 2004 election, perchance, fixed? 1 in 5 Americans, according to a December Gallup poll, suspect so.[1] Four out of five fellow Americans never heard a peep about rigging, believed scoffing authorities, or, being Bush backers, gloated. The first whiff our solid, and mostly white, middle class usually got of electoral mischief was the brief but brave challenge lodged at a joint Congressional election certification session January 6 by thirty-one Congressmen/women and California Senator Barbara Boxer.[2] Indeed, if not for the maligned blogs demanding investigations, such as the forums by Congressman John Conyers' House Judiciary Committee Democrat minority, ordinary citizens reliant on mainstream media (the MSM, in blogospheric parlance) would imagine that every vote was counted, just as the Fox News fairy tale goes. The MSM insisted that the rumors were, well, you know, a conspiracy made up of internet conspiracy theorists foisting sore loser views on sensible citizens who ought to believe everything they read in the New York Times (thanks for the war, Judith Miller) or watch on cable.

Given the utmost need for a trustworthy voting system it was very odd to watch a suddenly fastidious press, guardians of the public trust, do everything they could to tamp down percolating mis-election' reports dismissing them with a royal wave of the hand as sour grapes or batty conspiracy theorizing.[3] In upper media circles it is axiomatic that there are no such things as conspiracies. It was a bit rich, even bitterly amusing at times, to behold highly ambitious journalists and scholars, whose career fortunes (as they are most acutely aware) are decided in small rooms by unaccountable people, ruling out conspiracy from the start. Likewise axiomatic is their notion that villains with common interests must keep in intimate contact to pull off misdeeds. So only conspiracies are newsworthy, except they don't exist. And if there is no cheek-by-jowl conspiracy at work then villains can't be working toward a common end, and so they don't really matter. Neat logic. One wonders whether our intrepid media today would have stirred in 1972 if, say, some naïf noticed that a special White House unit was targeting domestic foes. Maybe if G. Gordon Liddy crossed his heart and promised to confess first?

So were Americans in November really 'dumb' enough, as an understandably testy British newspaper headline lamented, to elect a war-mongering, duplicitous, clueless, inarticulate buffoon as president?[4] Has Dubya, this reactionary dynastic 'aberration' slouching out from the 2000 Florida non-recount, now become a popular personification of a whole bellicose Orwellian 'era,' as a supercilious Guardian journalist suggested?[5] As small a consolation as it is to an apprehensive planet, a majority of Americans who trudged off to polling stations, it increasingly appears, fully intended to elect John Kerry (despite his long dreary list of shortcomings and misplays). Apart from numerous voter suppression gimmicks built into the

rickety US electoral system, as chronicled by Greg Palast and others, it was, according to a growing chorus of well-credentialed skeptics and congressional investigators, the deployment of easily-rigged electronic voting machines that may well have clinched the result for Bush.[6] Does the charge withstand scrutiny?

Contrary to soothing media accounts, the 2004 election was marred by tens of thousands of reported 'irregularities,' potentially affecting votes running to 6 and 7 figures. For starters, ask yourself what other modern country would be so staggeringly ill-prepared to handle a turnout of about 60 per cent? Scroll through the teeming complaints in Ohio – half of them afflicting the heavily populated Democratic county of Cuyahoga.[7] All one needed do to suppress decisive masses of Kerry votes, as the implacable Republican Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell is accused, is to deploy needed voting machines away from inner city working class Democrats who, with clock-in jobs and children with no nannies, then had to linger in often impossibly long lines for many hours. The press, initially, saw no problem whatever with this sly maneuver. Breaks of the game, guys.

This successful bottlenecking tactic finally is getting long-delayed coverage, as is a repertoire of dirty disenfranchising tricks. Blackwell, who also chaired Ohio's Bush/Cheney campaign, earlier overruled state guide lines when he decided that provisional votes (mostly given to inner city voters under contrived challenges, or while suffering long queues) be cast only in their own precinct and, a bit earlier, dictated that new and mostly Democratic voter registrations be deemed valid only if printed on 80 pound weight paper in shocking pink ink (okay, I added, the pink ink bit).[8]

New voters were at the mercy of often ignorant, indolent or downright devious poll workers, but that's nothing new.[9] Swat squads of Republican challengers' pestered likely Democrats (the tip-off usually being skin hue) at polling places so as to extend their voting ordeals; citizens were herded into wrong precinct lines in the right buildings, lifelong Democrats were purged from voting lists (mostly for not voting in two previous elections or changing their addresses, which the less affluent do more often). In Ohio's Warren County furtive officials expelled independent observers from the vote count by claiming, ludicrously, that the FBI warned them of imminent terrorist attack. In short, every demented trick that superannuated frat rat Republican cretins could dream up was dragged slimily out. Why? In a crucial national election, with Democratic registration way up and Independents and undecided voters likely to break for Kerry (as they did), Republicans could win only if they disenfranchise a goodly slice of opponents.[10] All that is at stake, after all, is hundreds of billions of public dollars, all those cool Pentagon playthings, and control of the law enforcement (or law flouting) apparatus of the nation. A quick scan of Conyer's Committee 102 page report covers many of the insidious gags the Republicans pulled off.[11]

Yet the single most disturbing electoral element in 2004 remains the role of eccentric, to say the least, electronic voting devices recording 30% of the US vote (versus 13 per cent in 2000) and, in addition, tallying 80 per cent of nationwide ballots in central tabulators minded by partisan pro-Bush private firms. The software source codes' are, serendipitously, proprietary

information. Your electoral system, in case you didn't know it, is virtually privatized. Why should anyone get excited about such irrelevant details? The MSM were extremely annoyed, and indeed baffled,.by the internet outcry. Republicans even when displaying ample motive, means and opportunity (not to mention, sleazy history) wouldn't try to exploit this frightfully advantageous situation, would they?[12] Perish the thought. Get over it. Pop another Prozac..

In the roiling aftermath, as recounts were demanded (but the Kerry camp remained formally aloof), the protective mantra was that no one actually hoped to change the outcome. Only indiscreet third Parties, at first, dared get into the investigative act. In New Hampshire Ralph Nader forced a teensy-weensy partial recount (11 of 301 precincts) in which Kerry gained votes but not what was deemed a significant number. In Ohio, at the behest of Michael Bednarik of the Libertarians and David Cobb of the Greens – later obliquely joined by Kerry/Edwards – a highly crimped recount was permitteded to proceed only after Blackwell certified a state vote replete with screamingly obvious anomalies, such as more votes than voters showing up in certain precincts.

A team of Kerry's lawyers did descend on Ohio, they tactfully said, "to make sure all votes are counted." One worthwhile service performed by these suits was preserving as much evidence as possible for perusal afterward. The official count of Ohio provisional ballots (77% accepted) cut Bush's margin to under 119,000. Of 147,000 hand-counted provisional and absentee ballots, Kerry took 54.46%, which by itself might raise a few eyebrows. Yet another remarkable electoral oddity is an obscure, underfunded Afro-American Democratic nominee C. Ellen Connally for the Ohio state Supreme Court gathering a six figure vote excess over Kerry. The candidate at the head of the ticket usually leads as vote-getter. So what happened?

The Ohio recount' itself was a series of travesties reported as routine truth. Precincts were not randomly selected, as stipulated by law, but largely picked by Blackwell. Triad, a voting machine manufacturer supplying 41 of 88 Ohio counties, dispatched technicians who, according to affidavits (not "anecdotes"), re-jigged devices in several counties before the recount began and also set up cheat sheet to enable lazy or pliant officials to match tallies and so avoid full hand recounts.[13] Some re-counters found ballots were pre-sorted, not random; that signature counts did not match official recorded votes; and other anomalies. One can't help but marvel at Board of Election officials and in Ohio Democrat and Republican alike were appointed by Blackwell who behaved as if this nuisance of a voting system must not dare to inconvenience them. Blackwell brushed off subpoenas like they were gnats. It is difficult to come away from a survey of incidents' without deducing that nothing in the USA today seems a prosecutable offense where vote tampering is concerned. How many incidents,' amateur and real lawyers alike wonder, add up to fraud anyway?

Recount demands were lodged in Nevada (refused) and New Mexico (still pending) too. With the Democratic Party and media investigators missing in action, Reverand Jesse Jackson Sr. visited Ohio in early December to rally support for investigation of anomalies that he justly said cast the US election as much into question as the notorious one in the Ukraine where exit polls discrepancies set off heeded alarms.[14] House Judiciary Committee Democrats led by Conyers

commenced looking into voting maladies and produced a

102 page Dorian Gray portrait of Ohio. Purported whistleblower Clint Curtis, who says several years ago he was asked by Florida Republican honcho and now Congressman Tom Feeney to devise a nifty prototype software program to switch opponent votes one in 20 would do the trick – to Republicans, bore up rather well under grilling.[15]

Yet the US media, except for a few (like Keith Olbermann of MSNBC news or Randi Rhodes on Air America radio) shied well away from what it disdainfully dubbed "tin foil hat" conspiracy theories.[16] The best way to prove one's case is, of course, to go and prove it either way. Commendably keeping the noisome issue alive in the blogosphere and internet news services were, in no particular order, such sites as Democratic Underground, blackcommentator.com, Smirking Chimp.com, Daily Kos, Brad blog, Freepress.org, cursor.org, bluelemur.com, Raw story, corporatenewslies.com, Buzzflash, wikipedia.org and many others one can find through links in the foregoing list. The MSM was daintily disdainful, although right wing blogs evidently propelled the mainstream's insanely beside-the-point denunciation of Dan Rather for his use of the wrong memo copy to prove an utterly accurate Bush National Guard AWOL story.

Still, the stony silence the mainstream media exhibited on electoral mishaps' betrayed an inherent rivalrousness with blogs that formerly were beneath notice. In amazingly haughty retorts the MSM relied less on argument or evidence than upon their increasingly tarnished authority to carry the day. The blogs, for their part, may be wildly varied in tone and temper but there is an intriguing core that meets high criteria. In the Democratic Underground threads, for instance, one finds a few loopy comments (as one does daily in seminar or news rooms) but any theorizing got tested for rigor and (not quite the same thing) public persuasiveness. A lawyer would weigh in, then a computer programmer, then a manager of a software company, then a statistician, then another lawyer or someone with insider' experience to show why this or that notion would or wouldn't fly. They ultimately subjected arguments to some reasonable first round tests of logic and evidence so as to satisfy (ideal) mainstream requirements. It wasn't all that bad as modern town hall meetings go. And there most definitely is first rate investigative reporting out there among the dubious stuff. You have to pick though it with a critical attitude, just like when reading the daily papers. People in threads love to play devil's advocate too. While no substitute for our more staid institutions, they can be valuable correctives and one is glad these alternatives are there.

For what is potentially at stake is not 500-some Florida votes but upwards of five million national ballots or more. The new electoral machinery is the rather wormy fruit of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which funded electronic voting as a panacea for past punch card ills. Yet Republicans fiercely resisted a paper trail requirement proposed in separate House (sponsored by Rush Holt) and Senate bills (sponsored by Hilary Clinton and others). Venezuelan electronic machines offer auditable paper trails, why not US ones? Every computer expert not on partisan payrolls testifies that these ditzy machines are a perfect invitation to program/reprogram whatever result manufacturers or rogue programmers please, and with no unsightly trace. So how to detect tampering? The machines, as chance would have it, are

manufactured mainly by four US firms which boast strong Republican (including nutcase Christian fundamentalist) ties.[17] Diebold's CEO Wally O'Dell, infamously promised assembled corporate brethren in the Summer of 2003 that he would "deliver" Ohio to the Republicans. (Blackwell bragged last month in a fund-raising letter that he delivered" Ohio to Bush). Anybody listening? Some 40 million votes passed through the innards of these delicate gadgets, and indications that some underwent a sudden 'conversion experience' there or, much more likely, inside easily hacked central tabulators, is accumulating.

The election despite Bush's apparent 3 million vote majority – came down to whomever nabbed Ohio. Just a one per cent voter swing would make Kerry president. There were scores of startling cases of voters touch-screening Kerry and having Bush flash up or the screen go blank.[18] But visible miscues are the least of the problems.

Despite a veritable mountain of facts attesting that these machines can be altered with ridiculous ease, our proud pundits instantly and without exception opted to explain the wide discrepancies between exit polls and final tallies as entirely the fault of historically highly reliable exit polls. Exit polls should not be confused with pre-election polling, as the post-election press likes to do. Exit polls customarily are accurate to within 0.4 per cent of final tallies whereas pre-election polls have a margin of error ten times larger. In Germany exit polls regularly predict election outcomes within a quarter of a percentage point margin or less, and are regarded as checks on election mischief. Former Clinton guru Dick Morris stated that US exit polls are almost never wrong' and suggested in this case that the polls, not the vote, must be sabotaged.[19] The American MSM en masse genuflected to the immensely fallible machines. Where is a Luddite when you need one?

"Kiev? What about Cleveland?" Reverand Jesse Jackson archly asked about exit poll discrepancies in one of the first published mainstream op-eds at the end of November.[20] Jackson and John Conyers crankily insisted, so the testy press saw it, that mounting problems, electronic and otherwise, warranted serious inquiries. The most peculiar thing about the myriad of reported malfunctions, as Jackson and Conyers pointed out, is that nearly all malfunctioned in favor of Bush. Their gutsiness was fueled in no small part by the disgraceful fact that, by far the most targeted and disenfranchised group were blacks, who vote overwhelmingly for Democrats. The MSM saw nothing particularly personal or racist in this, just ordinary and insignificant political high jinks, although many blacks didn't see it quite that way. Little wonder that Jackson and Conyers took the lead in generating what paltry and belittling attention that the newspapers and networks were willing to devote.

Were these dark suspicions so preposterous? In October 2004 California ordered 15,000 touch-screen Diebold machines not be used because of serious flaws. "[Diebold] literally engaged in absolutely deplorable behavior and, to that extent, put the [2002] election at risk, jeopardizing the outcome of the election," said California Secretary of State Kevin Shelley.[21] A voting machine in one Ohio county precinct awarded Bush about 4000 votes despite there being only 638 registered voters. Was it an isolated error? Detecting errors is precisely the problem. Had a plausible number of votes been cast the discrepancy might not have come to light. A North

Carolina County machine lost 4,500 votes. Other machines began counting backwards after a certain numerical point (32,000 votes).[22] The list goes on as one scans especially (but not only) the battleground' States.

In a controversial chart of the Florida vote, strange results leaped out. In 22 counties with non-electronic machines one showed a slight drop in Democratic voting, and they produced an overall Democratic majority. However, of 52 counties using electronic machines 37 displayed often steep drops in Democratic turnout and huge rises in Republican turnout, so as to pull off a half million vote majority for Bush – despite both 2000 figures and exit polls predicting the opposite result)[23] In 22 non-electronic counties Bush and Kerry showed similar improvement in turnout while in electronic counties Kerry's vote was flat while Bush soared 45 per cent. Was this remotely credible in such a fiercely fought contest? The Republicans' smug claim that they worked harder than Democrats to get out their vote is what they say reports of voting mischief are, anecdotal.

The Florida chart was airily dismissed in The New York Times when a couple of obliging academics were summoned to point out that small rural communities in that region often are "Dixiecrat" (registered Democrats voting Republican).[24] Sober leftists, including David Corn of The Nation, accepted this apparent debunking and joined in the mocking chorus, a weirdity since The Nation earlier published the single best forewarning of electronic hanky-panky, a piece by Ronnie Dugger.[25] Alexander Cockburn, Rick Perlstein, Michael Moore and others likewise scoffed. Yet contempt is not the soundest scientific attitude with which to approach data either. Eager to convict, the mainstream assumed the chart creators were gullible and that they themselves were not. Yet their rebukes misfired inasmuch as the original chart analysts, knowing this, instead had averaged 26 mid-sized counties and still came up with an identical unlikely tilt to Bush.

At last one contrite internet journalist committed the initial "Dixiecrat" mistake, and was promptly corrected not by the MSM but by the original compilers of the chart.[26] Although he retracted his speculation within hours of first posting, the MSM gleefully seized it and wouldn't let it go circulating the story to this day as proof of the ineffable daffiness of the internet. News editors, of course, figured it was a low-risk call to ignore the electoral flap because Kerry didn't contest the result and because they believed that no tree falls in our modern forest unless their press corps says in fit print they heard it do so. Scoops' on the internet don't count. Anyway, as one managing editor of a major British newspaper told me, if the reported irregularities can't change the election result, why bother?

Yet troublesome studies poured in. Statistician Colin Shea at the Zogby Poll web site (which predicted a Kerry victory) reckoned that the consistent four per cent advantage reaped by Bush in closely fought states had a statistical improbability of 50 thousand to one. University of Pennsylvania researcher Steven Freeman reported that chances that the gaps between exit polls and votes in three key states were due to random error were 250 million to 1.[27] Freeman was criticized for underplaying design effects and exaggerating the odds.[28] But, if so, by how much?

Collectively, exit polls had Kerry handily winning both the electoral college and the popular vote – including Ohio, Florida and new Mexico- before the polls underwent a midnight "correction" aligning them with the incoming votes which ruins the polls as independent devices. The poll data, owned by a private consotium, also is proprietary information. A Cal Tech/MIT Voting Technology Project study, glommed onto by the New York Times as the infallible final word, turned out to have employed this useless adjusted poll data to refute charges of a fix.[29] That is, they circularly used the results they were supposed to check to verify the results. The demand by bloggers, critics and Conyers for the raw data" from the NEP was even ridiculed on the rather contradictory grounds that raw data is meaningless and that anyway this raw data isn't raw anyway since it already has undergone transformations in the course of being recorded.[30] Yet what this means is that one cannot appraise the validity of the transformations or results without examining raw data,' or whatever one cares to call it, too. Indeed, even the National Commission on Elections and Voting in a much-cited report hostile to the rigging charges recommended full data disclosure."

University of California professor Michael Hout found that in Florida's heavily Democratic Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties that Bush was awarded 130-260,000 excess votes, whether by error or design. (Bush won Florida by 380 thousand votes): "No matter how many factors and variables we took into consideration, the significant correlation in the votes for President Bush and electronic voting cannot be explained," asserted Hout. Yet another study found it within a 95% probability that Kerry was the popular vote winner, to boot.[31] If studies reckoned the odds against Bush winning were only 2 to 1, might a bit of poking around be in order? You know, just in case?

In this hypersensitive fray, mainstream viewers resort to the discrediting ploy of exaggerating their opponents' claim to say exit polls are more accurate than vote tallies all the time. Authorities say that although it is true exit polls are used in German elections at a very high accuracy, or were used in Mexico to assure that the ruling party wasn't rigging against Vicente Fox, that the US polls are constructed for different purposes with different sample sizes so that, and here they stretch a bit, they are no use for prediction, even though that is at least one purpose the networks who pay them for. They are not a warning light' on the dashboard, as the US State Department insisted, in Ukraine. The speculation that exit polls were off because Kerry voters might have been more eager than pathologically bashful Bush voters to speak to pollsters is beyond the realm of the lame as an excuse. How does one account for the vast preponderance of the breaks from the exit poll predictions 42 of 51 units (including Washington D.C) – going in the same direction, toward Bush, anyway?

One reliable protective mainstream device is the familiar phenomenon of differential application of healthy doubt to those theories the viewer dislikes versus those the viewer favors. The first credible alternate explanation' that is mooted is duly bought right on the spot, without bothering to kick the tires or look under the hood. With watchdogs like these guys who needs stooges? Consider the instructive following summary, a few days prior to the election, of our wartime President's standing, cited by a writer who nevertheless argues that the Bush camp's mesmerizing narrative' (Strength! Leadership! Character! Integrity!') carried the

day:[32]

Most notably, more Americans (55 percent) said they thought the country was “headed in the wrong direction” than those who said it was headed in the right one, and fewer than half the Americans polled (49 percent) said they approved of the president’s performance in office. More disapproved than approved of the President handling of foreign policy (49 to 45 percent) and of the economy (51 to 43 percent). Finally, more Americans disapproved than approved of the president; handling of Iraq (50 to 45 percent), and, perhaps more striking, two of three Americans told pollsters that Mr. Bush’s tax cuts his signal domestic achievement had either been bad for the economy (17 per cent) or had not made much difference (51 percent).

Yet, after a rocky day, during which an aide informed him that he was likely to lose, Bush wins handily. (Republican experts believed the exit polls they now disparage, which ought to tell us something.)[33] The question is not whether there are plenty of suckers in America but whether there were enough to elect our tongue-tied P. T Barnum. So analysts of every description and caliber on or via the internet are poring over physical incidents as well as testing statistical relationships between votes and kinds of voting devices (paper, punch card, opti-scan and electronic) plus differences between exit polls and recorded votes, and subjecting them all to every imaginable test. By way of evidence gathering, Bev Harris’ organization Black Box Voting (whose video demonstration of easy electronic meddling is at www.votergate.tv) is carrying out the largest Freedom of Information trawl ever for public records from thousands of counties. According to Harris: “Among the materials requested are internal audit logs, polling place results slips, modem transmission logs, and computer trouble slips.

Were there earlier inklings of problems? Plenty. (See, for example, www.ecotalk.org/VotingMachineErrors.htm) Republican Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska happened to be chief executive of a voting machine company which blanketed his state with its nifty gadgets just before his 1996 upset victory. Hagel miraculously captured almost every group, including many blacks who never before showed any fondness for Republican in suits or sheets. In the all-electronic state of Georgia pre-election polls showed Democratic Senator Max Cleland with a two to five point leads over Republican challenger Saxby Chambliss – and losing by seven per cent. In one Texas County in 2000 three Republicans got 18,181 votes each – with two more outside Texas scoring exactly that total too.

The macho naïveté that many leftists have displayed about getting over it” is exceedingly strange. If the evidence pans out, and only investigations can ever find if it will, then the implication is that, uncorrected, there would be no possibility of defeating Republicans ever again. One supposes leftover immiserationists (“the worse things get, the better”) welcome this plight but they’re woefully misled if they imagine they and their constituency will suffer less than the so-called “Red Staters.” in the relentlessly ugly future that Bush yahoos have in store. What is the point of crafting incisive manifestos if it is done on the basis of misinformation and rigged realities? Would the distraction of moral values” rubbish have arisen otherwise?

What’s the upshot of the controversy? For a brief shining moment a fading, far-fetched

scenario in deep recesses of the blogosphere was one of an amassing of incontrovertible errors and malfeasances so as to force scrutiny of election and perhaps even a re-vote. Some internet enthusiasts even dreamed Kerry was monitoring events in preparation for a dramatic un-concession' speech. Evidently not. Still, on the basis of evidence of systematic irregularities, lawyer Cliff Arnebeck of a citizens watchdog group did file in the Ohio Supreme Court to overturn the result and order a state-wide revote, a long shot measured in light years. The suit was rejected after the election result was certified in Congress but it is likely to be filed in Federal Courts next so as to secure a precinct by precinct examination that can yield conclusive data (or disprove suspicions). The Ohio recount flushed out, or was itself the occasion for, ever more seamy events. And it is a mistake to ignore antics in other states, such as New Mexico (a 7000 vote Bush win) where voter suppression was rampant in native American and Hispanic districts, or to assume these antics only began in 2004.

Jesse Jackson's proposal for a constitutional amendment to standardize state voting procedures is an essential step forward. Democratic Congressmen duly asked the Government Accounting Office to "immediately undertake an investigation of the efficacy of voting machines and new technologies used in the 2004 election, how election officials responded to difficulties they encountered and what we can do in the future to improve our election systems and administration." A verifiable paper trail' must be affixed to electronic devices, although only hand counting of paper ballots really can eliminate the inherent threats of these easily meddled-with machines. What also is vital is lower level investigations that may eventually put the squeeze on cute critters who, if they indeed exist, will blab and offer evidence to save their skins and begin to unravel things.

Did tens of millions of ordinary Americans stand in line, often for many hours, to vote for an ultra-right winger who has blithely bungled everything he has touched? Perhaps the likely story Republican strategist Karl Rove spread about a vast turnout of rightwing Christians – the American Taliban – is accurate but the numbers so far don't necessarily support it. What is clear is that the first priority is electoral reform to avert a recurrence, or even a suspicion of recurrence, of this election. One can strategize from here to doomsday and it won't matter one iota if the voting system is rigged. What would advice be today if Kerry were President with a 51-48% victory, as exit polls seemed to predict? Perhaps not so different. Kerry is no savior, a near majority who voted for Bush remain a huge concern, and the MSM stays overwhelmingly rightwing. Yet the stampede, at least, into a lot of little Armageddons, or one great abyss (see Bronner's grim and insightful accompanying piece), would have been interrupted. No small grace.

A polity that prizes accountability must look into the claims if only to dispel widening fear that the fix was in. Only 53% of Democrats were "very confident": their vote counted (versus 86% of Republicans).[34] In CNN exit polling 86 per cent of Democrats in Florida and 80 per cent in Ohio 'were not confident that their vote would be counted accurately." That kind of alienation needs to be addressed. Bush continues as President but this controversy is not going to go away quietly. What bloggers, to whom we owe a debt, are asking is that the media view the evidence through something other than wraparound tin foil spectacles.[35] We're not (only) in

Kansas anymore.[36]

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[1] www.inthe00s.com/index.php/topic,5738.0.html. 77% think Bush won fair and square.'

[2] For many this gesture made some amends for the wrenching scene in Michael Moore's documentary Fahrenheit 9/11 when protesting Congressional Black caucus members couldn't drum up a single Senator to back their objection to the 2000 election result.

[3] Where, many people reasonably wondered, was this debunking zeal when the Bush Administration was concocting its case for invading Iraq? See, for example, Michael Massing, Iraq, the Press, and the Election" New York Review of Books 16 December 2004

[4] The Mirror (UK) 4 November 2004.

[5] Jonathan Freedland, This is no passing phase, this is now an era' The Guardian 4 November 2004.

[6] Greg Plast, The Best Democracy Money Can Buy (New York: Plume Books, 2003). And his "Kerry won" http://www.commondreams.org/views04/1104-36.htm

[7] See https://voteprotect.orgindex.php?display=EIRMapCounty&state=Ohio&cat=ALL&=ED04&county=Cuyahoga.

[8] Some of these tactics were caught and stopped by Democratic watchdogs but not before doing incalculable damage.

[9] Fritz Wenzel, Purging of Roll, Confusion Anger Voters: 41% of provisional ballots axed in Lucas County', Toledo Blade 9 January 2005. http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050109/NEWS09/501090334&SearchID=73195662517954

[10] A momentarily candid Republican state legislator in Michigan, for example, blurted, "If we do not suppress the Detroit vote, we're going to have a tough time in this election cycle." http://www.freep.com/voices/columnists/eholl27_20040727.htm

[11] Preserving Democracy: What went Wrong in Ohio.' House Judicary Committee Democratic Staff (US House of Representatives 5 January 2005 "We have found numerous, serious election irregularities in the Ohio presidential election, which resulted in a significant disenfranchisement of voters. Cumulatively, these irregularities, which affected hundreds of thousand of votes and voters in Ohio, raise grave doubts regarding whether it can be said the Ohio electors selected on December 13, 2004, were chosen in a manner that conforms to Ohio law, let alone federal requirements and constitutional standards." p. 4. This PDF can be

downloaded many places, including Buzzflash.com.

[12] For a typical specimen of once-over-lightly debunking, see Russ Baker, "Election 2004: Stolen or Lost?' 10 January 2004. www.alternet.org/story/20934. "As for Diebold and other vilified companies," Baker writes reassuringly, "in all probability, they didn't, and wouldn't, risk the ignominy and consequences of fixing an election.' That's all right then, as Monty Python used to say.

[13] See Bob Fitrakis, Steve Rosenfeld and Harvey Wasserman "Election 2004: Ohio vote count battles escalate amidst new evidence of potential criminal activity.' 18 December 2004 www.freepress.org. Also see Preserving Democracy: What Went Wrong In Ohio?' (fn 9) pp. 78-95.

[14] Of course, the White House got the result it desired in the USA but not the one it sought in the first election in the Ukraine.

[15] Brad Blog.com broke this story. Curtis' affidavit downloadable at corporatenewslies.com. Sworn testimony of Clint Curtis to House Judiciary (http://www.dailykos.com/comments/2004/12/13/18416/541/77#77) Cited in Wikipedia.org.

> *Q: So one person putting in bad code in a central tabulation machine could affect thousands and thousands or tens of thousands of votes?*
>
> *A: Right.*
>
> *Q: And if you had a recount and no paper trail, would that be … reversible by seeing the discrepancy between the tabulator, the central tabulator code, and what the individual machines which had not been tampered with code?*
>
> *A: Not if I wrote it.*
>
> *Q: Why not? In other words…*
>
> *A: In other words I could make it match.*

[16] Tin foil hats, apparently are donned by dazed believers as mental protection from evil telepathic space alien influence. You can see these shiny chapeaus on display in the lamentable M. Night Shyamalan 2002 movie, Signs.

[17] Howard F. Ahmanson, majority owner of ES & S voting machines, is a sugar daddy for Christian Reconstructionist projects, a board member of the religious right theocratic think tank Chalcedon Institute and a member of the ultra-right Council for National Policy. http://www.bestoftheblogs.com/2003_02_05_bestof.html.

[18] See Richard Hayes Philips, "Default Settings in Mahoning County.' The Free Press 23 December 2004, http://freepress.org/departments/display/19/2004/1018

[19] Dick Morris, "Faulty Exit Polls" New York Post 4 November 2004. http://www.hillnews.com/morris/110404.aspx

[20] Reverand Jesse L. Jackson, Jr, "Kiev? What About Cleveland?' Chicago Sun-Times 30 November 2004.

[21]http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Vote2004/story?id=203866&page=1),[38], and http://www.wired.com/news/evote/0,2645,63191,00.html

[22] Broward Machines Count Backward,' Palm Beach Post, November 5, 2004

[23] Kathy Dopp. See http://ustogether.org/Florida_Election.htm

[24] Faun Otter, Vote Fraud Theories, Spread by Blogs, are Quickly Buried" New York Times, 12 November 2004. p. 1

[25] Ronnie Dugger, "How They Could Steal the Election This Time." The Nation 29 July 2004.

[26] See Thom Hartmann "Evidence Mounts that the Vote was Hacked." www.commondreams.com. 6 November 2004.

[27] Steven F. Freeman, The Unexplained Exit Poll Discrepancy.' Research Report, University of Pennsylvania, 29 December 2004.

[28] http://www.mysterypollster.com/main/2004/12/exits_were_the_.html

[29] "Voting Machines and the Underestimate of the Bush Vote" http://www.vote.caltech.edu/Reports/VotingMachines3.pdf Even more odd, as remarked by a blogger, is that this Cal Tech/MIT Voting Technology Project did not mention its July 2001 report detailing how easy rigging electronic voting can be, entitled "Voting: What is, What Could Be." http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/nr/2001/VTP_report_all.pdf

[30] Baker, "Election 2004: Lost or Stolen'

[31] Jonathan Simon and Ron Baiman, "The 2004 Election: Who Won the Popular Vote? An Examination of the Comparative validity of Exit Poll and Vote Count data 28 December 2004 (www.Free Press.org.)

[32] Mark Danner, How Bush Really Won,' New York Review of Books 13 January 2005, p. 50. Also see Gary Langer, Poll: President's Year-end Job Approval: Views on Iraq Grow more Negative, Bush's Approval rating Follows', ABC News 21 December 2004.

[33] The aide is Karen Hughes, and the story was reported by Nancy Gibbs in Time magazine, 3 November 2004.

[34] National Annenberg Election Survey, 7 January 2005, p. 2. www.naes04.org

[35] As one blog contributor notes: If you really don't think election fraud this big is possible, please go read about the voting systems: Optech II Eagle Optical Scan readers with modems inside (the tallies of which can be changed using cell-phone technology), Windows-based PC's running Microsoft access to tabulate votes (that can be hacked via modem), touch screen machines that can be set to Bush as the default setting and/or that can be programmed to assign votes correctly unless the candidate you want to have win starts to drop below a chosen value (51% or 54%) at which point votes are assigned so that the vote percentage gets back to your desired value. How about punch card machines that are misprogrammed for precincts in which you think you candidate will lose so that when voters punch the hole for Kerry their vote is counted for Bush and vice versa. Where will you find material about how vote fraud this big could happen? You might start by tracking the links from Edgar Steele's post here http://www.serendipity.li/jsmill/bushwon.htm. (Look at the Devvy link and then at the Ronnie Dugger links in Devvy's post)."

[36] Thomas Frank, What's the Matter with Kansas? (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004).

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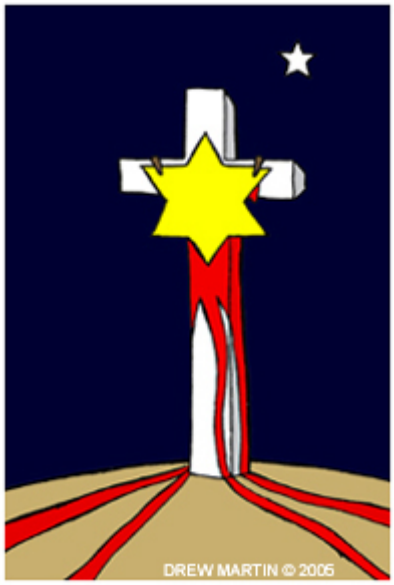
Christian Zionism And American Foreign Policy: Paving The Road To Hell In Palestine

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

The Cultural and Religious Context

The 19th century English poet and critic Matthew Arnold once observed that culture gives us a picture of how our world should be and then compels us to go out and "make it prevail."



Westerners have been doing just that for at least 500 years, and as a consequence there is scarcely a place on the globe that does not show some impact of this effort. And how have we undertaken to make our culture prevail? Traditionally, we have pursued a policy of imperialism that is supported by a number of assumptions and assertions which, alas, reflect the egomania of the Western cultural paradigm. For instance, there is the prevailing bipolar perception that the world is divided in two. On one side is a progressive and technologically advanced West. On the other side is a backward East in need of guidance. Then follows the assertion that modernity as expressed in Western style economic and political institutions is a prerequisite for societal success. Finally, there is an underlying assumption that the spread of Western civilization is inevitable and beneficial. In other words, imperialism is an altruistic endeavor. As Rudyard Kipling put it in his 1899 poem, addressed to the American people on the eve of the Spanish-American War, "Take up the white man's burden. Send forth the best ye breed….to serve your captive's needs."

The West's self-glorifying assertions are not restricted to the material. There is yet another persistently assumed aspect to our capacity to "meet its captives' needs," and this is the belief that the West possesses the superior religion of Christianity. Here the altruistic mission to

breech the bipolar divide by bringing the backward East the blessings of good government and the hardware of progress is melded with the proselytizing zeal of Protestant evangelical fundamentalism. No where can this be seen more readily then in that part of the Middle East known as the "Holy Land" or Palestine.

America Takes the Lead

It has been American devotees of the Holy Land who have most ardently melded religion and the notion of benevolent imperialism. And, they have done so with a characteristic self-righteousness that connects American manifest destiny with God Almighty. Listen to the Reverend John Codman addressing supporters of American missionaries Palestine and Greater Syria in 1836. "How can we better testify our appreciation of [America's] free institutions, than by laboring to plant them in other lands? For where the Gospel goes in its purity and power, there will follow in its train the blessings of civilization, and good government.…Coming himself from a land of freedom, he [the American missionary] will naturally spread around him an atmosphere of liberty." Codman was suggesting that, just like Protestant Christianity, America too had a divinely sanctioned mission to expand its way of life, its values of economic freedom and political democracy, for the salvation of mankind. Or, as one of Reverend's compatriots put it, America was "God's last dispensation towards the world."

It is not by coincidence that in the opening years of the 21st century we are still adhering to this traditional script. Many of America's leaders since the time of Codman have held his same point of view. And now we have President George W. Bush, whose public remarks clearly indicate that he too believes the United States is God's instrument in the divine mission of spreading modernity, development, free enterprise, and overall "freedom." The evangelicals are also still with us, adding the ingredient of spiritual redemption. As Robert Pyne, a theologian at the Dallas Theological Seminary has observed, today's Christian evangelicals "identify the American cause…as the cause of Christ." As it was for John Codman so it is for today's American fundamentalist Protestants the United States marches through history in partnered strides with God.

The Zionist Connection

The same Protestant fundamentalists who sought (and still seek) to redeem the Holy Land through missionary work as well as bringing the world the blessings of the American way of life, had (and still have) a fascination with the Jews. This is because many of these evangelicals were (and still are) true believers in the biblical prophecy that speaks of the return of the Jews to Palestine as a necessary precondition for the second coming of Christ. In his book *The Roots of Fundamentalism,* Ernest R. Sandeen captures the importance of this connection when he tells us that many Protestant fundamentalists "watched in fascination the formation of Zionism under Theodor Herzl and the meeting of the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.…Almost instinctively [they] grasped the significance of Allenby's capture of Jerusalem and celebrated the event as the fulfillment of prophecy." Thus it was that, by 1917 and the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, most American Protestants who concerned themselves with the Holy Land

were enthusiastic supporters of the right of the Jews, led by an active Zionist movement, to "return home."

In terms of altruistic imperialism, the Zionists soon became perceived as a major force for the physical redemption or modernization of Palestine, as well as the realization of prophecy. They won support in the United States by claiming to be acting in a traditional American style. For instance, American Zionists quite purposely drew parallels between the American pioneer experience and the Zionist colonization of Palestine. Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s representatives of the Zionist Organization of America placed articles in strategic American newspapers describing the Zionist "pioneers" as modern day versions of America's "brave and religiously pious settlers." Here are some quotes from one article that appeared in the New York Times on June 11, 1922. "These immigrants to Palestine are indeed the Jewish Puritans." Their settlements are "the Jamestown and Plymouth of the new House of Israel." They are "building the new Judea even as the Puritans built New England." The settlers are like the "followers of Daniel Boone who opened the West for American settlers" while "facing the dangers of Indian warfare." In the process "the Jews are bringing prosperity and happiness in Palestine."

As the Zionists opened the Holy Land for settlement, the natives, the indigenous Arabs (both the Muslim majority and what American Protestants considered the "pseudo" Christian Arabs of the Greek Orthodox and Catholic "degenerate churches"), became less noticed by American and other observers except in as much as they stood in apparent opposition to redemption and modernity alike. This took the form of a process of "perceptual depopulation" that erased the demographic and cultural/religious realities of Palestine. It was a form of ethnic cleansing at the conceptual level.

Impact on US Foreign Policy

In the 20th century, the impact of these interlocking religious and imperialist-colonialist lines of thinking on U.S. government policy begins with Woodrow Wilson. Wilson was easily persuaded by Louis Brandeis to support the Balfour Declaration because of, in part, the President's belief in biblical mythology. As he told the Zionist leader Rabbi Stephen Wise in 1916, "To think that I, son of the manse, should be able to help restore the Holy Land to its people." Most of the American Presidents who followed Wilson were similarly pro-Zionist. However, for the men in the White House there were sometimes countervailing international pressures that limited their ability to make too public a pro-Zionist display. For instance, Woodrow Wilson was a Christian Zionist but, during World War I, he could not be as forthright about it as he might have wished because to do so would have alienated the Turks and risked the ruin of the American missionary presence in the Ottoman Empire. Just preceding and during World War II, Franklin Roosevelt, who was sympathetic to the Zionists without being religiously motivated, agreed with the State Department that too much of a public pro-Zionist display would unsettle the Middle East and perhaps drive the Arabs into alliance with the Axis Powers. After World War II, presidents such as Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson (who likened the Israelis to 19th century "Texans fighting Mexico"), and Ronald Reagan (who had made

references to Israel's foes in terms of biblical prophecies) continued to have a basically romanticized biblical understanding of Palestine and Israel. However, even while faced with the issue of oil, they tended to be increasingly forthright in their support for Israel. Their Christian Zionist sentiments merged with the political and financial strength of the Zionist lobby to produce overtly pro-Zionist pronouncements and policies.

Congress, on the other hand, never suffered the occasional restraints felt by the executive branch. Their politics were wholly local and, very early on, the American Zionists had made themselves a force in the domestic politics of America. Thus, by 1922 Congress had passed a joint resolution in support of the Balfour Declaration and from that point on the legislative branch never looked back. They supported the Zionist interpretation of events during the 1929 Arab uprising in Palestine and the rebellion of the late 1930s. Even during World War II, when Roosevelt and the State Department were trying to keep the Arabs from deserting the British-American cause in the Middle East, Congress repeatedly tried to pass pro-Zionist resolutions calling for open Jewish immigration into Palestine.

There were varied factors that reinforced this enthusiasm for Zionism: anti-immigration sentiment among constituents during the depression and post World War II years (that led American leaders to support Palestine, rather than the U.S., as a destination for Jewish refugees), a mixture of post-war guilt and humanitarian sympathy with the Jews as victims of the holocaust, and the sheer financial and organizational clout of America's Zionist organizations. However, the effectiveness of all these factors was underpinned by the reality that a large number of Americans, who think little of foreign policy unless it can be linked to their everyday lives, had already been conditioned to view Palestine in romanticized biblical terms. In other words, for many American Protestants (to say nothing of the American Jews) Israel was, and is still, an extension of Sunday School, and in this mythologized form does touch their lives. As Lyndon Johnson once told a meeting of B'nai B'rith, "The Bible stories are woven into my childhood memories as the gallant struggle of modern Jews to be free of persecution is woven into our souls." Add to this Christian Zionist predisposition an updated version of the bipolar world view wherein Israel is seen as "the only democracy in the Middle East" and a Western civilizational outpost that is allegedly "just like us," and you get the acquiescence of many contemporary Americans to U.S. support for Israel that, between 1948 and 2001, totaled some 91 billion dollars.

Today's Christian Zionism

Today's Christian Zionists are motivated by the same religious passion as America's 19th century evangelical missionaries. However, they are now much better positioned and equipped to spread their ideas. Utilizing televangelist techniques, religious radio, evangelical newspapers and even religious novels, they have once more taken up the fulfillment of prophecy as a key motivator for American support of Israel.

Nor should one think of today's Christian Zionists as a fringe group. Those who call themselves "Christian conservatives," take the Bible as the literal or inspired word of God, believe in

prophecy, and expect the end of the world in the relatively near future, make up close to 20% of the American electorate. This constituency has become the voting core of the Republican party, or as Karl Rove, Bush's political adviser describes it, the Republican party's "base." The base proved its political potency in November of 2004.

The Christian Zionists are represented by such groups such as: 1) The Christian Coalition of America founded by Pat Robertson (who on a November 2002 program of the Christian Broadcasting Network which reaches 180 countries, called Muslims "worse than Nazis" and the efforts to bring peace to the Middle East a waste of time "The idea that you're going to make peace with the Muslim world by giving them territory (a reference to the Palestinian desire for a state) is an absolute illusion." 2) The Moral Majority founded by Jerry Falwell, who in October 2002 called Mohammed "a terrorist" and in June of 2003 remarked that "it is my belief that the Bible Belt in America is Israel's only safety belt right now." 3) The National Unity Coalition for Israel (NUCI), an important lobbying arm of the American Christian Zionist movement that maintains close contacts with neo-conservative Washington think tanks and Bush administration personnel. It is presently claiming to represent 40 million Americans and runs an on-going "Save Israel [from any compromises to the Palestinians] Campaign" 4) The Religious Roundtable run by Ed McAteer, the self-styled "godfather" of the modern Religious Right. In his opinion, "the best friends that Israel has are not those people who believe the Bible contains the word of God, but that the Bible is the word of God."

All of these individuals and groups were galvanized by the 1967 "Six Day War" and Israeli expansion into the Occupied Territories. Just as in the case of General Allenby's capture of Jerusalem in December of 1917, they saw the hand of God in Israeli expansion into the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and interpreted these events as a big step toward the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Their faith seemingly reconfirmed by events, Christian Zionists have since been energized to do what they can to move prophecy forward. They take hard line positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and have repeatedly warned the Bush administration that any real pressure on Israel to make a just peace would result in their abandonment of the Republican Party. In this way they have effectively blocked any substantive American Government support for a Palestinian state or the trading of land for peace. In essence they support the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in the name of Christ.

In this effort they once more have close allies in the government. For instance the November 2002 convention of the Christian Coalition, held in Washington DC, was opened with a videotaped benediction that came straight from the Oval Office. The most powerful republicans in Congress addressed the Convention (as did the Zionist mayor of Jerusalem), including Tom Delay who was then the House majority whip. We are "standing up for Jews and Jesus" he told the crowd. Later, as the majority leader in the House of Representatives, Delay went to Israel with the same message and addressed the Knesset directly. Under these circumstances, according to Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the conservative Cato Institute and himself an evangelical, the Christian Zionist message "colors the environment in which [government foreign policy] decisions are made." It is no surprise then that this administration often turns a blind eye to Israeli behavior no matter how brutal. The oppression of the Palestinians and the

confiscation of their land is simply “God’s way” of keeping his promise to “bless” the Israelites along with those who aid them (most of all America), and “curse” those who oppose Israel (most of all the Palestinians).

It should be kept in mind that this whole-hearted evangelical support of Israel and Zionism does not come from any love of the Jewish people or pity for their past sufferings. On the contrary, if a Jew takes the time to reflect upon what these evangelicals and their prophecies seek to accomplish, the only rational thing to do is run the other way. In fact, what the Christian Coalition et. al. have in mind for the Jewish people is annihilation in a fashion that makes the Holocaust look like an amateur operation. Here is their scenario. After the Israelis clear out the Palestinians, the Jews as a whole take the Palestinians place as the accursed of God. First there is the great battle at Armageddon at which most of the Jews are simply slaughtered. And then, in the aftermath, the surviving Jews see the light and convert to (Protestant fundamentalist) Christianity. Poof, a world wiped clean of the Jews. Remember, those who ardently await these events are part of Karl Rove’s Republican base. The Grand Old Party turns out to be partially grounded on a movement of fanatic anti-Semites.

What is equally disturbing is that the right wing of the Israeli political spectrum and their American Jewish boosters are in alliance with these divinely inspired supporters of Armageddon. They take their money and host them to champagne tours of the Holy Land even while these same Zionist Jews make fallacious claims of anti-Semitism against anyone who would criticize on-going Israeli barbarity in the Occupied Territories. We should judge these Zionists by the company they keep and, in their growing fanaticism, their taste has turned self-destructive. They now favor the companionship of those who anxiously await the ultimate demise of the Jewish people.

Amongst these Zionists, both Jewish and non-Jewish, are the neo-conservative imperialists who make up President Bush’s secular advisers: people such as Vice President Cheney, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, and, of course, Richard Pearle, Paul Wolfowitz, and Douglas Feith. Thus we have an intertwining alliance of neo-conservative government leaders and the Christian Zionist movement. It should be noted that all of these people and groups also believe that the United States has a duty to reshape the world in terms of its own interests. Just as in the mid 19th century, a sense of divine purpose has today been married to American manifest destiny. The same neo-conservative advisers who support Israel with the assistance and blessing of the Christian Coalition, planned the invasion of Iraq, and assert America’s right to remake the Middle East in the name of, as Reverend John Codman put it some 167 years ago, “spreading the atmosphere of liberty.” As American troops bombed Baghdad, the televangelist leader Franklin Graham (son of Billy Graham) prepared his army of missionaries as a second wave of invaders. Once more, we see ourselves as “God’s last dispensation towards the world.”

President George W. Bush: High Priest of a Fundamentalist National Religion

President George W. Bush has said that he makes decisions by “gut instinct.” There seems little

doubt that his instinct is basically that of an evangelical Christian with an unquestioning commitment to a divinely inspired American Manifest Destiny. Read Mr. Bush's 2002 and 2003 State of the Union Messages and you will find "the loving God behind all of life and all of history" has once more called on the United States to spread "the liberty we prize" which, according to the President, is "the right of every person and the future of every nation." For Mr. Bush the American cultural paradigm encompassing modernity, development, free enterprise, and democracy conveniently turns out to be identical with "God's gift to humanity." Here are a series of additional quotes from the President that meld Christian fundamentalist thought and American manifest destiny: "Our Nation is chosen by God and commissioned by history to be a model to the world of justice." The United States has been called upon to bring God's gift of liberty to "every human being in the world." "We are in a conflict between good and evil, and we will call evil by its name." In Saddam Hussein "we are encountering evil" that must be destroyed, even if it means waran action about which Mr. Bush says, "if anyone can be at peace, I am at peace about this." As one reporter recently concluded, "the sense of divine calling is hard to miss in the White House."

However, perhaps even more than the fundamentalist presidents before him, Christian evangelicalism melded to American nationalism marks the boundaries of Mr. Bush's world view and he seems incapable of the self-examination and reflection required to see beyond it. The results can be frightening to those who happen to be outside of Bush's world. For one, decisions made from "the gut" and guided by "providence" do not have to be thought through. In the Bush White House no one is allowed to play the devil's advocate, the "what if" critic. According to a Bush staffer "no one is allowed to second guess, even when you should." When, according to former Commerce Secretary Don Evans, the President's faith gives him "a very clear sense of what is good and what is evil" you don't need any second guessing. As a consequence the president knows who are the "terrorists"and "evildoers." Correspondingly, his gut and faith tells him who is "good." In the Middle East, the good guys are the Israelis.

George W. Bush and Israel

The way George W. Bush interprets his Christian fundamentalist faith causes him to have an a priori sympathy for Israel. Before he was President, Bush told the American Jewish Committee that, "I am a Christian. But I believe with the Psalmist that the Lord God of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. We will stand up for our friends in the world. And one of the most important friends is the state of Israel."

Prior to September 11, 2001 this commitment was kept in the background. The president had seen the approach of the Clinton administration to the Israeli-Palestinian problem as overly intrusive and unsuccessful. The result was a hands-off attitude that clearly favored the stronger party in the conflict. On September 11, however, as the Twin Towers came down, Bush's sense of divine calling seemed to rise up and his orientation changed. The "war against terrorism" became a holy mission for him. It was a "war to save civilization itself." And, almost automatically, Israel became a key player in the President's "anti-terror front."

Mr. Bush's gut told him that Yasir Arafat and most of the Palestinian leadership were "tainted by terror" and therefore evil. This is not surprising given that Bush's evangelical orientation makes it hard for him to understand Palestinian violence in terms of resistance. When it comes to the Holy Land, what is most real for the president is the Palestine of the Bible, which is "covenant land," and this rationalizes Israel's possession of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Therefore, he views the Palestinian reaction to occupation as defiance of God's will. The last 36 years over which Israel has destroyed Palestinian civil society, killed thousands of Palestinian civilians, and displaced hundreds of thousands more is, for the president of the United States, religiously justified.

In addition, if we are to judge from the justifications put forth for the war in Iraq, Bush is convinced that imperialism and colonialism should once more be fancied altruistic endeavors. Israel's settler movement and presence in the Occupied Territories could be interpreted in the light of the Zionist movement's original assertions for the occupation of Palestineas at once the fulfillment of biblical prophecy and the expansion of Western civilization. This also allows Bush to rationalize away Israeli actions, even at their most bloody. Thus, Israel's Prime Minister Sharon, who is a war criminal even in the eyes of some of his own countrymen, has been transformed into a "man of peace." Such a deluded approach has led American Zionist leaders to rate Bush's government as "the best administration for Israel since Harry Truman." Correspondingly, it can safely be said that almost no one in the Arab or Muslim world takes seriously any Bush administration blather about democracy and peace.

Conclusion

The 19th century Western cultural paradigm, combining as it did imperialism and religion, has once more come to the fore within the context of 21st century technology and geopolitics. A sense of cultural and religious superiority reigns in U.S. government circles, while a claim to the right of preemptive attack and conquest has been formally proclaimed. Of course, there are no longer a multitude of Western states competing for empire and therefore no immediate possibility of a "balance of power." Now the United States stands supreme. It alone claims the right to say, as Hilaire Belloc once did of the British, "Whatever happens, we have got the Maxim Gun, and they have not." In other words, power can do anything it wants in the world. However, those who wield the power always need ideologies and rationalizations to differentiate themselves from the merely criminal. Today, most of the rationales of this new rising empire are remarkably unoriginal. The bipolar perception of the world (now termed a "clash of civilizations"), the assertion of imperialist altruism, God as a partner in spreading modernity, development, free enterprise, democracy, etc. are all alive and kicking in the rhetoric of the Bush administration and its supporters. There is also the persistent Christian Zionist belief that American foreign policy is destined to help pave the way for Christ's second coming and the apocalypsean eminently anti-Semitic ambition.

History is littered with leaders who thought God was on their side. It is such an utterly vacuous and irrational belief that those who know real history (as against mythology) can only wonder at its persistence. Yet this is how our present American leaders see the world. It amounts to

the delusions of power marching hand and hand with the religious delusions of those who dream of prophecy and hear God whispering in their ears. Both approaches, the power of "blood and iron" and power Christian fundamentalist religion, now stand supreme in the halls of Congress and the Oval Office. The resulting inevitable slaughter has only just begun. American manifest destiny and Christian Zionist delusions now pave the road down which we all walk. It runs through Palestine and leads to hell.

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John Locke In Jerusalem Written On The 300th Anniversary Of The Death Of John Locke

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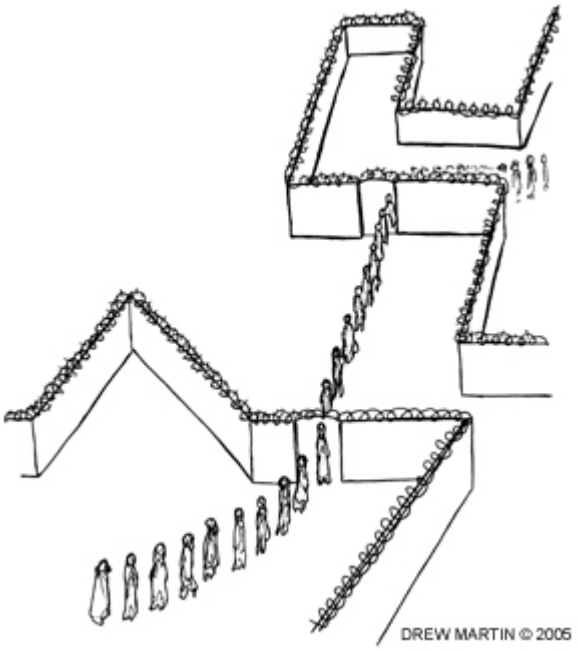
The year 2004 passed without any mention of the 300th anniversary of the death of John Locke. But thinking about Locke and his contributions made me



think almost at once of the conflict in the Middle East; about ethnocentrism, the role of religious identity and political identity; the ways that secularism and liberalism are unique in their ability to promote peace and social and political progress. Israel is touted as the lone democracy in the Middle East. When it is attacked, democracy too is being attacked. After 9/11 Israel has become a metaphor for what the United States has seen as a changed world: The claim of Israeli democracy has served ideologues of all kinds with different justifications for a variety of different policies. But irrespective of the rhetoric, the claim of Israel as being the lone democracy in the Middle East requires significant justification and it raises the question of exactly what democracy means in a global context where different peoples and ethnicities overlap and all too often degenerate into violence.

One of the things that political scientists examine is the phenomenon of political culture. The basic question of this kind of research is: How do political institutions operate in different cultural environments where different ideas about the state, law, rights and justice prevail? In the Middle East, individuals and parties that align themselves with secular, universalist, democratic traditions and political ideas have been slowly but assuredly eclipsed by the politics of ethnic particularism: a politics of group identity that trumps universal rights and therefore

the rights of minorities or any other kind of "other." There has been an erosion of the ideas and values of political liberalism with its emphasis on universal rights, a separation of religion and the government and an ethic of religious and ethnic tolerance, and a rise of the politics of ethnic particularism where the decisive factor of politics becomes religious and ethnic identity and the interests of the communities defined by these bonds. It is this tendency within Israeli political culture that is most distressing since it predates the active rebellion of Palestinians-something that began actually with the first intifada (uprising) in the late 1980s, an event that marked the first stirring by Palestinians in 30 years.

This does not mean to take away from the progressive elements of Israeli society which have advocated human rights, secularism and which have railed against a culture and politics of Jewish statehood and ethnicity. What does need to be pointed out is that the very idea of a state defined by religious and ethic identity becomes anti-liberal and therefore anti-democratic since it privileges a conception of politics which survives on the basis of exclusion. The erosion of liberal political culture in Israel has led, and continues to lead, to such a conclusion. And there should be no mistake about what is at stake: political culture is an issue of considerable concern because it is out of that mass of beliefs and values that institutions are rationalized, legitimized and redefined. Israel may in fact still possess liberal institutions and a fair amount of liberal notions within its political culture. But there is little doubt that the escalating conflict with the Palestinians as well as the internal conflict between secular and religious Israelis is pointing toward a new reality on the horizon: the demise of liberalism as a paradigm for Israeli politics, culture and society. The claim of Israeli "democracy" therefore needs to be subjected to more scrutinizing analysis.

Liberalism's Enduring Contribution

The problems of cultural membership, and the particular form of solidarity that it entails, have always been seen to be at odds with ideas of liberalism-and there is good reason to see why this is the case. And it is important to point out that supposedly "liberal" ideas can be co-opted and, in effect, distorted by the politics of identity. In her book Liberal Nationalism, Yael Tamir argues that liberalism's ideals of autonomy, free choice, and individual rights is in fact not irreconcilable with nationalism and the sense of belonging and loyalty to group identity that it entails. She sees the importance of liberal nationalism in its ability to reconcile the needs of cultural membership that individuals possess as well as the need for individual autonomy that liberalism puts forth. But what is becoming painfully obvious in the Middle East is that the emphasis on cultural membership and its various "obligations," especially those of a nationalism grounded in ethnic identity, have become not only a barricade to the possibility of peace in the region, but also a cancer on the prospects of liberal democracy inside Israel itself. Once group identity is privileged, the suppression of the "other" becomes ever more possible and, to be sure, more probable. What thinkers such as Tamir have overlooked are the ways that ethnocentrism factors into national identity; the way that nationalism itself can find coherence and strength based on the denigration or devaluation of other nations; and the ways that nationalism feeds the most irrationalist and dangerous elements in politics and culture. What has become obvious by the end of the twentieth-century is that any form of politics which is

grounded in ethnic identity and which gives privilege to that ethnic identity over that of universal citizenship and rights forfeits its ability to govern impartially and with any sense of democratic justice, especially in a time of national or regional crisis.

Liberalism is therefore not something that can find a neat affinity with nationalism, as thinkers like Tamir suggest. Quite to the contrary: what is radical and progressive about liberalism-and here I am referring to the kind of liberalism espoused by thinkers such as Locke and J. S. Mill, among others-is the way that it removes ethnicity or religious affiliation as a primary concern for political equality; the way that it universalizes rights by abstracting the individual from national, ethnic, racial and gendered categories and therefore separates these categories from the activity of the state and the content of its laws. Liberalism acts as a lever against pre-modern forms of hierarchy, status and superiority. It rails against these things because it promotes toleration, universalism and equality. It prevents the denigration of the civil rights of minorities by ensuring that equality is attached the category of personhood rather than on religious affiliation or ethno-cultural membership. Locke's notion of liberalism came not only from the notion of a natural right to property, but-and in many ways even more importantly for present circumstances-the elimination of the ascripitive attributes of individuals from the application of political rights. Whatever criticisms may be launched against liberalism for its defense of property and its economic doctrines does nothing to diminish its purely political impulse and the salience it still retains in the context of racial and ethnic conflict.

What was universal in Locke's liberal political theory was the category of the person-not male, Christian or of any particular social status. Locke's Deism was profoundly important for his conception of liberalism and the notion of tolerance that it entailed: since God did not intervene in the affairs of men and was only a creator of first causes who had receded from the universe and its unfolding-this was standard Enlightenment Deism, invoking the notion of the deus abscondus that the Protestant Reformation had inaugurated-there was no reason to involve religion with the state or to allow different religious views to lead to different or unequal rights under the state. This became a standard argument during the Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century-indeed, Voltaire would make a very similar argument decades after Locke. This also reinforced the secular character of the state which leads, in more contemporary arguments, to arguments for pluralism: ethnic and racial minorities ought to be accorded equal rights because of their status as persons, not because of any other characteristic they may actually possess.

Whereas Locke's doctrine would become a radical cry against both the church's influence in government as well as feudal social arrangements and the forms of hierarchy of pre-modern society, his continued relevance can be seen in the way that his philosophy structured the relationship between the individual, the state and religious affiliation (which in modern terms can be conflated with ethnicity or race). Locke's immediate concern was the various religious wars of his time-a similar concern of Thomas Hobbes decades before-but his ideas are not bound to their historical roots. Locke's ideas about toleration were in fact not theoretical insights, spun from the abstraction of philosophy. The time he spent in the Dutch Republic-which was founded as a secular state allowing religious difference to flourish before the

Calvinist church took power there-was crucial in forming his ideas about tolerance and the foundations of what we know now as the liberal political ideal of political equality. The conception of religious tolerance has broadened to become one of racial and ethnic tolerance in modern liberal democracies. But it is here that the roots of the cultural and political crisis of the Middle East can be glimpsed: the impossibility of true liberal democracy means not only the reversion to crude forms of nationalism or ethnic particularism, it also means the continuation of what the anti-liberal, Nazi political and legal theorist Carl Schmitt theorized as the centerpiece of all politics: the division between "us" and "them." Coexistence becomes impossible and, in time, dialogue does as well.

Israel and Anti-Liberalism

An anti-liberal politics has gradually become the norm in Israel, and this translates itself into a crisis that affects both Palestinians and Israelis and their mutual interests in peace and coexistence. In political struggles, we are more often than not defined by what we oppose and this means that both sides are sliding increasingly away from a politics which encompasses the other to one which deliberately excludes the other. We are supposed to believe that Israel, being the only democracy in the Middle East, is under attack just as the West is by Islamic terror. But the problem is that Israel can only be classified as a Jewish democracy, not much more and this leads to the perpetuation and, in many ways, the intensification of the present conflict. In other words, Israel is a democracy that grants a specific group, Jews, legal and political priority over its Arab minority within its legal borders and, of course, the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Indeed, whatever the legalistic gains made by petitioning the High Court of Justice and its more recent, liberal leaning-especially the so-called "Barak Court"-Israel's treatment of its own Arab minority has been less than democratic since the Court itself is weak with respect to policy and has little enforcement mechanisms available to it. Whether it is the seizure of Arab land in East Jerusalem or the As Zionism turns from an ideology of Jewish political autonomy from centuries of political, social and cultural dependence on others to one of political and ethnic tribalism, the chances for truly liberal-i.e., secular and without any form of ethnic orientation-political institutions become increasingly bleak.

What is needed more than ever is the resurgence of liberal institutions and ideas. The Sharon government's policy of "disengagement" ought to be seen for what it actually is: the continued expansion of the state of Israel to encompass what a highly mobilized religious minority see as the "Land of Israel" (Eretz Yisrael). It is a policy that serves the ends of both extremist religious zealots as well as extremist secular ends of territorial expansion and national separation from Arab lands. The fuel for this broad policy has rested on the notion that ethnicity is somehow tied to geography and it is ethnicity-not land-that is primary in the Middle East conflict and it is Israel Zangwill's famous slogan that Palestine was, for Jews, "a land without a people, for a people without a land" which links the way that ethnicity, land and politics are layered in the Middle East conflict.

There should be no mistake about the roots of the perpetuation of the current conflict: the secular Zionism of Sharon and many members of the right-wing Likud party is premised on the

very idea of ethnic particularism and the identity of the state of Israel with the people of Israel. The classic distinction made by thinkers like Kant and Hegel between a political community organized by emphasizing the irrational bonds of blood, kinship, and common identity whether it be racial, religious or otherwise (Volkstaat), was contrasted with one organized by the universality of human subjects and held together by rational laws (Rechtstaat). The Israeli Volkstaat has slowly emerged as the prominent path for the future and this can only spell disaster for Israelis and Palestinians alike since it will breed nothing but continued resentment and separation, both distinct and long-term barriers to peace. The choice for both sides is becoming more painfully clear as time goes by: either to side with the liberal, universalist, secular character of the state and its laws which emphasizes rational discourse and deliberation or to choose to have political power fused to ethnicity and identity.

Indeed, whereas many of the founders of the state of Israel were of secular orientation seeing the newly born Israeli state as a chance for socialistic economic and political institutions, the present state of Israel sees itself less and less in touch with the western political ideas and traditions of many of its founders. The liberal tendencies within Israel have been weakening as the ideology of Jewish particularism has been gathering strength, especially from Jewish groups abroad (i.e., the United States). Only once the cultural imperatives of both Israelis and Palestinians are reoriented from particular interests to common interests can there be genuine improvement on this front; and such a reorientation rests on a transformation in political culture away from ethnic particularism and toward political universalism. All forms of political and cultural particularism lead to similar forms of counter-politics that are equally as narrow and eschew broader forms of solidarity and opportunities for dialogue-Israel's continued exclusion of Arabs and the need to hold on to the anachronistic notion of a Jewish state has created the dimensions of the present Middle East crisis and its continuing pursuit of such policies will only deepen the rift between the two sides even more, allowing irrational and extremist voices to drown out those that are rational, tolerant and progressive.

Only a political order that is founded on justice and equality in universal and secular (i.e., non-ethnic) terms can, over time, solve the problems faced by both Israelis and Palestinians alike. The move away from political institutions grounded in such ethical imperatives can mean nothing more than perpetual violence and the erosion of any meaningful political life outside of mere survival. If Locke's message was valuable over three hundred years ago, it is certainly more so today. Faced with the currents of globalization and stubborn ethnic particularism, Locke's insights about equality and the political nature of the individual achieves an even greater relevance. Using the conflict in Israel-Palestine as an example of the relevance of the liberal ideas that Locke helped put in motion does not mean that they are limited to that context. From Iraq with its explosive, imbalanced mix of religious and ethnic identities to the Balkans and Indonesia, liberal political institutions and, perhaps more importantly, a liberal political culture will be the only way for the massive abuses and conflicts that have marked these places be overcome.

In Israel-a thoroughly modern nation in almost every other way-the stubbornness of its ethno-religious identity will continue to serve as an insurmountable obstacle to an enduring peace in

the region. By turning away from the ideas of liberal democracy and the universal character of equality, individualism and rights that it embodies, Israel forfeits its ability to act as a progressive force within its own conflicted relationship with its Arab inhabitants who have legitimate rights in their own land. And whatever Zionism's intentions twenty, thirty or even sixty years ago may have been, they are certainly not what they were when Martin Buber could write with genuine sincerity-if not naïveté as well-about the intentions of the Jewish migration to Palestine: "The more fertile the soil becomes, the more space there will be for us and for them. We have no desire to dispossess them: we want to live with them. We do not want to dominate them, we want to serve with them."

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India And Pakistan: Hair-triggers And The Question Of Reconciliation

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Shaking off a colonial power is never easy and rarely results in anything one might call a clean break. With the waning of Western domination, stretching from the 18th century exploits of the East India Company, with buccaneering Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, through the somewhat more civilized heights of the post-Mutiny British Raj, the local peoples and elites by the end of the Second World War finally were set to impose their own vision, or, rather, visions. Despite, or perhaps because of the colonialists' deftness at dividing and conquering, the British were leaving behind a secularly oriented centralized administration, infrastructural improvements, and a solid military force. If they got little thanks, it was because they had done so largely for their own economic and governing aims, and already had taken a heaping helping of the region's riches.

The post-war British Labour government, acceding to inevitable departure, preferred one India, with semi-autonomy arrangements, if necessary. Yet in August 1947 India became an independent nation and, perhaps avoidably, so did Pakistan in what had become a hastily organized, ghastly split of the subcontinent along religious lines. Could not the Muslim Leaguers and the Indian National Congress have put their collective wits together to devise a reassuring non-sectarian agreement to run just one new nation in some acceptable federal fashion? The debate over how to allocate blame for partition goes on and hardly will be settled here. Ultimately, for various reasons and with whatever degree of justification, Muslim Leaguers were unhappy with the conduct of a Congress leadership whom they saw as either intent upon, or easy prey for, Hindu predominance. Sunil Khilnani puts the predicament as concisely as anyone:

The Muslims of British India did not form a single communal' identity or interest any more than Hindus did. Class and region divided as much as religion might unite, and beliefs about community and interest varied between provinces where Muslims were in the majority and those where they were not. ….Muslim politics had significant secular voices, most notably Jinnah's own. It is perfectly plausible to construe Jinnah's political project as intended not to bifurcate India and create two territorial nation states, but to safeguard the interests of Muslims in provinces where they formed minorities . . . (p162)

It was not to be. So in what the British aptly called Plan Balkan,' the Punjab and Bengal (the troublesome latter province already up for partition in 1905) accordingly were divided by Sir Cyril Radcliffe's wobbly pen. Muslim-Hindu communal suspicions and enmities, though obviously the major problem, were hardly the only issue in play. Sikhs wanted their own state too and the 584 princely states (with 90 million inhabitants) were inclined to side with the old

Empire. Were these groups preternaturally disposed to sectarian ancient hatreds' or was sectarian violence something manufactured' or at least, strategically goaded Soon, Hindus and Muslims, about 6 million each, streamed both ways inflicting as many as a million casualties on one another over the new brittle borders of West and East Pakistan – two ultimately untenable entitles, as it turned out, separated by a thousand miles. Sixty million Muslins remained in India and 10 million Hindus in West and mostly East Pakistan. West Pakistan became the governing and military center of what was intended to be a secular Muslim State but the majority of the population lived far away in East Pakistan.

Both independence movements (or a Muslim movement within the wider Indian movement) were fired by near-utopian nationalist zeal as well as haunted by mutual fears of betrayal. Fear, as elsewhere, proved a reliable mobilizing tactic by which cynical elites swayed people into their camps and to back their agendas. India and Pakistan also swarmed with idealists striving, ironically, to make their cherished schemes for nonsectarian societies work across a religiously defined divide, side by side rather than together. Neither Jinnah nor Gandhi nor Nehru nor Mountbatten had any truck with theocratic urges. But disputed borders after 1947 make for friction, and the bleeding sore of breathtakingly beautiful Kashmir provided tinder for several subsequent Indo/Pak wars and a myriad of low-intensity clashes. Alliance formation pulled the states further apart as they (voluntarily, to be sure) were worked into the larger game board of the superpowers' schemes.

Any state, like Pakistan, that borders India, Iran, China and Afghanistan is not slated for an easy existence. Domestically, Pakistan can be said to have had brief bouts with democratic parliamentary politics in between long military dictatorships of varying character. India, a resilient democracy but for Indira Gandhi's emergency'period in the mid-1970s, finds itself unpleasantly surrounded by non-democracies. Both India and Pakistan, bristling with allegedly defensive arms, suffer from enormous poverty. Pakistan, a quarter the size of its neighbor, must pony up a far greater portion of its easily evaded taxes for weaponry, and so does next to nothing for its needy populace. Pakistan spends 3.5% of its budget on education and health resources versus 38% on the military. As for India, a critic points out that One Agni [nuclear medium range] missile would finance the operation of thirteen thousand health centers,' and the annual budget for [nuclear weaponry] would pay for primary education in India for two years.'

The great game,' invoked romantically in Rudyard Kipling's Kim, is still afoot in updated forms. One domestic byproduct is the threat of fundamentalism in both nations, stirred by the spillover of the Soviet-Afghan war into initially tiny zealot circles in Pakistan and, until the 2004 election dumped the BJP, by an alarming hindutva upsurge in India. The Gujurat riots of 2002 were perhaps the apex of this trend. Geopolitically, the USA blanched from the beginning at India's nonalignment policy and essentially pushed them into Soviet arms supply networks. India's shocking 1962 war with China made the latter a new Pakistan ally, along, incongruously, with the USA. (So it goes in international relations.) The arrogant and myopic treatment of East Pakistan people by West Pakistan elites resulted in negating the 1970 election result (which should have put the East Pakistan Awami League in overall power) and

in March 1971 a shameful and brutal civil war broke out.

Bangladesh was born of India's decisive military intervention. General Zia-ul-Haq installed his shambolic Islamic" dictatorship in 1977, cheerfully served as a US conduit of aid to the mujahideen, and died in a 1988 plane crash, clearing the way for a temporary restoration of democracy. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif switched premierships until Musharaff in the wake of another bloody misadventure at Kargil in Kashmir in 1999, took power over a doubtless corrupt system and a growing "Kalashnikov culture.' Although the Soviets left Afghanistan in February 1989 the war itself continued with debilitating spillovers for Pakistan, which always sought to reshape Afghanistan into a secure and friendly regime on its Western border. The notorious 1998 nuclear blasts incurred suspension of US assistance but, expediently, good relations were restored after 9/11 when Musharaff wisely acceded to American demands. Not even the recent scandal over Pakistani trafficking in nuclear materials and delivery systems to North Korea, Libya and Iran have dented the new relationship. As always, the uppermost foreign policy concern for India and Pakistan is each other.

Logos assembles a quintet of essays examining the current state of play in Indo/Pak strife – doing so from historical perspectives and, usually, with a personal touch. The contributions by Dawn editor Zubeida Mustafa and critical essayist Sayeed Hasan Khan relate the sharp-eyed views of Mohajirs (Indian Muslim emigrants who settled in Pakistan), reflecting on the perhaps inevitable shortfalls between youthful hopes and the grubbier reality of Pakistan, turning what Yeats would call a cold eye on the shortfall from higher aspirations that the new State evinced. Gerald Meyerle, a journalist and now a PHD candidate, covers the Kashmir crisis up to the present. Manju Parikh, a politics professor, examines the prospects for peace from the Indian side of the border. Journalist Tavleen Singh adds a vivid on the ground' essay on Indian views of Kashmir. These essays explore both "high" (elite diplomacy) and low (popular and informal) politics, and their interaction, in appraising prospects for ending this dangerous and unnecessary stand-off. The essays, we hope, provide illuminating accounts especially for non-South Asianist readers in appraising chances for reconciliation in what Arundhati Roy justifiably said in 1998 (when both states conducted provocative nuclear tests) and again in 2002 (when they faced off with hundreds of thousands of troops along the frontier) was an utterly insane stand-off by two nuclear-wielding powers that cannot look properly after their own populations. Of course, this reprehensible plight is becoming the case with the largest wielder of nuclear weapons in the world, but that is another story, to be told elsewhere.

The Shaky Peace Over Kashmir

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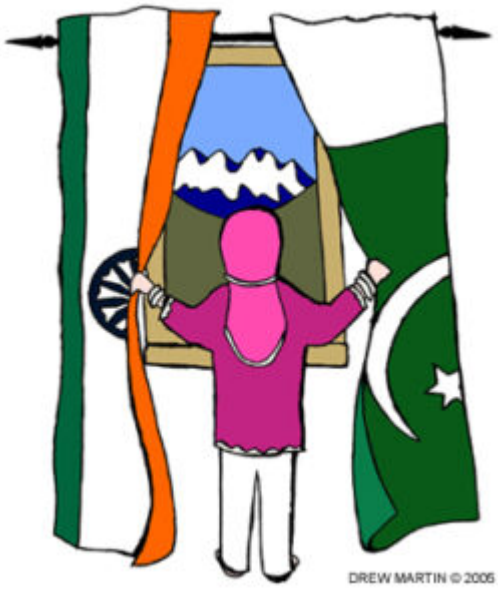

Peace talks between India and Pakistan tend to collapse in spectacular failure. Every attempt at peace during the last 15 years deteriorated within months into explosive military crises over Kashmir in 1990, 1999, and 2002. India and Pakistan are again attempting peace, and have been doing so since May 2003 with a minimum of violence and mutual recrimination. Does this signal a break from the past? Is the "world's most dangerous conflict", as President Bill Clinton once called it, moving towards a final resolution? Supporters of peace everywhere jump to answer in the affirmative, and they may be right. But solutions to conflicts like Kashmir, Chechnya, Sri Lanka, or Palestine do not happen quickly. Understanding the complexity and volatility of the Kashmir problem demands a heavy dose of realism, as a lasting agreement will require hard decisions and tough bargaining. Yet analysts on both sides fail to look critically enough at the problem, basing their arguments on wrong assumptions. It would be a shame if yet another Indo-Pakistani peace process fell victim to unrealistic expectations.

The stated claims of Indian, Pakistani, and Kashmiri leaders remain irreconcilable, though they appear more flexible these days. Indian politicians maintain that Kashmir is an integral part of their country, and that Islamic Pakistan's religion-based claim to the Muslim-majority region is illegitimate. They believe that Kashmir willingly joined India in 1947, but that Pakistan invaded to thwart this development, taking and holding one third of the state in the first war over Kashmir in 1948. Two more wars followed in 1965 and 1999, yet the 1948 ceasefire line remains the de-facto boundary between Indian and Pakistani Kashmir. India asserts that allowing Kashmir to become independent or join Pakistan would threaten the unity of the country. Pakistani leaders, on the other hand, believe that without Kashmir their country can be neither complete nor secure. They argue that, according to the rules governing the partition of British India in 1947, the predominantly Muslim region of Kashmir should have gone to Islamic Pakistan. When separatist Kashmiri militants took up arms against the Indian state in the midst of a massive popular uprising in 1989, Pakistan argued that human rights abuses by security forces made Indian rule in Kashmir illegitimate.

One of the reasons the Kashmir conflict seems so intractable is that the issue has so many difficult dimensions, yet no one person can hope to fully understand much less control them all. If any one falls out of sync, the entire process could collapse like a house of cards. The

conflict's first dimension is Kashmiri politics in which the pervasive sentiment of *azadi* (freedom) confronts the overwhelming might of the Indian state. The explosion of violent rebellion that catapulted Kashmir into the international spotlight in 1989 proved that the famously disputed territory is more than just a piece of real estate to be fought over by outside powers. A second aspect is the 57-year-old confrontation between the Indian and Pakistani strategic establishments over who should control Kashmir. This unceasing, low-level war overshadows almost every aspect of relations between the two countries, and threatens to destabilize the region. The third is public opinion in India and Pakistan where Kashmir is an extremely emotive issue. Any government hoping to negotiate in good faith will have a hard time convincing its people to go along. Lastly, the much talked about and often exaggerated American role.

Kashmiris caught in the middle

Indian analysts give the impression that the "silent majority" of Kashmiris are tired of violence and are ready to give up their secessionist struggle. It is only a violent and vocal minority that is really anti-India. Kashmiris want to participate in national elections and join the Indian mainstream, so the story goes, but are afraid of Pakistani terrorists who threaten them with violence. Pakistanis, on the other hand, assume that Kashmiris will never accept anything short of secession (and accession to Pakistan), and will forever support the glorious "freedom fighters" battling the Indian state. Kashmiris, goes the usual argument, appreciate how Pakistan has trumpeted their cause internationally and supported the militant struggle. These wildly divergent perspectives on what Kashmiris want reflect the opposing strategic interests of the two countries, and have little to do with Kashmiri public opinion.

Kashmiri-speaking Muslims, who make up almost 70% of the state's population, appear to favor independence from both India and Pakistan, though one can never say for sure because no accurate opinion polls exist. This desire for independence, which has always brewed beneath the surface, did not gain momentum until the 1980s when street agitations and police firings rocked the Kashmir Valley. Following an apparently rigged election in 1987 and the deaths of hundreds of protestors at the hands of Indian security forces during the next few years, many Kashmiri youth became militants, apparently convinced that democratic methods had failed. Indians would like to believe that once the democratic process in Kashmir is firmly reestablished and governance improved, the people will give up their struggle and the problem will go away. But a deep cynicism about Indian democracy remains, even though the last two Kashmiri elections were widely considered free and fair. The dominant argument in the Valley is that elections remain insufficient as long as New Delhi refuses to address the possibilities of independence, a plebiscite to determine the will of Kashmiris, or even administrative autonomy. Indian officials hope that Kashmiris will tire of their struggle in the long-run and settle for functioning democracy and Indian citizenship. To this end, India's leaders are willing to wait forever because time is on their side. They have what they want of Kashmir, the power to defend it against Pakistan, and the ability to contain the insurgency, which they believe will wane over time. This fact arouses passionate consternation among Pakistani officials, frustration among well-meaning peace activists, great sadness among secessionist leaders, and

deep apathy among the impoverished Kashmiri farmers who want only to feed their families and protect them from violence.

As no accurate poll exists to ascertain the wishes of Kashmiris regarding independence or accession to India or Pakistan, one must rely on the views of political leaders and journalists in touch with public sentiment. Interviews with top separatist leaders and editors of major newspapers in the Kashmir Valley indicate that support for independence remains strong, suspicion of India high, and distrust of Pakistan less but growing. The Indian government is disliked for its heavy-handed policies and abrogation of its many agreements with Kashmiri leaders; Pakistan is distrusted because of the murky role of its intelligence agencies in backing fundamentalist, pro-Pakistan militants, and helping destroy the pro-independence outfits. Until about ten years ago, many Kashmiris appreciated Pakistan's help, but goodwill towards Pakistan has since dried up, and Kashmiris now see themselves sandwiched between two powerful governments pursuing their own particular interests. Joining Pakistan would mean "trading one slavery for another," according to one separatist leader. No leader opposed to independence (whether he wants accession to Pakistan or India) can command broad popular support; even the most pro-India Kashmiri politicians promise *azadi* (freedom) at public rallies.

While the fundamental demand for independence remains strong, popular support for the tactic of militancy and terrorism is declining. Nearly all the pro-independence militants were either dead or in jail by 1992. By the late 1990s, more powerful pan-Islamist outfits from Pakistan, known to use suicide bombers and target civilians, were sidelining the only remaining Kashmiri militant outfit, the *Hizbul Mujahideen*. Indian officials claim that more than 80% of the militants are from either Pakistan or Afghanistan. Though the accuracy of this statistic is debated, many Kashmiri journalists, separatists, and former insurgents have said that foreign militants now outnumber their more popular but less deadly Kashmiri counterparts. Referred to in the valley as "*mehamaan mujahideen*" (guest freedom fighters), these new militants are seen as outsiders under the influence of Pakistan's intelligence agencies, whose goal is not independence for Kashmiris but merger of the state with Pakistan. The killing of moderate separatist leaders such as Abdul Ghani Lone in 2002 and the uncle of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq in 2004 has also dealt a blow to the militant cause. So has the killing of many innocent Kashmiris in grenade attacks and bombings.

An April 2002 poll by MORI, an independent British polling agency, found that out of 850 Kashmiris interviewed, 65% believed that foreign militants are damaging the Kashmir cause, while most of the rest said they are neither damaging nor helpful. Two thirds of respondents said Pakistan's involvement in the region during the last decade has been bad, reflecting the view that Pakistan's generals hijacked the militant cause, turning it to serve their own strategic interests. By spring 2004, every major separatist leader except one had distanced themselves from militancy the exception being the pro-Pakistan hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who has a troubled relationship with his party, the *Jamaat-i-Islami* of Kashmir, whose leadership wants to distance itself from the militant struggle. Most top secessionist leaders are pro-dialogue support the peace process. The separatists' shift away from violent methods was striking, as nearly every secessionist outfit supported the armed struggle during the 1990s: the pro-

independence Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) was a militant organization until 1992, while the *Jamaat-i-Islami*, People's Conference, and Awami Action Committee had militant wings.

There was much hope for peace during this time as politics in the Valley appeared to be undergoing a structural shift towards peaceful methods of protest. But by June 2004, the tide turned with renewed militant attacks on moderate, pro-dialogue separatist leaders, and lukewarm commitment to dialogue by India's newly elected government in New Delhi. As a result the hardliners re-emerged. Syed Ali Geelani regained control over the powerful *Jamaat-i-Islami*, and reappeared in the headlines opposing dialogue and voicing cynicism about the peace process in the midst of a new wave of political violence, including attacks on pro-dialogue separatist leaders. Many analysts say this is only a temporary setback, but there is no way to know until the snows melt in the spring and the passes through the mountains are cleared.

The influx of pan-Islamist militants from Pakistan many of whom either have links with *Al Qaeda* or share its ideological predilections has contributed to declining international support for the separatist cause. After 2001, the US State Department in its annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report designated the two major pan-Islamist outfits, the Pakistani *Lashkar-e-Toiba* and *Jaish-e-Mohammad,* foreign terrorist organizations subject to a wide range of sanctions, and put the Kashmiri *Hizbul Mujahideen* on a lesser watch list of "other terrorist groups". The radically changed global environment following the terrorist attacks of September 2001 convinced moderate separatist leaders that they should distance themselves from militancy for fear of being associated with terrorism and losing international support altogether. According to Bilal Lone, a member of the Hurriyat Conference, an umbrella organization of top separatist leaders, September 11th changed everything. "Kashmir is part of the world and must change with the world," according to Lone. "We have recognized that where there is jihad, there will be no international support. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs will have to live together side by side." This sentiment remains among a mostly divided and despondent separatist leadership despite the recent escalation in militancy.

Strategic Myths

For 15 years, Pakistani strategists have based their Kashmir policy on the assumption that they can wrest the disputed region from India through a combination of force, support to militants, and international pressure. There is a pervasive belief in Pakistan's strategic establishment that the Indians are weak and cowardly, that they will eventually buckle under the strain of a popular insurgency and international criticism of the human rights abuses that have accompanied the suppression of this rebellion. Pakistani strategists talk passionately about Kashmir and the plight of Kashmiris, and many believe its possession by India is an unacceptable threat to their security. Indians, on the other hand, believe that Pakistan is a rogue state with rogue intelligence agencies obsessed with spreading terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. Indian strategists assume that the world will eventually see this, at which time the international community will come around to India's point of view and force Pakistan

to back off. Indian policy-makers also assume that their terrorism problem is entirely the result of Pakistani involvement. They believe, therefore, that once the major powers force Pakistan to cut its links with the militants, then Kashmiris will give up on secession and participate in national elections. The problem will then simply go away.

Rather than buckle as Pakistani strategists hoped, India has not budged an inch since the Kashmir Valley exploded into violence in 1989. Rather than run like cowards, India responded with overwhelming force when Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry secretly took strategic peaks on the Indian side in 1999. Indian strategists now believe they have a better hold than ever over the insurgency, and enjoy greater international support in their efforts to eliminate the most dangerous militant outfits. The heavy international criticism of alleged human rights abuses by Indian security forces that was so prevalent during the 1990s has dropped off. According to Yasin Malik, a separatist leader and former militant commander, organizations such as Amnesty International that pledged support to the separatist cause during the early and mid 1990s have all but disappeared from the scene since 2001.

While Pakistan's renewed relations with the US helped it emerge from the prolonged financial crisis and international isolation into which it had sunk by the late 1990s, strategic relations between the US and India have also improved, including unprecedented cooperation on counter-terrorism. In the meantime, India's economy, which is already six times larger than Pakistan's, is surging ahead, helping to finance an ambitious defense modernization plan. Pakistan's economy, on the other hand, is stagnating, despite an enormous infusion of capital from the US, much of which has gone either to the military or the country's small elite. Pakistan is also facing pressure from the International Monetary Fund to cut defense spending. These and other developments have given Indian strategists new confidence. Indian policy-makers feel stronger than ever, determined to hold their ground and speak from a position of strength.

On the other hand, India's assumptions that the international community will eventually notice Pakistan's connection to Islamic militancy may be correct, but whether the major powers would force Pakistan to back off is another matter. Indian hopes that the US would declare Pakistan a rogue state were dashed soon after September 11th, 2001 when it became clear that Pakistan would become a major US ally against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. As long as the violence in Kashmir does not adversely affect the western powers, Pakistan's role will be overlooked. The attack on America's World Trade Center towers forced Pakistan to distance itself from Islamic militants for fear of becoming a target of America's new "war on terrorism". If the Pakistan army makes what appears to be a sincere about face on Kashmiri militancy, they could steal India's thunder, and the international community would have little reason to weigh in on India's side. President Musharraf pledged to disarm the terrorist organizations operating on Pakistani soil, and reform the Pakistani political system. Washington's policy-makers support Musharraf, and believe that he is the man most needed to track down Al Qaeda militants on Pakistani soil and prevent instability in Afghanistan.

It also remains to be seen whether the problem in Kashmir would really go away once the

Pakistan connection is severed. While there appear to be more foreign than Kashmiri militants, Kashmiris continue to carry out regular attacks against security forces, and many remain quite popular despite dampened public enthusiasm for violent methods. In 2001, the last year for which data is available, more than 40% of militants killed by security forces were local Kashmiris. Though the separatist politicians have, for the most part, cut their links with the militants, they do not criticize them; to do so would "dishonor the blood of the martyrs", according to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a well-regarded separatist leader. What he means is that because so many Kashmiris have died in the struggle, the cause must not be abandoned. Average Kashmiris may be tired of violence and cynical about their leaders, but that does not mean that they have given up their desire to be free. Furthermore, a drop-off in militancy would not necessarily bring a return to "normalcy" without a serious peace agreement between Pakistan, India, and Kashmiri separatist leaders because the separatist politicians may very well renew the street protests and boycotts of the 1980s, leading to the usual over-reaction by Indian security forces.

Misunderstanding public opinion

One hears people on all sides whether in India, Pakistan, Kashmir, or western capitals say that ordinary people want peace. It is only the governments that get in the way. Pakistanis believe that Indian politicians profess peace, but only for political mileage, and always go back on their commitments. Pakistan's leaders believe that Indians are anti-Muslim, that they will never accept Pakistan (created as a homeland for South Asia's Muslims) as a legitimate political entity, and that they seek the break up of Pakistan. Most Indians believe that Pakistan's generals are committed only to making war, and will never stop until they have taken all of Kashmir and weakened India in the process.

Reading the Indian press and talking to leaders as well as ordinary people, one gets the impression that Indians, for the most part, do indeed want peace. To the surprise of many Pakistanis, India's Hindu nationalist government showed a remarkable commitment to peace that was lacking in previous administrations. As the peace process gained momentum through the first half of 2004, there was very little criticism from either the Indian press or the political opposition. However, Indian leaders have yet to take significant risks that is, to talk about Kashmir and offer solid concessions. If the Indian leadership moves beyond mere rhetoric and commits itself to offering Pakistan enough territorial concessions to allow it a peace with honor, would the Indian public go along? The US-based Kashmir study group has suggested that the Muslim majority areas of Kashmir become independent and the Hindu and Buddhist portions be ceded permanently to India. But the Indian public has never warmed to this possibility. Could a weak coalition government follow through on it in the teeth of popular opposition? Because of India's status-quo position on Kashmir, it is easy for Indians to seek peace with Pakistan and appear reasonable and rational, as long as they do not have to give away land. "Why can't we just let bygones by bygones," Indian diplomats ask. "Let's forget the past. You keep your part of Kashmir, and we keep ours." India's only offer is and likely will be for the indefinite future to turn the Line of Control separating Indian and Pakistani portions of Kashmir into a permanent international boundary.

Public opinion in Pakistan is more complex, and varies from region to region. In the outlying provinces of Baluchistan, Sindh, and even the North West Frontier Province, Kashmir is not a high priority, and the people are willing to accept whatever the government decides. In the core province of Punjab, however, Kashmir is a hugely emotive issue, made all the more so by decades of government propaganda and the fact that more than 80% of the army hails from this region. Public opinion in Punjab is mostly opposed to any settlement that involves backing down on Pakistan's claims to Kashmir, or cutting support to the "freedom fighters" battling the Indian state. What liberal Indian commentators often refer to as Pakistan's "peace constituency" of "civil society groups" is exaggerated, limited as it is to a small and isolated circle of English-speaking elites with little interest in grass roots sentiment or much influence over official policy.

Many prominent Pakistani politicians and press persons are critical of the peace process because they believe President Musharraf is offering too many concessions (probably under US pressure) without getting enough in return. The hawks on Pakistan's powerful political right are increasingly influential and appear to be more in touch with grass roots public opinion on foreign policy matters. The fastest growing and now largest-circulated daily in Pakistan is the Urdu-language *Nawa-e-Vaqt*, a stridently right wing paper known for its hawkish positions on foreign policy, sympathy for Islamist causes, and its stridently nationalist yet libertarian positions on other domestic issues. For example, the paper supports the Taliban, opposes the peace process with India, and is deeply critical of Pakistan's renewed relations with the United States. When the *Nawa-e-Vaqt* refused to compromise on its opposition to peace with India, the military government pulled all official advertisements, which make up a substantial portion of the paper's revenue.

Musharraf has faced stinging criticism for his abrupt turn-arounds on the Taliban, nuclear weapons, and support to the jihad in Kashmir. Yet many Pakistanis still believe in the ideologies that justified the old policies, and think the president has betrayed what were almost sacred causes until a few years ago. Making peace with India over Kashmir will require Musharraf to back down on what is, arguably, the country's most sacred foreign policy issue. Salim Bokhari, editor of *The News*, a major Pakistani English-language daily, told the author: "It is in the blood of every Pakistani that Kashmir be a part of Pakistan, but India will not give it up on a silver platter. We will have to take it. This is what the Pakistani people were told for years. You can't just turn this around over night." Musharraf is facing a rising tide of public criticism for betraying the very same ideas that the army taught people to believe in for decades. If opposition to Musharraf's policies grows, the peace process could collapse, as taking a strident line on Kashmir may be the quickest way for Musharraf to shore up support among the country's powerful and vocal political right. The Islamists and anti-peace Kashmir hawks will continue to be strong as long as the military keeps the mainstream parties divided and their leaders, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, in exile. As things stand now, the most vocal and articulate advocates for democracy and an end to military rule are leaders on the religious right such as Qazi Hussein Ahmed of the *Jamaat-i-Islami* and Maulana Fazlur Rehman of the *Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami*.

Inflated hopes about America's role

After the attack on America's World Trade Center towers in September 2001, Indian strategists assumed that the US would finally pay attention to Pakistan's connection to the jihadis and declare the country a state sponsor of terrorism. They hoped that Washington would recognize that India and the US share the common threats of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, both of which emanate from Pakistan, and have been supported for years by the country's security establishment. Indian strategists, therefore, concentrated on exposing the Pakistan connection, and refused to talk about Kashmir until "cross-border terrorism" ended. Pakistani strategists, on the other hand, assumed that their renewed importance to the United States after its attack on the Taliban in Afghanistan would ensure that American policy-makers would turn a blind eye to Pakistan's support for militants in Kashmir. Pakistani policy-makers assumed they could escalate the level of militant violence, and rely on the US to prevent India from attacking in retaliation.

The US favored neither country, disrupting calculations on both sides. American policy-makers recognize that if they become too involved, they could ruin the entire process. Critics on both sides are wary of US involvement, and could easily discredit any agreement seen as the result of US pressure. This is a particular danger in Pakistan where the public is extremely angry about the inordinate influence Washington has over the country's foreign and domestic security policies. America's official role in Kashmir has remained limited to encouraging dialogue and preventing another flare-up that could compromise US interests in Afghanistan. Washington policy makers seek good relations with both countries, and will not take sides on Kashmir.

To the surprise of Pakistanis, the US, recognizing that Islamabad's support to terrorist groups could cause another war with India or further destabilize the Pakistani state, pressured Musharraf to put a stop to the infiltration of militants into Indian Kashmir. The Pakistan military reluctantly complied, though it has made little effort to close down the jihadi network. American leaders disappointed India as well. They did not even suggest that Pakistan was a state sponsor of terrorism; to do so would have made ridiculous the claim that Musharraf was a frontline ally in the "war on terrorism". As long as Pakistan cooperates with the US and attempts to shut down the jihadi groups operating on its soil, there is no reason to isolate its leadership, whatever may have been its past transgressions. It was naïve for India to believe the US would expend valuable political capital to shut down militant outfits that are not involved in attacks against western interests. The US played down Pakistan's support to militancy, working in private to ensure a reduction in infiltration without appearing to take sides. American policy-makers did not originally agree with the Indian view that Kashmir is a terrorism problem, or that it should be considered part of the war on terrorism. Rather, they concerned themselves with ensuring Pakistan's stability and gaining the support of its leadership.

This attitude has changed slowly during the years since September 11th. More awareness about the situation in South Asia has led more US officials to note the connection between the

jihadi movement in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Islamist extremists fighting in Kashmir. While the US remains sensitive to the independence movement in the Valley, many American officials are also talking about the possibility that many, if not most, of the militants fighting in Kashmir are from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Realizing this fact does not mean that the US will expend political capital to address the problem, however. US officials are concerned most of all with not rocking the boat in Pakistan in a way that might cause problems for Musharraf's government or compromise US-Pakistan relations. American policy-makers want to ensure that tensions over Kashmir diminish, but their greater concern is the stability of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

New Complications

India's Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was ousted from power last May, and replaced by a new government whose policies on Pakistan and Kashmir remain unclear. Despite its hawkish proclivities and Hindu nationalist ideology, Vajpayee's government showed unprecedented creativity and flexibility in its dealings with Pakistan and the Kashmiri separatists. Vajpayee was the first prime minister to visit the Valley since troubles began in 1989, and he did so at great risk to his life. Will India's new Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, follow through on his predecessor's political program? Since he came to power, relations between the center and the separatists have deteriorated; militant attacks on moderate separatist leaders have increased; the moderate, pro-dialogue Maulvi Abbas Ansari has stepped down as leader of the separatist Hurriyat coalition; and the hard-line, pro-Pakistan leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani has reemerged as the uniting factor in the Hurriyat, thereby strengthening the hardliners in the separatist camp. Singh demonstrated his government's commitment to solving the conflict, however, by visiting the Valley in November. It will be difficult for him to make a deal with Pakistan, however, until he consolidates his party's grip on power.

In the meantime, Pakistan is engulfed in an intense civil-military struggle over the future structure of the Pakistani state. General Pervez Musharraf, who is both president and army chief, is attempting to carve out a permanent role for the military in Pakistani politics. Musharraf recently decided to continue military rule for another five years, backtracking on his promises to bring democracy back by the end of 2004. He is under heavy criticism for compromising with India over Kashmir, sending the army into the tribal areas to capture alleged militants, and for his close cooperation with the US. Pakistan's political opposition is growing in strength, recovering after more than three years of army rule, and tapping into a growing tide of anti-military sentiment. The Islamists are emerging as key opposition figures and are growing in strength, while moderate leaders remain in jail or exile. The Islamists are the most bitter critics of Musharraf's peace process with India, and the most vocal opponents of military rule. Will Musharraf be more likely to make a lasting peace than an elected leader? Can he afford to negotiate with India, and survive both popular opposition and the ire of the Islamists? Will India give him enough concessions to allow him a peace with honor? All these unanswered questions make for a shaky peace process.

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India-pakistan Rapprochement: A Cautious Optimism?

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On September 24, 2004 the new Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York; it was the first meeting of the two leaders. The South Asian media were keen to observe even the tiniest signals. Will the two leaders interact well? Will they establish a good rapport? Would the elusive peace negotiations, initiated in January 2004 by Atal Behari Vajpayee, the former Indian Prime Minister, continue with the new Congress party government? In spite of past failures to resolve Indo-Pakistan conflicts, this time a little more hope was pinned on this first meeting. Indeed, there was some poignancy in the encounter; each leader was born in the other's country. Manmohan Singh was born in Gah, a village in western Punjab, now in Pakistan, and Pervez Musharraf was born in New Delhi, India. The significance of their meeting cannot be underestimated, but was it a turning point?

There is, of course, a pervasive cynicism in South Asia concerning Indo-Pakistan relations, which sees all peace negotiations as doomed enterprises. But we need to examine the context of present negotiations carefully to assess the chance for better outcomes. What factors produced the current rapprochement? Have changes in the international environment (especially the 9/11 attacks) played a transformative role? The mainstream media around the world recently have praised Indian and Pakistani leaders for engaging in dialogue and welcomed interventions of US diplomacy to avert escalation of a potentially nuclear conflict.

Should the credit for the peace process be limited to the initiatives of the leaders and these external mediators? I argue here that a great deal of credit should also be given to civil society dialogues. The peace process is sustained by creative energies of citizens, transnational groups, and non-governmental organizations which have helped change public attitudes of Indians towards Pakistan (and vice versa, although I am limiting my analysis to India). These unofficial groups play an indispensable role in promoting initiatives, reducing tensions, and coming up with useful alternatives to calm dangerous situations. Along with a changing public consciousness, we need to understand the reasons and imperatives that influenced leaders to begin bona fide negotiations. Have changes in public opinion decisively affected the calculations leaders make?

I briefly examine the character of Indo-Pakistan relations, focusing on the last six years of BJP rule in India when the ties between the two nations displayed a seesaw pattern: periods of abrupt hostility followed by returns to a more or less amicable footing. Then I examine how civic organizations and transnational networks fostered a favorable climate for negotiations. Finally, I discuss pressures on leaders which steered them to dialogue; I also take into account

the influence of US and other international actors. I conclude that when we weigh the changed environment, domestically and internationally, and the role of the peace constituency, we can be cautiously optimistic about a negotiated settlement of the ongoing conflict.

Historical legacies

It is all too easy to assume that the relations between India and Pakistan are implacably hostile. Not only was partition in 1947 marked by searing violence, the two nations fought three full scale wars over their first five decades. However, while public discourse remained fractious, in fact, the two nations edged toward muted cooperation. Indeed, right from the start, the two new states, with inadequate bureaucracies and police forces, and woefully insufficient infrastructures had to cooperate to cope with 12 million displaced people. (1)

In the ensuing years, the two neighbors have signed a number of important agreements. In 1948 they agreed to share water flowing between the two sides of Punjab and in 1960 to share Indus river basin water. They negotiated settlements of border disputes along the western Indian desert. In 1973-76, after the Bangladesh war, the negotiations between the three governments led to Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh, and an exchange of Pakistani prisoners. In 1988 they pledged not to attack each other's nuclear facilities, not to violate each other's air space, and to notify the other in advance of military exercises. The Declaration on Chemical Weapons in 1992 agreed to forswear use of chemical weapons. In 1996 Pakistani and Indian military officers met at the Line of Control to wind down border tensions and in 1996-1997 diplomatic talks tamped down tensions in Jammu and Kashmir. In 1997 Pakistan proposed to discuss terms for a non-aggression treaty and for restraints on nuclear and missile capabilities. (2)

However, the electoral victory of the Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in India in March 1998 ended the discussions. But, ontrary to most expectations, during six years of BJP rule (1998-2004), relations between India and Pakistan did not turn out to be hopelessly hostile.

Oscillating relationship – 1998-2004

In 1998 India under the BJP government shocked South Asia by conducting nuclear tests. Pakistan retaliated with its own tests. The international community, alarmed, pressured the two nations to negotiate. In February 1999 Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif undertook an initiative to normalize relations. This led to a visit by the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to Lahore via bus, across the Wagah border. The leaders issued a joint communiqué, known as the "Lahore Declaration", and the two nations seemed to set on an amicable path. However, a few months later, insurgents in the Kargil hills in Indian Kashmir, ignited a three month clash. President Clinton pressured the Pakistani leader to force rebels to withdraw. Kargil was a dismal low point. A few months later, in October 1999, a coup in Pakistan overthrew the elected government of Nawaz Sharif, and General Pervez Musharraf seized power.

A bloody insurgency has been going on in Kashmir since 1989. India blames Pakistan for harboring violent insurgents who infiltrate the border. Pakistan claims that it only offers moral support. This low intensity conflict' has taken nearly 65,000 civilian lives, disappearance of 6-8000 young men, and displacement of 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits [Hindus]. In 2000 a ray of hope appeared: the main insurgent group declared a ceasefire and India reciprocated. In July 2001 President Pervez Musharraf went to Agra for a summit with Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee. Despite much fanfare, the two sides could not arrive at a conclusive compromise.

Soon after the 9/11 attacks, the Indo-Pakistan relationship slid into a downward spiral when Kashmiri separatists attacked the state legislature in Srinagar in Indian Kashmir which left 38 dead. That was followed by another bold attack on December 13 when militants associated with Lashkar e- Taiba assaulted the Indian parliament and killed fourteen. India held Pakistan responsible. Although President Musharraf denounced the attack, India deployed 700,000 Indian troops along the border. In response, Pakistan mobilized its 300,000 troops. The harsh rhetoric and threat of use of nuclear weapons again frightened the international community. The US induced both sides to de-escalate. India agreed to remove troops from forward positions, and Pakistan agreed to ensure that insurgent camps on its side of the border would be removed.

With strong mediation the two sides made another try to mend relations in 2003. The upswing began with a visit of Pakistani Parliament members to New Delhi in May, followed by the visit of Indian Parliament members to Islamabad in July. A few months later, a ceasefire was reestablished in Kashmir. In January 2004, Atal Behari Vajpayee met President Musharraf while attending the meeting of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation in Islamabad, Pakistan. There began a new round of negotiations, called the *Composite Dialogue*. There was some anxiety about the peace process when elections in spring 2004 brought the victory of the Congress led coalition government under the new Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. However, the new administration quickly reaffirmed its support for the continuation of the *Composite Dialogue*. Let us now examine the factors influencing this rapprochement.

Will negotiations work?

There are good reasons to be skeptical about peace prospects. President Musharraf has survived several assassination attempts and continues to be excoriated by civilian political leaders, Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto, both in exile. Musharraf also faces wrath of the Islamist parties for support of the US-led War on Terror. As the search for Al Qaeda proceeded, many Pashtuns (sympathetic to Taliban) faced harassment in tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. Rising alienation of the local population probably resulted in the recent termination of searches by the Pakistani military. The strife in Jammu and Kashmir simmers; every day one hears of "terrorist incidents", more killings and growing rage at Indian security operations. Skepticism about negotiations is squarely based on the Kashmir problem; India favors the status quo and Pakistan wants change, not leaving much ground for compromise.

The lack of trust is based on each side's perceptions of its own vulnerability and the other's

lack of good faith. Actions aimed ostensibly at reducing tensions, such as India's fence inside its border to prevent incursions in Kashmir are seen by Pakistan as a violation of earlier agreements. There is impatience in Pakistan about the pace of progress in negotiations; the Indian side appears to be dragging its feet. The two countries have not established congruent doctrines on nuclear weapons use, leaving many security experts very uneasy.

Yet there are considerable reasons for optimism. First, a *composite dialogue* process continues. In September, the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan met to review the progress of the *Dialogue* and agreed that the negotiations on eight subjects of the dialogue have been productive and recommended continuation. Indian and Pakistani commanders are discussing pulling troops back from the perilous 21,000 foot Siachen glacier. While the negotiators have not come to a grand agreement on Kashmir, they are building on areas of convergence to improve daily life for Kashmiri people, such as allowing families ease of access and cross-border visits. Accomplishments also include reaffirming nuclear Confidence Building Measures, agreeing to cooperate to check drug trafficking, and consult on poverty alleviation programs, release fishermen who had crossed poorly marked boundaries, ease visits of each other's nationals through a special tourist visa, and establish bus services between the two divided parts of Kashmir, Punjab, and Ladakh. There are plans to open consulates in Karachi and Bombay to facilitate and expedite visa procedures. (3)

Trade growth is promising. India enjoys a surplus with Pakistan and would like MFN status for its exports of chemicals, plastics, petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, rubber, iron ore and tea. India imports fabrics, spices, sugar, vegetables, fruits and nuts. Two-way trade increased from $157 million in 1997-98 to $343 million by March 2004. (4). Another relevant figure is the $ 2 – $8 billion of prohibited goods such as medicines, liquor, auto spares, cosmetics, DVDs, videotapes, chemicals and viscose fiber, which is conducted via indirect routes through Dubai or Singapore, or by smuggling. (5) Of mutual interest is a natural gas pipeline from Iran through Pakistan to India. The discussions for this four billion dollar project were initiated eight years ago but tensions blocked its progress. Pakistan would earn $600 million in transit fees, while India could save $2 billion dollars a year by importing natural gas from Iran. (6) Although the two sides did not settle the issue of the construction of Wullar Barrage in Kashmir, the two sides re-affirmed the Indus Water Treaty. They also reached an accord to jointly survey the boundary pillars at Sir Creek, a small coastal seven mile strip along the Gujarat coast. The governments agreed to establish a vital nuclear hot line to avert risk of accidental launch, and to upgrade an existing hotline between India and Pakistan's senior military officers. (7)

Yet what is especially heartening in the peace process are the informal exchanges. For instance, in Punjab, the Eleventh World Punjab Conference in Patiala invited Chaudhary Pervez Elahi, chief minister of Pakistan's Punjab province, as chief guest. [He was reciprocating an earlier visit of (Indian) Punjab's chief minister to Lahore] This conference was preceded by first ever Punjab Games where teams from both countries competed. Along with games, the Punjabi leaders advocated rapid normalization of Indo-Pak relations, more trade, tourism and cultural interaction and a bus service between the two capitals of Punjab. (8)

Regarding Kashmir, India moved away from its hard stance that it would not negotiate until border incursions stopped. India also withdrew some troops. Pakistan, for its part, relaxed its demand that a plebiscite resolve the dispute. Neither country any longer claims the whole of Jammu and Kashmir. Citizens in each country are beginning to see that a compromise is needed (9) So far India has held two rounds of discussions with moderate separatist leaders in Kashmir and allowed the Pakistani Prime Minister to meet with Kashmiri separatists in India. Some separatist leaders (All Party Hurriyat Conference) are optimistic about being allowed to visit Pakistan, a condition they set for their third round of talks with India. In mid December, Kashmiri leaders from both sides met at a conference in Kathmandu organized by Pugwash International, a non-profit think tank which encourages peaceful resolutions of conflicts. The meeting was also attended by retired diplomats, bureaucrats, army officers, politicians, journalists and other concerned individuals. (10) Indeed, the most important contributing factor in the Indo-Pakistan rapprochement may be this active peace constituency in both countries fostering people to people dialogue to mold the public opinion in favor of negotiated solution.

Peace Constituency

Since the 1970s civil society engagement emerged as the educated middle classes became frustrated with the inability of their governments to provide social services and viable solutions. A variety of South Asian non-governmental organizations and networks got involved. Conflict management studies distinguish three levels of peace making interactions; Track I is diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts through official channels; Track II is policy-related discussions that are non-governmental and whose goals are new policy initiatives and informal channels overcoming closure of official communication. Track III activities connote people to people interactions which bypass official contacts with the goal of building constituencies to change public opinion and pressure governments to resolve differences peacefully. (11) I identify below the main organizations and the kind of activities they have sponsored, although this is not an exhaustive list.

India-Pakistan Friendship Society is one the earliest Track II organizations. Started in 1987 it organized visits of Pakistani cultural groups to India, annual lectures, and held discussions with the diplomatic staff at the Pakistan High Commission. It was chaired by I. K. Gujral, who became the Prime Minister briefly in 1997. Others are India-Pakistan Neemrana Initiative and the India-Pakistan Soldiers Initiative for Peace. The former, established in 1991, provides a forum for annual discussions for retired diplomats, academics and military personnel. The latter, formed in 1999 in Karachi by retired military personnel from India and Pakistan, offered chances to meet political leaders from the government and opposition. There also are business efforts to arrange mutual visits of chambers of commerce and to promote bilateral trade. Then there are reunions of elite educational institutions such as the RIMCO Old Boy’s Network, Doon School Old Boy’s Society, and Kinnaird College for Women from Lahore, Pakistan, whose alums occupy influential positions.

Among the Track III are the Pakistan-India People’s Forum for Peace and Democracy, who have

organized annual conferences since 1994. Their meetings deal with conflict in Kashmir, demilitarization, persecution of minorities, etc. There is also the Pakistan-India People's Solidarity Conference which holds conferences on nuclear issues, democracy, the Kashmir problem. Another is the Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia which exchanges delegations between the countries. The People's Asia Forum (established in 1996) brings eleven Indians and eleven Pakistanis in a face-to-face discussion to explore issues, and its recommendations are offered to the government. Such initiatives multiplied as more groups such as the Association of the Peoples of South Asia, the South Asian Human Rights Association and the South Asia Free Media Association sponsored organized dialogues.

A more glittering feature of Track III are visits of sports teams: cricket, hockey, polo, etc. And there is the steady stream of visiting movie stars, musicians, journalists, high school students, college students, and peace activists. The opening up of these societies has offered a richer view, from Indian movies at film festivals to an India book fair in Pakistan. Indeed, one mundane sign of changing attitudes is a popular new Hindi movie, *Veer Zaara*. It portrays a love story between an Indian (Hindu) rescue pilot and a Pakistani (Muslim) young woman. The Indian pilot is played by a Muslim actor and a Hindu actress plays the Muslim woman. The new popular theme focuses on the trauma of families divided between the two countries. This is a dramatic change because only three years ago, several Hindi films exploited the hyper-nationalistic theme of an Indian hero fighting Pakistanis. Now when a film ("*Lakshya*" which means target) focuses on the Kargil conflict of 1999, it does not demonize the foe. A film with a rabid hyper-patriotic message (such as the film, "*Hero*") falters at the box office. Indian films, though banned in Pakistan since 1965, are widely seen because of availability of videotapes and pirated copies. Indian movie stars are treated as celebrities when they visit Pakistan. Both countries have excellent singers and several artists cooperated to produce joint albums, and are sought to sing in the films and TV serials in each other's nation. The movie industry takes a lead in movies promoting better understanding; it will not be long before directors will hire not only actors but technical staff from both countries. (12) The best symbol of citizen initiative is the spirit of bonhomie generated each year when peace activists gather at the Wagah border to light candles to express friendship on Pakistan and India's independence days, August 14 and 15. (13)

Having highlighted the contribution and supportive role of the peace constituency in the negotiation process, I turn to factors that have brought the two countries to the negotiating table.

Factors enhancing dialogue

During 1998-2004 Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee firmly associated himself with the peace process despite opposition within his own party. Commentators suggest that Vajpayee sought a major agreement to establish a glowing legacy. One cannot ignore electoral calculations either. Recognizing that peace attracted great public support, BJP leaders calculated that Vajpayee's rapprochement with Pakistan would translate into more votes in the parliamentary elections in 2004. Vajpayee's peace overtures need to be seen against the

background of other developments as well. Militarily, India won the 1999 Kargil War and achieved a diplomatic victory by gaining American support for its preferred Line of Control [LOC]. President Clinton, fearing escalation, pressured Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to remove infiltrators from Kargil and to foreswear future transgression.

Yet India's military success did not translate into border security. India couldn't eliminate the Kashmir insurgency, which it blamed on militants based in Pakistan. After attacks on the Kashmir legislature and Indian Parliament in 2001 the Indian government shelled Pakistan's positions in October and amassed its troops. This expensive mobilization in 2002 was eventually called off. (14) The Indian army simply cannot destroy terrorist bases on Pakistan's side without huge casualties and inviting international condemnation and intervention. Indian Ministry of Home Affairs reports that India spent $1.1 billion on cross-border insurgency over 1989-2002, plus $4 million a month on economic development in Kashmir. India's central government also provides $93 million assistance to the state government in Kashmir, which does not include cost for care of 40,000 displaced persons from Kashmir valley or compensation for 20,000 dead.(15) How long can this burden be carried?

In addition to economic costs, the Indian leaders acknowledge that military operations rouse anger because security forces commit severe human rights violations. The search for a political solution to the growing alienation necessitated the Indian government's push for new state legislative elections in Jammu and Kashmir in October 2002. The new state government gained office by promising to increase economic opportunities, improve security, and investigate rights violations. Cross border infiltrations declined from 164 in 2002 and 138 in 2003 to 30 in the first half of 2004 (16). Is this a result of US/EU pressure on Pakistan to cut support to jehadi militants? (17) Or, is it because India has nearly completed fencing the border along the LOC ? This fence is a multi tier security set up, including sensors, thermal imagers and night vision devices, and is electrified in sections of the border where there is high degree of infiltration. (18)

Another factor influencing Vajpayee's decision is India's ambition to be recognized as a regional leader and gain a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. India cannot do so if it cannot ensure stability in its region and demonstrate good relations with neighbors. India also wants to achieve 8-10% annual growth but for that it needs to attract more foreign investment, which is dependent on domestic stability and peaceful relations. Last but hardly least, there is an urgency to avoid nuclear war, and reap the anticipated benefits from trade with Pakistan. India surely prefers to deal with President Musharraf (who has shown willingness to compromise) than with an extremist Islamist party. In summing up, the current Indian leaders resumed negotiations because they hope to establish a stable relationship, regain peace in Kashmir, and seek a permanent seat in the UN's Security Council. They also hoped to make significant economic gains from future trade and investments in Pakistan. Also their calculations were based on limits of India's military capabilities, a nuclear weapons stalemate, and an increasingly urgent resolution of Kashmir problem.

What factors have influenced Pakistan? One is recognition of the growing disenchantment of

Pakistani middle class citizens over Kashmir policy. The media and intelligentsia have raised questions about the high cost to Pakistan for its support of Kashmir's secessionist struggle. This policy resulted not only in diplomatic isolation but a decline in trade and tourism and a serious lag in technology development. Such a policy also fostered confrontation with India and the development of nuclear weapons as a consequence of 'militarization.' Further, the support of Islamic militias damaged Pakistan's image abroad while, domestically, these religious groups began a gradual "Talibanization" of civil society, causing discord and sectarian divisions. (19) Critics contrast Pakistan's deteriorating economy to India's meteoric rise based on new foreign investments, development of its Information Technology sector and its acquisition of an immense share of America's outsourcing business.

Dissatisfaction with Pakistani military adventurism is matched by citizen discontent with the military's influence in politics. (20) The 9/11 attacks forced US policymakers to refocus interest on South Asia, which had flagged after the 1989 Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Pakistan had ceased to be a strategic ally and in 1998 the US Congress imposed sanctions after the nuclear tests. However, 9/11 brought US back as it unleashed its war on terror in Afghanistan. Pakistan not only recognized the Taliban government but was its key sponsor. As the US leaned on Pakistan to help it in Afghanistan, Musharraf complied but continued to support "Jihad" in Kashmir. Yet Musharraf's shift led to a confrontation with Islamic militants. In 2003 there were two assassination attempts on Musharraf. Recognizing Pakistan's vulnerabilities, US offered a $3 billion aid package with three conditions: Pakistan's cooperation in the US led War on Terror, improvement of relations with India, and greater democratization at home.

The Pakistani establishment realizes that "its 14 year-old policy of trying to bleed India through Kashmir failed. India has not only absorbed the damage, but won a good deal of sympathy from the international community, especially the US". (21) There is growing recognition, among the public and elites in Pakistan, that recent surveys have shown discontented (Indian) Kashmiris prefer independence more than joining Pakistan, and that reality needs to be acknowledged. (22)

Public disenchantment in Pakistan grew over a Kashmir policy which drained large defense expenditure at the cost of development needs. There also is a public realization that support of *jihadis* was harming Pakistan by propagation of an intolerant, divisive and gender biased version of Islam, which negated Pakistan's self image as a successful, secular, progressive, tolerant multiethnic state.

The US, for various reasons, interceded to induce the rivals to work out solutions. In 2002, Britain and US considered sending 500 peacekeepers to monitor the LOC.(23) Western Europe and the US have a definite interest in preventing escalation and promoting development. As South Asian countries prosper there will be more demand for western goods. US business ties with India have recently expanded and there is a virtual global frenzy for access to India's cheap skilled labor. Some observers also note that US has likely designated India as a "crucial economic and military counterweight to China" and has increased military ties with India and conducted joint naval and military exercises. (24)

Over 2002-2004 the US Deputy Secretary of State visited India four times, Secretary Colin Powell three times and an Assistant Secretary of State as many as ten times. The US assured India that the training camps in Pakistan controlled Kashmir are being removed and that President Musharraf is sincere about stopping infiltration. (25) US involvement, of course, stirs a variety of reactions. The Left worries about access of US and other multinationals and loss of India's remaining socialist policies. Ardent nationalists worry about the loss of sovereignty and that US might impose its own blueprint on Kashmir. Still others welcome US mediation because the two parties cannot solve problems on their own. Finally, some foresee rapprochement as the two nations are motivated to resolve conflicts if only to limit less benign US meddling in South Asia. (26)

Conclusion

Any appraisal of Indo-Pakistan relations is afflicted with anxiety as to whether the leaders negotiate in good faith. Both sides need to highlight their accomplishments and also reiterate support for continued dialogue.

There is a clear awareness how each side could vitiate the dialogue process. From Indian perspective, if violent attacks by rebels were to increase in Jammu and Kashmir (with support from Pakistan) or if Pakistan were to pressure India to a rigid time frame and push for agreement on Kashmir problem, it would work to unravel earlier achievements. It would build more trust, if Pakistan acted to prevent cross border terrorism and to promote economic relations and people to people contact while negotiating on the Kashmir conflict. (27)

Similarly from Pakistan's perspective, trust in dialogue process with India would be lost if it is not leading to any visible progress on Kashmir problem, or if India insists on converting the LOC into an international border as the final solution, or if India prioritizes trade over other issues. India could gain more trust from Pakistan, if it were to improve human rights situation in Kashmir and reduce its troops from the region. India could also express more appreciation of Pakistan's observation of the ceasefire along the border, which has allowed India to build the fence. (28)

In conclusion, a cautious optimism about the final outcomes is based on the fact that even when the talks seem to reach a stalemate as recently, the officials in both countries promptly reaffirm their commitment to negotiations, in recognition of the growing strength of their respective peace constituencies. In January 2004, in Islamabad, Vajpayee acknowledged the "peace camp in India is much larger than that favoring perpetuating of enmity with Pakistan" while Pakistan's Information Minister, visiting India, remarked "hostility with India no longer sells in the Pakistani election market."

In India and Pakistan the domestic environments have altered for the better. The peace constituency exerts genuine influence on the dialogue; it represents the wishes of average citizens who are eager to improve relations with their neighbor. At the same time, a benign byproduct of the War on Terrorism has been discreet but sustained US mediation to encourage

India and Pakistan to resolve their outstanding conflicts through negotiations. Given these positive changes in internal and external environment, I remain cautiously optimistic about the eventual resolution of the longstanding conflicts between India and Pakistan.

Notes

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Pakistan’s Changing Images Of India: A Personal View

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

I was six years old when Pakistan was so turbulently born. Six obviously is a difficult age to try to comprehend major national and international events even when they create extreme upheavals in a child’s life. Still, I could sense the rising tensions around me. We already had just moved to Delhi when it was decided in June 1947 that India was to be partitioned. My father was appointed to the Railways subcommittee of the Partition Council to work out the division of the rolling stock and financial assets of the Railways between the new countries. Here we were positioned in the eye of what was for us the gathering storm. It was quite disturbing for me to find that the cheer and warmth of our home rapidly was vanishing. My parents spoke in hushed and somber tones and always urged the children “to go out and play” – in other words, not listen in to the fretful adult conversation. We found ourselves on prolonged holiday from school and, with no friends around, my brother and me grew quite bored with life, as our two elder sisters already had been packed off to my grandparents in Karachi.

All this was puzzling. I found it terribly strange. Being in the Railways service my father had always been on the move. Packing and unpacking, living in unfamiliar places and changing schools had become a normal pattern of our lives. All of us accepted it as routine. But in August 1947 the prospect of yet another move suddenly seemed radically different. My parents, though practicing Muslims, were really secular minded in all their social relationships. They had many Hindu and British friends with whom they mixed quite freely and unremarkably. It was the looming change, a splitting apart of old India, that was to shake up their lives – and the lives of millions of others – that made them so extremely apprehensive. Uncertainty of this magnitude breeds a gnawing sense of insecurity because of the fear of the unknown. Besides, they knew, once they departed, that many dear relatives and friends would be left behind and probably out of reach in the ‘new’ India.

There was no escaping the unsettling tension in the air as Hindu-Muslim riots already were breaking out in not-so-distant places. Those in government service had been given the option of going to Pakistan or staying in India. According to my harried father, a “snap decision” had to be taken for there simply was no time for “rational thinking”. My father opted for Pakistan but he frankly described this even at the time as a “gamble.” Later in the twilight years of his life when he talked to me about the partition days he didn’t regret his fateful decision to migrate – he was too pragmatic to agonize over bygones. But he did emphatically say that he and others of his idealistic generation had never visualized Pakistan as the actual flawed country that emerged. They had dreamt of a splendid secular nation where Muslims, generous to others in their midst, would have the freedom to live as they wanted to just as the founder of

the country, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, had promised.

On 4 August 1947 we took the train to Pakistan – one of the last ones to get through without suffering attack. I was later told. the train after ours arrived in Lahore from Amritsar full of corpses. After a mercifully safe arrival, however, came a number of grim and traumatic experiences. Our next door neighbor's cook was stabbed, allegedly by a Sikh, in the market where he had gone to shop for groceries. (Many years later when I had grown up I did wonder why a lone Sikh would be foolish enough to attack a Muslim in Lahore, which was the heartland of the Muslims – obviously it was a figment of a fertile and malevolent imagination bent on inciting communal hatred.) Another friend found a trembling Sikh hidden in the washroom when she went there late in the night. He was trying to escape the sectarian fury and begged and pleaded for mercy, which was indeed shown to him. But the incident was enough to drive a spike of fear into the heart of a very young child. Then came a grim and memorable visit to the refugee camp at Walton with my mother. The vast camp had been set up by the government for the millions of people fleeing from East Punjab and the United Provinces (as India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, was known under the Raj) to seek shelter in heavenly Pakistan. The desperate refugees arrived in a mostly dreadful condition – women raped, families looted, and all in very bad shape after having trekked who knows how miles in the blistering heat of August to reach sanctuary. The camps were there but there was not nearly enough manpower or resources to supply and operate them. A large number of women who were lucky to have escaped rape and other abuses would visit the camps daily to distribute food and clothing to the hapless people. That is how I was brought face to face with mass tragedy. I had been in one of those troublesome moods which children at times get into when they must tag along with their mothers and do not let go of them. So she resignedly took me along with her and what I saw there affected me deeply: women in a state of shock with babies dying in their arms, men sitting gazing into space, whimpering children wandering all over. Mayhem everywhere.

Those were hardly uplifting memories and with so much hatred in the air, not surprisingly I grew up believing that all the Indians were bad guys and not to be trusted, ever. They wanted to destroy Pakistan at the first opportunity – that is what we were told and that is what we firmly believed. And that was the general belief in Pakistan. Why would a child think differently? A whole generation grew up in the painful shadow of the bloody partition experience and consequently perceived India as an implacable enemy. The new government only encouraged this black and white perception. The radio – in those days there was no television – and the newspapers overpoured with anti-Indian rhetoric and it was taken for granted that we could never reconcile with Indians.

Here was a state – the largest Muslim state at the time – that had sprung onto the world map out of nowhere. For the Muslim League, latterly, the struggle for independence had been directed more against ambitious Hindu rivals and the Congress Party than against the British. Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, had propounded the somewhat slippery 'two nation theory,' saying the Hindus and Muslims were two distinct nations which could not live together in the same country (although saying all religions somehow should live in amity here). Hence the

bitterness and mistrust between the two communities – more political than anything – had spilled indelibly into the post-independence period. The nasty quarrels over division of assets between the two new dominions and the shocking bloodletting that accompanied their birth stoked incalculable anger and ill feeling. This found its way into our textbooks. We were told that the Indians were Hindus who deeply resented the Muslims who earlier had ruled India for a glorious thousand years. They were jealous of the "greatness" of the Muslims and could not accept the partition of India. Hence they sought to stamp out fragile Pakistan.

These hostile images of India were strongly reinforced by the 1965 war. Since 1947 the dispute over Kashmir – a Muslim majority princely state in the north ruled by a Hindu Maharaja – kept the two surly neighbors at loggerheads. The raja decided to join India. An uprising at the time in the area bordering Pakistan and a tribal invasion backed by the Pakistan Army failed to seize the Kashmir Valley — widely described, with some justice, as a scenic paradise on earth. Protracted debates in the UN and untiring mediation by UN appointed middlemen only generated greater frustration. Come 1965 with India's defeat at the hands of China in their border war fresh in people's memories, Pakistan opportunistically sent infiltrators across the ceasefire line into the disputed state and tried to stir a popular uprising in the valley. This gambit turned out to be a gross miscalculation on the part of General Ayub Khan's government. The uprising never took place. As Pakistani forces tried to cut off India's communications with the Valley, New Delhi retaliated and the Indian Army soon crossed the international border near Lahore. Thus the two states found themselves in a full fledged war in September 1965.

This clash was wholly different from the 1948 conflict, which had been confined to Kashmir alone. This time the vulnerable major cities of Pakistan came under deadly attack. On those long balmy September evenings we sat in semi-darkness observing black-out regulations – the window panes covered with black paper and the lamp draped in a blanket to keep its light dim — listening anxiously to the radio to catch the news bulletins and get the latest information on the war. Suddenly came the screaming sirens, the drone of the aircraft above us and the undercurrent of fear and excitement was like adrenaline to the animosity we felt against India. Here was the perennial enemy out to get us, yet again, unprovoked.

As we focused on our war with India, China jumped into the fray issuing its famous warning to New Delhi demanding the return of a dozen yaks and 40 odd sheep which Beijing claimed had strayed across the border in the Tibetan region from where they had been abducted by the Indians. China gave an ultimatum – return the yaks within 72 hours or face the consequences. Of course no serious action was taken. But the point was well understood as the changed tone of All India Radio amply confirmed.

We citizens were awash with an intense sense of relief. At last there was someone on our side who was trying to pin down wicked India. Our friends in the Muslim world had never done anything practical to help us except issue a lot of sympathetic, tongue-clucking statements. As Pakistan ran low on ammunition it seemed frighteningly clear that we all could be defeated, all the loud talk of our bravery and courage notwithstanding. Hence when the United Nations called for a ceasefire, Pakistan authorities readily agreed with relief. We would not face the

specter of being occupied by India.

Yet I, and many friends, underwent a dramatic change in viewpoint after the war ended. I shall speak only of myself here to whatever degree I am representative of other Pakistan citizens at the time. People didn't want to discuss the war, so strong was the sense of having been betrayed by the leadership. The post-war protests were used by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was out of the government by then, for political gains and to unseat Ayub Khan.

Having emerged safely from the dangers thrust on us, I could not ignore the grief and trauma of those who had lost their near and dear ones in the war. There was the constant stream of obituary notices in newspapers, some with pictures of young men in uniform who were declared shaheed (one who dies in jihad) I didn't know these men personally but they were very like the young men I knew at work or had known at the university. I thought of their mothers and brothers and sisters and wondered how they felt. It was then that I began to ask myself, was war really unavoidable? Was India such a belligerent power? Do we have to remain locked in a confrontation on Kashmir? Isn't there a way out?

Other developments helped to change my entire outlook. I hungered for news but the press was tightly controlled. So I would look for foreign printed material on the war published in non-partisan newspapers and journals abroad. Of course the BBC's world service on the radio was something I had to listen to religiously. A colleague of mine at the research institute I worked in was highly and unguardedly critical of the government's policy. Her brother was an Air Force officer who had emerged from the war unscathed but I shared her worries and relief when the war ended. Gradually the realization dawned on me that the government in Islamabad had taken me and so many other citizens down the garden path.

Four months after the armed conflict ended the two governments were invited by Alexie Kosygin, the Soviet prime minister, to Tashkent to formally wind up the war. Tashkent itself was food for thought. The meeting simply put a seal on the status quo ante. No one won and no one lost. We were back to square one after so many people needlessly died and were maimed. How could we be so certain that the Kashmiris really wanted to join Pakistan? If they did, why hadn't there been a heroic mass uprising in the Valley when paratroopers from Pakistan crossed the ceasefire line, as it was called then? So the 1965 war was a major turning point, as wars inevitably are. It served as a catalyst and a crucible to our thinking process, hemmed in before by propaganda, history and habit. Although there were some intrepid souls who criticized the military regime of General Ayub Khan all along, the resistance was stepped up after the war. In East Pakistan, where a strong and highly justified sense of deprivation had taken root soon after independence, a movement for secession was gaining momentum. Many like us wanted to get better information about India. But there was no way to get it directly since the borders had been sealed. There was no official communication between the two countries. Even to send a letter to a relative in India you had to resort to the roundabout route of sending it to a mutual friend in a third country – maybe England or America – who then put it in another envelope and mailed it to the address in India. You could tune in to All-India Radio but being government-controlled it merely broadcast news bulletins that were as off-puttingly

propagandistic as ours. Mercifully, some Indian newspapers were free and competent and did not simply toe the line regarding their government's policy on India-Pakistan relations but in those days they did not offer a third option…

Up until the 1971 debacle got under way, our military dictator went all out to suppress the people of East Pakistan and tried to rule it with an iron hand with the help of the Army. It suited him perfectly to project India as an arch enemy so as to rally the people behind him – a not unfamiliar tactic elsewhere. But now much of my generation refused to swallow hook, line and sinker whatever accusations it read about India in our newspapers (incidentally I was not a journalist then). What was broadcast from the radio and television (recently introduced in major cities) was taken with some corrosive caution. Meanwhile, the world had been opening up for a new generation of Pakistanis who had not directly experienced the horrors of partition but had heard about them from their elders. They were travelling abroad for tourism, higher education studies, and jobs and in the process they were meeting Indians and finding them similar to our own compatriots, warm and friendly. When I arrived at the London School of Economics in 1970 I met many Indians there and discovered quickly that they were not at all unapproachable. States may not behave the same as individuals do, still It surprised me and others like me why India and Pakistan couldn't work out a good relationship.

On my return to Pakistan from LSE I found it very nearly transformed. The crisis in East Pakistan was heating up. India was again declared the black-hearted villain of the piece, deviously wanting to break up Pakistan for no good reason. This time the supposedly foolish Bengalis were India's accomplices – the 'miscreants,' as they were called. The Bangladesh crisis and the war with India in 1971 brought me much closer to the actualities of death. Although the press played the Establishment's tune, it retained little credibility in the eyes of the skeptical public. Everyone I knew instead wanted to tune to BBC to hear the news bulletins. Another rather delicate exercise was to listen to both All-India Radio and Radio Pakistan and try shrewdly to negotiate between the two extremes presented to listeners. The public in Pakistan was remarkably subdued this time. Still, the war was on and the safety regulations had to be observed. The blackout rules had to be followed and the nation remained patriotic, despite so much skepticism and cynicism simultaneously in the air. We were torn. How else would one feel when you sympathized with the Bengalis for their just demand for a share in power but had your close relatives and friends butchered at the hands of the Mukti Bahini (the freedom fighters)?

In addition to the recognizing massive human rights abuses in East Pakistan, many people had ceased seeing India in black and white. It was no more the psychotic bully of the region who was out to get Pakistan. Few believed the jingoistic messages Yahya Khan's regime spewed on the radio and television about the Bangladesh crisis being a ploy of India to break up Pakistan. The people saw it as a political crisis, which was the manifestation of the rueful failure of our democracy. West Pakistan, which dominated the Army and the political Establishment, not only had failed to devise a power sharing arrangement with East Pakistan, which had a majority of the population but declined to cede the political control which should rightly have been Dhaka's. True, India did not remain a passive and disinterested onlooker in 1971 either. It

cleverly exploited the situation, which it did not create, to its own advantage.

With 93,000 prisoners-of-war penned in Indian camps, Pakistanis began to reconsider their often cartoon-ish views about India. There was hardly a family that was not affected in some way. Even when the prisoners came home to tearful reunions in 1973-1974 and Bangladesh and Pakistan recognized each other, our relations with India continued to be quite tense because the governments remained locked in their dispute on Kashmir. The people were weary of war, but there was nothing much they could do about it apart from expressing support for peace in very personal ways such as when any of them visited India or met an Indian. The more this happened the more the word got around, and the clearer it became that the two countries had much in common culturally and socially to build on. In spite of the artificial barriers erected by leaders on both sides, the cultural affinities were not destroyed – language, customs, dress, and many other subtle bonds became potential areas of cohesion.

What are members of an officially discouraged peace movement to do? We recognized and identified many gray areas in India-Pakistan relations. We knew there were some major problems but they were not irresolvable ones. We also started with the knowledge that the Indians were not the bad guys they had been made out to be. We could do business with them. We could play cricket with them. We could watch their movies and enjoy sifting out their cultural nuances. We could talk to one another in our own subcontinent language(s) – as the editor of the Indian Express, Mr. Mulgaokar, and I would do, and tell our Western friends who scratched their heads and wanted to know which language we were speaking that it was Hindi (according to him) and Urdu (according to me).

These contacts were all at the people-to-people level from the mid 1980s onwards and the governments were surprisingly unconcerned as to the slowly changing sentiments of a large section of the population. This was a crucial period when it finally began to dawn on many Indians and Pakistanis that our countries could come to terms. Over the years a significant emergence of a peace lobby on both sides of the border took place. Meanwhile, given the two governments' reluctance to negotiate a durable peace accord, the initiative passed informally to cross -border non-governmental groups which began to meet periodically to explore options. Termed the track-2 diplomacy, this option encompassed peace activists, human rights champions, retired diplomats, retired generals and others, illustrious and not so illustrious, but all intelligent and courageous. Although these groups did not represent the opinion of the governments in Islamabad and New Delhi, they won implicit official backing without which they could not have obtained visas. All the track-2 meetings were held in India or Pakistan, and not in a third country. In due course more working groups were formed comprising professionals, such as lawyers, writers, journalists and so on who interact quite frequently with each other to dispel noxious images and prejudices, promote peace initiatives, and establish friendly networks.

It was plain that a growing body of opinion in both countries did not want another war. This public stance was further strengthened when the two countries exploded nuclear devices and proclaimed their nuclear weapons status in 1998. While there was some Uncomprehending

celebration of the technical achievement, as the possibility of a nuclear war in South Asia became a reality, its potential horrors began to hit people who had some understanding of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The momentum of the anti-war movement rapidly picked up as activists joined hands across the border. Today they light candles on the Wagah border on the night of August 14/15 every year the anniversary of Pakistan's and India's independence respectively. Their voices are louder than bombs, to borrow the title of a book of interviews by David Barsamian, since they are people of repute on both sides who wield great influence. Arundhati Roy, Asma Jahangir, I.A. Rahman, Vandana Shiva, Admiral Ramdas, Mubashir Hasan and many more are doggedly pursuing the difficult path of peace. Two years ago writer Arundhati Roy proclaimed in Karachi that were she to learn that India was planning to fire a nuclear missile at Pakistan she would be the first one to fly to this country to act as a human shield. After that declaration, how can anyone feel that we can't live as friends with the Indians?

The feeling, I believe, is widespread that the people of India and Pakistan want to live in peace with each other, but governments think differently. They have had their own interest in perpetuating a state of conflict in the region. In the absence of political will, the disputes lingered on as hairsplitting arguments are cleverly advanced to make every issue ever more complex and beyond resolution. In all this the media's role has been a very mixed one. The English language press tends to be progressive and liberal in its outlook, and has generally supported peace overtures. But the right-wing Urdu papers, especially from the Punjab, have adopted a hard line vis-à-vis India, questioning the wisdom of dialogue so long as the Kashmir dispute goes on. A contradiction, but there they are.

The groundswell of public opinion in favor of peace in both countries has been a major factor, apart from the international environment, that induced governments to rethink their approach to one another. Paradoxically, what elected leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif found themselves unable to do has been undertaken by another army leader, General Pervez Musharraf. He sincerely, so far as we can tell, has called for a public debate on options on Kashmir so as to provide the two countries the opportunity to move away from the deadly fixed positions they have kept for over 50 years. Given the power structure, no civilian government in Islamabad could have effected so radical a change in its India policy because it was the Army that was always calling the shots. It was the Army which was spearheading a hard line policy on Kashmir. Now that a military leader has taken the initiative, one has legitimate hope that some formal progress will take place.

The so-called composite dialogue which began in early 2004 has given rise to hopes that the two governments mean business this time. Even Kashmir is on the agenda, which signifies a remarkable change in the Indian position. But no one expects a solution to all the vexatious disputes between India and Pakistan in a flash. Even if the talks drag on, does it matter? Wasn't it Churchill who said, "It is better to jaw jaw than war war"? But in this case a lot depends on the political drama being enacted in Islamabad. Governments in Islamabad and New Delhi have displayed a strong propensity to use their foreign policy to pull their domestic chestnuts out of the fire. Irrespective of his past adventures, Musharraf is constrained to

pursue the policy of dialogue. There is no turning back for him now.

What is the lesson one should draw from this experience of changing images of India, and ourselves? Communication at the popular level is just as much a key to stable international relations as is formal diplomacy. When walls are built around human minds and they are not exposed to new ideas, thoughts, and approaches, how will we emerge out of the rut in which we have fallen over the decades? This emergence will inevitably happen – a bit later if the governments continue to be obstructive, and sooner if they act as facilitators of the process. With new means of communication and transmission of information available to large sections of populations, they are able to access each other without government interference. They can create, and test, their own images of each other. Television channels, the Internet, emails, websites have allowed the people of the two countries to exchange views and understand one another's viewpoints. They can read one another's newspapers on the Web and even interact with them. Small wonder then, many young people who saw India as 'enemy territory' changed their mind when they met young visitors from across the border or went on a voyage of discovery. The generation which is coming of age in South Asia, if given the chance, would break fresh ground. It has no sad emotional hangups. There is no horrific historical baggage which it has to carry. When it meets its contemporaries on the other side of the Wagah, things will change. They cannot remain the same.

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Critical Reflections Of A Mohajir

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

I was born in the united province of British India (now called Utter Pradesh) which was the center of Muslim civilization in South Asia. Muslims comprised 14% of the population but their influence was greater than numbers imply. The province contained a core of Muslim landowners, a strong Muslim middle class and among its Muslim-oriented educational institutions were both religious and secular universities, ranging from the secular English language-oriented Aligarh Muslim University to the Darul Ulum of the orthodox Deoband sect. One finds little in the local political scene at the time that was straightforward or obvious. Although the Deoband Ulamas belonged to the religious right, they were also a strongly anti-imperialist bunch and thus their not-so-obvious home during the struggle for independence was the Congress Party. Cities attracted far more Muslims than did villages, and so they exerted a potent cultural and political influence on urban life. Muslim landowners, who were, by dint of raw power plus tradition,' community leaders, usually opposed the Congress Party inasmuch as it stood for the abolition of big land holdings. Another complication is that the Muslim middle class disproportionately occupied profession and high-end service jobs, and so felt threatened that after independence their hold on these desirable positions would be drastically reduced. As these fretful complexities played on, Muhammed Ali Jinnah, after growing exasperated equally with the insensitivity of Congress leaders and the bickering among Muslim leaders in the early 1930s, retreated to London for a few years.

In 1935 the Muslim leadership, drawn mainly from UP, prevailed on Jinnah to return and take the reins of their fractious community, and to plead their grievances inside the uneasy coalition making up the Congress Party. Jinnah was a proud self-made man and a brilliant barrister who won many cases, representing mainly princely ruling states of the era. He was charismatic, which appealed to the Muslim middle class no less than to the masses. He also had a long impressive service in the Congress Party and a staunch record of fighting British rule which made him popular in the eyes of secular as well as practicing Muslims.

When the Congress finally formed a government in UP in 1937, Muslim experiences and perceptions of its Hindu-leaning rule quickly became negative, arousing widespread anxieties about fairness in a future independent India. The Congress leadership failed to sooth or satisfy them. Congress leaders in the province made and quickly broke a promise to include two Muslim league leaders who earlier had declined to sign a Congress pledge to immerse their Muslim identities and concerns in the alleged melting pot,' as Americans might put it, of the Congress Party which saw itself, mistakenly, as satisfactorily incorporating all interests. This high-handed (or high-minded) attitude did not encourage Muslim Leaguers as to the prospects of establishing equitable and reliable cooperation with the (naturally) Hindu-dominated Congress.

During this fraught period I grew up in a middle-rank landowning family. As a teenager I along with many school and college friends were deeply attracted to the rising Pakistan movement whose aims and implications, however, no proponent bothered to explain clearly to us and which nobody bothered to suss out carefully until well after the violent partition.

After failing in the 1930s to arrive at a palatable confederation arrangement with the Indian National Congress to assure the rights and security of Muslims in an independent India, Muslim League leader Jinnah opted with some evident reluctance for the separation of Muslim majority provinces and to join them into one state called Pakistan. It remains debatable as to what stage it was that Jinnah decided for autonomy instead of employing the demand as a bargaining chip. As this stern man who came to be called the Quaid-i-izam (great leader") declared in a Lahore speech on 27 March 1940: These are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are in fact different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and Muslims can ever [become] a common nationality." Yet Jinnah, leery of religious strictures, had not given up on an all-India confederation. The so-called Cripps mission in 1942 and the cabinet mission in 1946 temporarily seemed to present a patchy solution but fell apart. Nehru's impolitic statements at the time helped put paid to that. Plenty of fault can be spread all around.

Indeed, once Mountbatten arrived to oversee the breakneck-paced British "quitting" of India, the two major provinces (Punjab and Bengal) envisioned in Jinnah's original scheme of a secular Muslim state were partitioned into Hindu and Muslim majority zones, with Muslim majority areas joining the new Pakistan. While the leadership of Bengal successfully strived to save the province from serious communal riots and migration, the Punjab with its 30 million populations of intermingled Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims underwent a horrifying large-scale massacre and mass migration. There was a complete transfer of Muslims Westward from the Indian Punjab while all Hindus and Sikhs rapidly fled most of the areas comprising the new Pakistan. These migrants from either side of Punjab were absorbed in the respective provinces of India and Pakistan.

Lord Mountbatten was in an unholy hurry to get back to Britain to become the naval chief, a post which his Germanic father had missed out on earlier. Before the First World War sentiments in England were anti-German so that the father had no chance, in spite being a son-in -law of the queen. Mountbatten hastily went through a fixing of boundaries of the two countries with outdated maps, which aggravated the Kashmir dispute as well. A million people died not only because he was in a hurry but because he also tried to interfere with the boundary commission's decisions. A more systematic and slowly paced withdrawal of British forces and their administration would have spared many lives. Moulana Azad, the leading Indian nationalist and President of the Indian national Congress from 1940-to 1946, had warned of these consequences but went unheeded. Mountbatten blithely believed communitarian violence of any scale would not happen. Azad was perhaps the only front rank politician who opposed the partition of the country and advised the Muslims not to migrate, predicting that they would face rough deal from the locals among whom they intended to settle. (Hundreds of thousands mohajirs in Bangladesh now belatedly agree with him.) Given

the cynical manner in which Pakistan was moved by opportunistic politicians towards theocracy in subsequent years, many mohajir intellectuals started having doubts whether Pakistan was such a good idea. I myself believe that Jinnah did not really want Pakistan as such; rather he was fighting for the rights of Muslims in an Indian federation. He used the slogan as a bargaining counter but mishaps of history forced him to accept the Pakistan in a severely truncated, split-apart shape. Indeed,on 11 August 1947 Jinnah said at he first meeting of the constituent assembly: You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State.'[1]

As it happens, many friends migrated to this promising new nation to look for jobs and careers. My elder brother in the government service was first to opt for Pakistan upon the news of Lord Mountbatten's hasty partition. I also decided to uproot in 1947. I left from Bareilly with an armed train of soldiers allotted to Pakistan, who had been posted in Bareilly and now were detailed to a special transport. My train, for obvious reasons, was not attacked. Along the journey I saw dead bodies lying along the train lines. When we passed through the cities we saw carloads of refugees. We finally crossed the new frontier close to Wagah. Arriving in Lahore safely I enrolled to study politics and economics in Government College Lahore, which supplied the future civil service of Pakistan, their ecole polytechnique. The initial and memorable experience on arrival was of a very warm welcome, extended to many others. These émigré Muslims, and thousand of others, like me, came to this dreamed-about country still call themselves Mohajirs During the early period of Islam when the prophet Mohammad found life perilous in Mecca he migrated to Medina along with his followers, who were called Mohajirs. Most Muslims even today situate themselves in that holy tradition of the prophet. Recently, even former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto who is living in luxurious exile in London and Dubai, had the temerity to describe herself as a mohajir. This free use of the term mohajir' is now used in whatever forms one likes. It functions as a slogan in the absence of any meaningful political program. Even at the time when I came to study at Lahore I was not inclined to call myself a mohajir though general sentiments among mohajirs were different.

My parents, who were comfortable enough and not at all sympathetic to Pakistan movement, decided to stay back. With a home in India as well, I resorted to various high-level connections to allow me to commute frequently between India and Pakistan and observe how political forces were developing in the two new emerging and rivalrous states. Soon after the death in 1948 of Jinnah, a strictly secular leader of a secular Muslim state, I found, disturbingly, that Pakistan began to edge perceptibly towards a more religiously defined state. This trend was unwelcome, if perhaps predictable from a political view. In my youth I freely had attended Hindu festivals and they ours. Still, Gandhi's shocking assassination by a Hindu fanatic, as a unbidden happy byproduct, had set back fundamentalism in South Asia for decades, until it would raise its ugly sectarian face in the eighties in the slightly more civil but formidable form of the BJP. In the meantime, however, Nehru was able to impart a strong social democratic direction to the Indian independence movement, which still runs deep in its psyche. I myself joined the nascent left movement of the National Awami Party in Pakistan which marginalized me regarding everyday power politics in Pakistan.

Those Muslims, who opted to serve in the government of Pakistan, migrated primarily to Karachi, which became the capitol of the new state after its separation from Sindh. Immigrant industrialists established or expanded industries which attracted thousands of job-seeking Muslims from the rest of India. Within a decade Karachi became a dynamic, bustling and predominantly mohajir-run town. It kept expanding well after the capitol shifted to Islamabad. The surrounding province of Sind absorbed the considerable overflow of migrants from Karachi. That created acute tensions with the local population in the interior of the Sind province who feared that they may be reduced to a weak minority. The Pakistan portion of Bengal received the bulk of its refugees from Bihar and other bordering states of India. Bengal and the Sind were the two provinces where ninety percent of refugees from India- excluding the refugees from East Punjab- settled. These immigrants were to play a great role both in the development of these provinces and also in generating political instability.

Soon after independence, movements for political autonomy rose in Sindh and Bengal, which helped turn Pakistan into an administrative state rather than a political one. This was all the more the case because the federal government, run by Punjabis and mohajirs, firmly resisted the genuine demands of these provinces. The majority of top Pakistan bureaucrats came from the Punjab and the migration. Bengal, the largest province of Pakistan, and Sindh possessed hardly any share in the top hierarchy, which in true colonial style took the reigns of government. West Pakistan ran East Pakistan like a nuisance satrapy. The mohajirs tended not to feel any special loyalty to the provinces they settled. Their stock answer, when asked, was that they came to Pakistan and not to any particular province.

So when the Bengalis of East Pakistan rose in 1971 against the injustices of the army, which also was mainly Punjabi, local mohajirs sided with the army rather with the masses of Bengal. The mohajirs were Urdu-speaking versus Bengali-speakers, and the mohajir industrialists were an integral part of a Punjabi investor elite. A familiar yet weird corporate identity also extended beyond class boundaries there. I learned of Mohajir rickshaw pullers in Dacca who identified with mohajir factory owners whose firms they heard that the revolutionary Bengali peasant leader Maulana Bhashani wanted to wreck; this meant they' wanted to burn our factories"). After many horrors and India's intervention Bangla desh soon become a state and the refugees, mohajir or otherwise, were rendered stateless. Thirty-four years have passed and many are still rotting in the fetid camps of Dacca and are not allowed to settle in the Pakistan to which they are so emotionally attached. One feels sympathy towards their plight but it is difficult to support a cause which placed them on the repugnant side of the army that happened to betrayed them as well. Anyone on the Left found it impossible to side with them. They supported Pakistani rulers who turned Bengal into a colonial hell hole, and mohajirs ended up as their stooges. Though the mohajir community in West Pakistan likewise supported army action they were not a hostage to fortune.

This infamous episode is not widely dwelt upon. Pakistan's military rulers ignored the unstinting support they got from the mohajirs during the civil war. In just one incident the army, with the aid of local mohajirs, killed 140 Bengali intellectuals at Dacca University. Resident mohajirs actually guided soldiers to arrest Bengali rebels.. When the army left the

Mohajirs high and dry in the new Bangladesh, one was reminded that British deserted Anglo-Indians who supported the empire in much the same blithering way. These loyal subjects were definitely not welcome in Mother England, so some of them found refuges instead in Canada and Australia. Their emotional home remained England in the same way the Urdu speaking mohajirs of Bangla desh are psychologically and emotionally are linked to the metropolitan part of Pakistan (which most of them had not even seen). The Algerian French were absorbed in France but the mohajirs of East Pakistan, for their unseemly services, were denied space in their dreamland. Now their third generation is rotting in the camps. Successive governments of Pakistan promised to repatriate them but did not keep it. Sindhis oppose new settlements in Sindh because it will upset the demographical balance. This leaves refugees in a limbo. At the moment these few hundred thousand people are neither Bangladeshis nor Pakistanis. Most of the present generation does not even speak the Urdu to which their parents were devoted.

As time passed, however, the influence and share of mohajir bureaucracy in Sindh would diminish. When Zulfiqar Bhutto took power after the separation of East Pakistan, his rhetoric, if not so much his actions, only antagonized Urdu-speaking mohajirs. They felt that their language was threatened — an exaggerated fear since Urdu is the national language of Pakistan as well as that of Punjabis who remain a dominant force. But the perception spread that they were being discriminated against in jobs and admissions to the professional colleges.

In the 1970s Bhutto's nationalization of industries and its mismanagement severely hampered the economy. This stoked unemployment, and as the mohajirs had scant political influence in his regime they suffered more than others. At least this was true of their lower middle class, which gave birth to mohajir student organization, which later evolved into a mohajir national movement. The refusal of the Bhutto's government to allow Urdu speaking mohajirs, called Biharis, from Bangla desh to enter also angered compatriot here. This was to influence strongly their attitude towards politics. Many mohajras from UP and Bihar and other parts of India soon formed a base for the two religious organizations, Jammat-I-Islami, and JUP. MQM soon dislodged and absorbed these parties in Karachi and Hyderabad Though not a part of this movement I found myself a supporter of many of its policies: reservations in colleges, jobs for lower middle class people, and more representation in government. (The mohajir element within the government of Sindh today is from such lower middle class origins.)

Because of the indiscriminate nationalization of every sort of industry, and the class and market reactions to it, the growth of social forces stopped. During the decade of industrial development trade unions were coming up who suffered setbacks and since then never revived. Bhutto was also responsible using Islamic slogans. He appointed a minister of religious affairs and, astonishingly, used his majority in the parliament to declare a sect of Muslims, Qadianis or Ahamadis, as non Muslim. Thus he laid the foul foundations which were to mature during Zia's period

Before the formation of MQM mohajirs ideologically were wedded to the Pakistan movement which originally inspired them. In plain terms this reactionary Romantic attitude always put them on the side of authoritarian regimes whenever conflict arose with regional ethnic

communities such those as in Bengal or Sindh. This stance inadvisedly, and even crazily, set them in automatic opposition to the legitimate aspirations of the larger communities among whom they lived. Before independence urban Sindh had been populated mostly by Hindus who also controlled the provincial economy. Soon after the Hindus involuntarily left for India, mohajirs moved into the vacuum of jobs, property and status left they behind.

Local Muslims were not in a position to fill these gaps or exploit these opportunities so long as the mohajir and Punjabi officials got there first. The political leadership was dominated by landowners and there was no appreciable Sindhi middle class. During this early time mohajirs thought that they are going to dominate the cities economy and politics. Karachi became the biggest mohajir town but also started attracting economic migrants from Punjab and the Pakhtoon areas of north. Transport and the building industry was controlled by pakhtoons who were hard working laborers. Punjabis and Pakhtoons soon became key groups in the lower ranks of police and other branches of civil administration. Since British days sizable colonies of Punjabis were in the canal-irrigated areas of Sindh. Lower middle class mohajirs felt discriminated against at their hands yet there was hardly any Sindhi element in the administration.

MQM's resentment against the Punjabi and Pathan lower bureaucracy and political elite grew. This situation was clumsily used by Nawaz Sharif (with Army connivance) against the People's Party. Benazir Bhutto played the same game against Sharif. In short, neither of the major parties was interested in accommodating the MQM program, but rather to utilize its constituency for their own purposes. Gradually the influence of the army increased on the local administration and it cleverly directed the resentment of Mohajirs against the Sindhis. No doubt the policies of the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto also helped in creating division between Sindhi and MQM.

During eighties and nineties army and civil leadership tried to crush the movement but the repression only hardened their spirits and the MQM won its first major victory for the control of Karachi Municipal Corporation. Later this mohajir organization was to win all the urban seats for the provincial and the national parliament. By the time Ms Bhutto became the Prime Minister MQM was the third biggest political party in the country. It represented the poor mohajirs but shunned by the mohajir intellectual left who were fond of Bhutto. Ms Bhutto's father had the support of the Sindhi and Punjabi poor and called himself socialist. The leadership of his people's party was in practice feudal while MQM backed he lower middle class. Both these organizations have Peronistic tendencies.

Because of the different complexions of these major political forces in the province of Sindh there is unresolved conflict and the central government exploits it while the leadership of both sits quietly in London. The Mohajir population, which reaches 40% (and majorities in Urban areas), wants a full share in the running of state and the province. They now have moved far from the sectarian slogan "ideology of Pakistan" – an Islamic state backed by Sharia law and islamization of all institutions- – which they and the Punjabis coined themselves. Now they concentrate on economic and political rights. Since MQM started it has increased in militancy

to achieve their goals. Today a different type of Mohajir is in control of its politics. Most are confident enough to work with coalitions from lower and middle class and they talk of Sindhi rights and for the whole province. MQM is so confident of its followers that it has nominated Sindhi speaking candidates from their area of influence and got them elected. It looks like that their movement is at last coming of age.

Conclusion

Soon after the death of Jinnah, Pakistan as a political experiment declined. For a few years democracy was practiced in a haphazard way, controlled by the bureaucratic and military elites. But there was still hope that things would improve. The Army chief Ayub Khan took power in 1958, an event which, on one hand, stopped the development of democracy but also halted the movement towards Islamization. There was needed development in the industrial sector but also cultural and political suppression due to bans on political and press freedom. Ayub lurched into the disastrous 1965 war with India which left East Pakistan undefended (and its people derided) and thus sowed the seeds of separatism. In 1971 the same rash and arrogant policies resulted in the horrors of the east Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who escaped condemnation for his behind the scenes role, captured power after the richly deserved defeat of the army in 1971 and he and his hand-picked henchman and then nemesis Zia turned Pakistan into a reluctant laboratory of the Sharia laws which were archaic and discriminatory.

The steady accumulation of these dismaying events were enough to influence me and others like me either to leave the country or spend as much time as possible outside it's reach. I now hardly see and feel any resemblance to the Pakistan that I came to study and live in and that the tatty one which exist today. Today there are large settlements of educated mohajirs in USA, UK, Germany and other parts of Europe. The Diaspora of Indian Muslims who migrated to Pakistan is found all over after their remigration. Even highly placed officials, after retirement, are joining their children abroad who left earlier. During my travels I have come across Pakistani Canadians who have retrieved the ancestral property their parents have left in India. They prefer to spend their holidays in India rather than Pakistan which was their last country of abode. A well known crony of Jinnah, recently answered that if Jinnah came back to day he would not recognize the Pakistan he created:' Who knows what happens next? Looking back on all these events one would be a fool not to wonder whether it was worth it . The leadership lacked statesmanship and Mountbatten was in a hurry to get back to England. What one needs today is what was lost in the 1940s: the prospect that India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh should enter into a close relationship that may ultimately lead to a Federal state.

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[1] Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Karachi, August 11, 1947. http://pakistanspace.tripod.com/archives/47jin11.htm

Closure for You, Jedermensch ein Übermensch

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. We have killed him-you and I… But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained the earth from the sun? Whither are we moving?… Are we not straying through an infinite nothing? Do you not feel the breath of empty space? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead… And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves…? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of the deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?"

– Nietzsche

OK, you want closure? Wrap yourself in this:

What would Nietzsche have to say about cloning if he were alive today? It's hard to know, but one thing's for sure; he would not be noodling around on the practical margins, he would not allow experts to reduce this fabulous eventuality to mere policy. He would plunge straight to the metaphysical heart of the matter, to the delicious and terrible dilemmas that cluster around the possibility of self-replication.

And so will we, because one way to interpret this account of mediation I have offered is to say that we have now realized-but democratically-the concept of the Overman, the *Übermensch*. That Olympian figure was to earn his standing by dint of self-overcoming, you may recall. That meant self-creation. Nietzsche thought of this as the most demanding of all projects, to be undertaken only by the rarest and greatest spirits in history. But the enterprise of self-construction turned out to belong to everybody.

Nietzsche thought a lot about how the herd was flattered by its shepherds, but even he couldn't foresee the extent of that flattery's effects or the technological modalities of it's expression. The possibility of cloning yourself is the ultimate representational achievement, the archetype of simulation, the final form of flattery.

That's the context for thinking about the possibility of cloning. And let's not forget that the human genome project is coming to fruition at the same time, as if scheduled by Sophocles. The information technology we call genetic engineering is opening up fabulous new options for the single parent of tomorrow.

How conveniently the term stands ready to assume its full meaning! Nietzsche might have helped us understand cloning as the ecstatic realization of a destiny. Maybe we should welcome this as the defining triumph of the mediated self. "God is dead" would sum it up just right if you considered the whole sweep of the enterprise of self-construction culminating in literal self-(re)construction through cloning and genetic engineering. Self-Help on a divine scale. If I hadn't already said I didn't trust the idea of huge unfolding historical patterns anymore, I'd be mighty tempted to see this as a logical outcome, the climactic fulfillment of modernity's essential aim: replacing God with Me. You want a Monster Vision? Here.

The aim of modernity fulfilled means this: humanly created options that endow ordinary people with entitlements no mortal in history, no matter how exalted, could ever have assumed before. While these entitlements are now limited to a relative and privileged few, this cohort already comprises many millions, shows every indication of expanding, and is, in any case, the source of the global Zeitgeist. Members of this cohort can take for granted, or realistically anticipate, the obliteration of all barriers of time and space, instant access to every text and image ever made, the free exercise of any life style or belief system that does not infringe on the choices of others, custom-made environments, commodities, and experiences in every department of their activity, multiple enhancements of mind and body, the eradication of disease, the postponement of death, and the manufacture of their progeny in their own image. Plus improvements.

How could we not think of divinity in the presence of such powers? If we refuse the description because God does not seem to us to be playing a prominent role at this climactic moment, aren't we collaborating with a repression of the obvious? If our usurpation of God's role is in fact the climax of the modern story is it surprising that we would want to keep it quiet? We resist religious literalisms for obvious reasons, but their resurgence among us, all over the world, is certainly a response to the situation as I am describing it-and we ignore that at our peril. God, in His various forms, has been obliged by our silence to make a last stand among fundamentalist refuseniks clinging to anchors no longer grounded in anything but willful blindness, compulsive ritual, and totalitarian discipline. But where else could God go after He was-not expelled, but counseled out, shall we say-by modern humanists? The whole transaction had to be discreetly handled, a manifold of dissimulations crafted to disguise our assumption of His responsibilities-you know, creating life, creating human beings, stuff like that. The trick has been to leave that whole topic off the table and concentrate on practical issues, health and environment issues, instead of the "issue," in the original sense of the word, instead of what it means for us to be creating life forms like goats that give milk that turns to spinnable silk because they've had spider genes implanted in them.

It helps a lot if the only people talking about this development-modernity in general, cloning in particular-in terms of displacing or replacing God are, well, you know, them, those fundamentalists. That could be why you might not want to think about things in these terms. Nietzsche did, though, and that's good enough for me. He understood that you don't have to believe in God in order to recognize Him as a major historical player. Unmasking power, exposing its various guises, especially the humble ones-that was Nietzsche's mission. And the

power of the flattered self at the center of the field of representations in this mediated age has been very effectively disguised. Look, it could always say, I don't have power, it's them, the rich and famous ones, those corporations, those prime ministers and presidents, look over there, don't look at me.

But let's consult some more established Big Thinkers on this issue, besides Nietzsche. Here's a little gem from the one who first gave us the modern self, in its purest form:

> *Now, if I were independent of all other existence, and were myself the author of my being… I should have given myself all those perfections of which I have some idea, and I should thus be God.*
>
> *– Descartes*

Now Descartes was highlighting his imperfections in this passage. He was denying himself divinity. His deficiencies were to be the premise for a logical proof of God's existence. But-like Locke with his fantasies about adjustable eyeballs-Descartes was flirting with a possibility. After all, he had just called the existence of his own consciousness the only thing of which he could be absolutely certain, the one thing he couldn't doubt. He had discovered that his mind continued to exist in the very effort to doubt it.

And he was about to show that everything outside his mind, outside his subjective experience, trees and tables, other people, his own body-even God-had to be derived by argument from his own mental existence.
So, right off the bat, we've got the human self in a pretty central position.

And, in other contexts, when God wasn't immediately on his mind, Descartes was eager to promote a standing for humanity that resonates like a call to arms. For example, when he called for

> *…a practical philosophy…by which, knowing the power and the effects of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies which surround us, as distinctly as we know the various trades of our craftsmen, we might put them in the same way to all the uses for which they are appropriate, and thereby make ourselves, as it were, masters and possessors of nature.*

"As it were?"

Please.

Or there's the concluding paragraph of Discourse on Method, the archetype of modern self-help books. Descartes there commits himself to the exclusive study of medicine, on the basis of

his method, and hints at a cure for death.

Stuff like that. Lots of it. Right from the beginning of the modern adventure. Like Locke, Descartes could not explicitly countenance the implication, but it was definitely there. He had to know at some level. When educated people think of modernity, they think of technology, first of all, and then of individualism (human rights, free enterprise), and also of secularization-the separation of church and state, the decline of medieval institutions. And they are right to do so. But these features of modernity worked together, as aspects of a single historical development. Cloning and genetic engineering, regarded as the crowning synthesis of that development, reveal the underlying unity. They constitute the ultimate in mediation-life forms express a code, after all, and, with genetic engineering, living creatures become the screens that display our designs.

Let's coin a term. "Proprietorial humanism"-to contrast with Renaissance humanism, the kind they introduce in High School history-Erasmus and Da Vinci and so on. Renaissance humanism took Classical antiquity as a model in order to leverage itself out of the Middle Ages. That's the basic storyline. What I'm calling proprietorial humanism emerged later, in the 17th century, as moderns decided they had surpassed the ancients by dint of achievements in what they called the "useful arts"-that is technology and all it's applications.

Effects of technology on material nature have always been obvious. Some metaphorical extensions are also obvious-the machinery of government, things like that. But other influences were subtler. They shaped the way the rising middle classes, the historical agents of modernity, conceived of themselves. They called themselves the "productive classes" to sharpen the political contrast with aristocracies. They were thinking of products of industry in the usual sense, but the term can be revealingly extended-modern persons and societies were also products. That's the essential point to grasp.

Here's the beginning of a list: the French Republic, the Ford Motor company, Teddy Roosevelt.… Here's the beginning of another: The New Britain, Google, Governor Arnold… You could extend the lists indefinitely. Your grandparents probably belong on the first list. You probably belong on the second. And what a difference between the lists. Those hoary old industrial-age constructs feel as solid as the Rocky Mountains compared to the hyper-fabrications of our time.

This book has mostly been about the difference between the two lists. But notice that the entities on both lists were consciously designed. Compared to medieval or tribal institutions and persons, they have this in common: they are all fabrications. Products.

These products vary enormously, of course. The French Republic of 1792 was not the Weimar Republic of 1921. The bohemian aesthete of the late 19th century was not a captain of industry, but he might have been his brother.

What makes all the variants modern (and, later, postmodern) is this: using raw materials of nature and historical circumstance, people undertook to fashion themselves in accordance with

their own designs-through politics and education, fashion, manners, psychology, through enterprises of all kinds. People began to make themselves as they remade the world. And these self-made people and their projects flourished, succeeded-they just took over.

That is the essence of proprietorial humanism. The reflexivity and self-construction we have been talking about throughout this book begins here. Popular expressions that reflect that origin have always shaped our public culture-Make Something of Yourself, the American Dream, the Better Tomorrow.

But we can get a deeper grip on why the word "proprietorial" is so apt a description, and on why cloning and genetic engineering realize the concept.

Let's return to John Locke, this time to consider some ideas he is known for. Brief excerpts only, but every word counts:

> *The mind as it left the "hand of nature," is a tabula rasa, a blank slate or "white paper" or "empty cabinet"*
>
> *…all the Straw, Bran, Bread…is worth…is the Effect of Labor…Nature and Earth furnished only the almost worthless materials…*
>
> *He that is nourished by the Acorns he pickt up…when did they begin to be his? When he digested?…Or when he boiled?…if the first gathering made them not his, nothing else could.*
>
> *For Men being all the Workmanship of one Omnipotent, and infinitely wise Maker…they are his Property, whose Workmanship they are…*

The first three claims were Locke's most influential. Founders of modern institutions from Sieyes to Jefferson had them specifically in mind when they did their constituting work. Anyone who takes a survey course on Western thought is exposed to them. The blank slate doctrine justified scientific method and progressive education. The labor theory of value made property a natural right-not something kings and lords could claim by hereditary right, but something the productive classes earned.

The fourth selection only matters today to specialists interested in Locke's religious beliefs. But it was the foundation of the whole enterprise for Locke.

In his attack on absolute monarchy, Locke depended upon this premise: human beings have a natural (God-given) right to preserve themselves. They are free to do whatever serves that purpose as long as the same right is respected in others. Most substantially, their human labor, which gives value to the almost worthless raw materials of nature as it transforms them into useful goods, also gives title to those goods. Thus were a parasitic monarchy and nobility

disenfranchised, and the productive classes given their due.

See how the fourth selection provides the foundational analogy? The human right to property mirrors God's ownership of His human creatures, who were His Workmanship.

Everything follows from that. All the rights and duties Locke attributed to persons he discovered in them as products of the Maker. He figured out how God intended human beings to live the way you might figure out how some gadget works. There was undeniable evidence of functional design in our physical nature, after all-from the eyeball, to the hand, to the physiognomy of the sexes. Don't forget, Locke had no concept of evolution or natural selection to account for that. The Maker's designs were evident in the human products of His Workmanship, in his human properties-and Locke took it from the physical to the political and ethical on that basis. He says murder is wrong because it is robbery of God; likewise, suicide and slavery. The right to life and liberty, the right to make laws and elect representatives-all the rights and duties that defined the modern political landscape were derived, in Locke's mind, from our obligation to preserve the Maker's human creatures. Politicians would hold such truths to be self-evident because inalienable rights were given to us the way hearts and feet and teeth were given to us. By our Maker.

That's the core of Locke's political philosophy. And it was accepted-more than accepted-it was taken for granted by educated early moderns. But, in another classic text (The Essay on Human Understanding), focusing on abstruse epistemological matters, Locke declared that the human mind, the defining characteristic of the human being, left the hand of nature-as a *tabula rasa*.

Oh, fateful seed.

Locke never let himself see the consequences of combining his political and epistemological premises. But think about it in light of the four selections just cited. Locke was opening up the most fabulous investment and development opportunity of all time. The *tabula rasa* of human nature was an uncultivated and unimproved piece of raw material of an entirely new order, and the human analogs of the divine Maker were quick to seize upon it. The improvement of humanity itself, the labor of civilization, would become the first aim of modern progress.

Moderns pursued the project of progress into every natural space and cultural arena. And the more extensively and elaborately they labored, the more everything in the world became manmade. It just did. That's just a fact. And what was not-the forests, the heavens, the depths of the sea-was frontier, molded in the aspiration of the map. And similarly for one's own potential, and for children, and for the lower orders, and for savages-these were also raw materials for the project. Whatever was not yet consciously designed and governed was marked for improvement, or simply for using. The process of modernizing, in all its detail and variety, over the whole course of those astounding centuries, was a process of fabrication through which moderns took over the Maker's role.

And title to ownership was accordingly transferred.

By the mid 19th century, in the shadow of Malthus and Darwin, the implicit aim was made explicit. Modernity's hidden agenda surfaced. For Marx, "the whole of what is called world history is nothing more than the creation of man through human labor, and the development of nature for man" which provides "a palpable and incontrovertible proof of his self-mediated [Marx' usage] birth" and renders "an alien being, a being above nature and man…impossible in practice."

The founder of positivism was even more explicit. Comte went beyond exposing God's irrelevance. He established a religion, with ritual and liturgy, an active church, the Church of Positivism-whose members worshipped Humanity, the "only true Great Being."

With Nietzsche, the death of God was formally announced and the figure of the Overman-the one who makes himself-appears on the horizon, hailed in terms that leave no doubt as to his standing.

God died slowly. He was not executed on a given horrific day. As the status of Maker fell more and more to those who actually made the settings that constituted people's lives, God simply evaporated. He could not sustain Himself as the subject of a world that no longer displayed His designs. At the most comprehensive level, this giant phenomenological fact is what accounts for the retreat of religion to the realm of private belief and practice under the regime of modernity.

And it's public reemergence in the postmodern context? Well, that's the next book.

What applies to the settings in which we live applies also, and more essentially, to our selves. As we become authors of our being, the proprietorial entitlement followed. Across the whole spectrum of the means and ends by which moderns have practiced self-government, socially and individually, since the 17th century, they have been realizing (as in "making real") the connection between secularization, the rise of technology, and the emergence of the modern individual-the Self-Maker, the Self-Owner. This book has focused on how much more extensive, various, and malleable self-ownership becomes as representations and options multiplied with the rise of mediation-but such are the roots.

With just that much perspective, genetic engineering and cloning appear as the fulfillment of a destiny. Literal human self-making is obviously continuous with the whole process of modern fabrication, but, with the focus on the theme of God, it looks more than continuous-it looks climactic. And this holds no matter how you evaluate it, no matter how secular your convictions are. You might see it, with Lee Silver, as a triumph, a breakthrough in our noble quest to liberate humanity from accidents of nature. You might welcome it, in the manner of Donna Haraway, because it liberates us from categories like "natural" and "human." Or you might see it, as Husserl or Heidegger would have, surely-as the ultimate technological abomination.

The story I just outlined accommodates all these evaluations, and more besides.

Obviously, a clone of you, improved or not, wouldn't literally be you, wouldn't have the same consciousness, experiences, memories. People realize this, but that doesn't smother the frisson of taboo evoked by the idea of self-replication, the rapture and horror of a narcissism intensified to the point of incestuous implosion. For the questions that hover at the edge of every mind that even glances toward a future populated by our virtual progeny living in virtual worlds, the questions that haunts this prospect at its moral limits, the questions Nietzsche would have seized upon immediately, are these:

What would it be like to gaze into your own eyes? What would it be like to caress and comfort, to love and care for, a clone of yourself? To kiss a person who looks exactly like you did thirty years ago? It would be as if the impossible solipsism of Descartes' original meditations were being acted out in the flesh. And then there's the whole question of giving yourself "all those perfections" Descartes mentioned, and so becoming the "author" of your being.

What would it be like to endow a clone of yourself with a few extras-an ear for music, an eye for color, a talent for languages, not to mention those few extra inches that make all the difference? And then, having given yourself what you were missing, what would it be like to raise and educate yourself as you deserve? Well, some of us are going to find out. Bank on it. It's a destiny. Parental pride at school concerts will take on a whole new dimension. And imagine those soccer games.

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Kashmir: A View From India

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

There was a sideshow at the Agra Summit that told its own story about Kashmir. In the lobby of the Moghul Sheraton Hotel journalists from both countries gathered from dawn to dusk awaiting news from the summiteers who met not just in another hotel but behind doors so completely closed that even titbits of news were hard to come by. With so much time on our hands us waiting hacks devised ways to entertain ourselves. Some invented gossip, others sought solace in chilled beer while still others made efforts to befriend the Pakistani journalists among us. Talking to Pakistani journalists became the most popular activity and there was bonhomie, friendship and (with the help of chilled beer)general agreement that peace between India and Pakistan was an idea whose time had come. If the Berlin wall could come down, if Israelis could talk to Palestinians, why should there not be peace between our two countries so linked by ties of culture, language and history. This was the mood on day one of the summit when things seemed to be going well between the summiteers.

Then, came day two and General Pervez Musharraf's unforeseen decision to allow his breakfast with Indian editors to be televised worldwide and suddenly it was not just ennui that was dispelled in the Moghul Hotel's lobby but bonhomie as well. Pakistanis coalesced into tight huddles and the Indians into theirs. Mistrust replaced bonhomie. Isn't that the woman who was on Star TV yesterday being really hawkish about Kashmir?' Yes, and that's that columnist from Karachi who was invited because he sounded so reasonable in his columns but on television he turned out to be just another hawkish Paki'.

As if some evil creature had cast a powerful spell an ugliness suddenly manifested itself. An us versus them thing that bred suspicion and misgivings. When Pakistani journalists were or seemed to be the recipients of privileged leaks from inside the Summit the Indian journalists whispered about how strangely journalists behaved in countries without a free press.

When the Indian media seemed to have access to privileged information from our Foreign Ministry spokesman Pakistani journalists nearly attacked the poor lady physically and by the end of the day the atmosphere in the lobby of the Moghul was as fraught as among the summiteers. We knew by then that Musharraf's breakfast show had put the Indian Prime Minister into a furious and unforgiving mood.

Even without this information, though, you could have told that the summit had failed from the atmosphere in the Moghul Hotel's self-consciously Moghul lobby. If you were in a Pakistani huddle you would be blaming India for the failed summit. How can there be progress as long as India refuses to discuss Kashmir? If you were in an Indian huddle you would be blaming the failure on General Musharraf's obsession with what he called the core issue and his puzzling decision to make his thoughts on the subject public mid-summit. Even those who thought he

won the propaganda war by doing precisely this were unimpressed with his views. All he had done was restate the Pakistani position in clear, plain-speaking terms but no Indian journalist I talked to saw it this way. The journalists in Agra were some of the finest in the sub-continent but were, inadvertently, taking exactly the positions their governments had.

It is, alas, always this way. Whether in Lahore's elegant drawing rooms or in Karachi's crowded streets I have found all talk of friendship and common culture, all bonhomie, disappear the minute the K-word creeps into a conversation. As an Indian journalist who has spent many years covering Kashmir what also never ceases to amaze me is the confused impressions of history on which many Pakistanis especially ordinary people base their passions. Over and over, when I have talked to the man in the street I have been told that Kashmir was part of Pakistan when India was partitioned and was taken by force.

If I have tried to explain that Indian troops only went into the Kashmir Valley after the Maharajah acceded to India I have at least in the streets of Lahore and Karachi – come close to causing a riot. How dared I tell such lies, it must be because I was Indian that I talked like this and more along the same lines. The question of conversation, leave alone debate, never begins.

The truth is as seen from India that for a couple of months between August 14, 1947 and the end of October that year Kashmir was *de facto* an independent country. Its Hindu prince disliked the idea of allowing his beautiful kingdom to be absorbed into the vast amorphousness of India and liked the idea of Pakistan even less. The biggest political party in his kingdom, Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference, was totally against the Maharajah but shared some of his ambiguity about where to be. Sheikh Abdullah was happier with the idea of a secular, democratic India than an Islamic, Punjabi-dominated Pakistan but was unsure of whether the autonomy he believed was vital to Kashmir would be allowed to remain.

So, Kashmir went to neither India nor Pakistan until the so-called tribals' invaded from Pakistan. Indians believe that the Pathan tribesmen included Pakistani troops and had the full backing of the Pakistani government. The average Pakistani sees what happened as some sort of early version of the *intifada*, a spontaneous uprising.

Unluckily, for Pakistan the Kashmiris did not see it that way. The men who came from Pakistan looted, raped and pillaged their way to Baramulla causing hatred and revulsion among the local population. The Maharajah remained immobile and dithering until he heard that they were less than two hours from Srinagar. Indians believe that it was at this point that he asked the Indian government for military support.

The Indian government pointed out that any military support would be seen as an invasion unless the Maharajah signed a document of accession. This he did on October 27 (CHECK) before fleeing with his jewels and minions to the safety of Jammu leaving his people to face an uncertain future.

This is the first event in Kashmir's post-Partition history and it is right from here that the

problem begins. It is hard to find Pakistanis, even the most moderate, who believe that Maharajah Hari Singh signed a document of accession before Indian troops moved into the state. Those who concede that some kind of document was signed believe that it was signed under Indian pressure and therefore invalid. There is also a peculiar pride in the UN resolutions that came soon after as if it were somehow Pakistan who had taken the matter to the United Nations.

The truth, as most Indians know, is that it was Jawaharlal Nehru who foolishly decided to take the matter to the UN thereby unintentionally internationalising the Kashmir problem. He went with the idea of having Pakistan punished for what he believed everyone would see as its attempt to take Kashmir by force. With the hindsight of history most Indians believe Nehru made a mistake by going to the UN and also believe that he would have held the promised plebiscite if Pakistani troops had withdrawn from what Pakistanis like to call *azaad Kashmir*. I have never met a Pakistani who believes that India was ever serious about holding a plebiscite, nor one who believed that Nehru was sincere in his offer to hold one.

Kashmiris believed him, though, and when it did not happen and the political problems began they rallied around the fact that he had offered them a plebiscite that was never held. Indian officials when asked about why it was never held point out that it could only have taken place if Pakistani troops had withdrawn from the territories they occupied in Kashmir but, again, to the average Pakistani this is just another Indian excuse.

The irony is that if Nehru had been courageous enough to order the plebiscite immediately after Independence Kashmir would almost certainly have voted for India and there would have probably been no Kashmir problem. Again, though, nobody is sure that there would have been peace between India and Pakistan if there had been no Kashmir problem and the reason is that the average Indian totally mistrusts Pakistan and believes that it is a country whose main objective is to break India up and if it were not the Kashmir problem it would have been some other excuse that would have been used.

Unfortunately, the average Indian also believes that the Kashmiri cannot be trusted. Indian government propaganda with the national press being the willing vehicle of it are the reason. In 1981 when I first went up to do a political story on Kashmir Farooq Abdullah's installation as the Sheikh's heir I was shocked to find that there was not a single Muslim journalist employed by the national press. If Kashmiris were employed as correspondents of national newspapers they were invariably Kashmiri Pandits. But, since Srinagar was a beautiful, relatively comfortable posting senior journalists from Delhi were eager to go and usually ended up treating the political sentiments of the average Kashmiri with total disdain. So, most Indians to this day remain only vaguely aware that Kashmir was denied fair elections between 1953 and 1977, when under Prime Minister Morarji Desai, a truly fair election was held. Journalists from Delhi, who liked to joke about the fact that they were India's viceroys', also went out of their way to increase the average Indian's dislike and distrust of the Kashmiri Muslim and of all Kashmiri politicians.

In 1983 I was sent up by The Telegraph newspaper, of which M.J. Akbar was Editor, to cover elections to the state legislature. It was the first election after Sheikh Abdullah's death and within days of arriving in Srinagar it became evident to me that his National Conference party had no chance of losing it because ordinary Kashmiris felt they owed this one election to the memory of the old Sheikh.

What also became evident, equally quickly, was that this was not how the election was going to be reported in the national press. I drove up from Jammu in the company of an old Kashmir hand who told me that he had spent many years in Srinagar as a Viceroy. We had spent some time in Jammu covering Indira Gandhi's campaign whose main characteristic had been to play what we liked in those days to call the Hindu card. She manipulated the sentiments of Jammu's large Hindu population by making campaign speeches that hinted darkly at the dangers of Muslims from across the border' being allowed in by the hoard if Farooq Abdullah came to power. It was the sort of patently communal campaign that should have drawn the attention of the national press and it surprised me that it had not found its way onto front pages. My travelling companion explained that this was because us Viceroys like to highlight the communalism of the other side'.

In the next three weeks that I spent in the Kashmir Valley I understood exactly what he meant. Delhi newspapers were filled with stories of Farooq Abdullah's communal campaign'. As one of the few journalists who accompanied him on his travels most others preferred to drink chilled beer provided by the Congress Party in Srinagar's Nedou's Hotel I asked colleagues when they had heard him make communal' remarks. They said that he usually made these remarks only in Kashmiri so I would naturally have missed them. Farooq Abdullah was painted throughout the election as an unashamed secessionist. The national press also went out of its way to create the completely untrue impression that the Congress Party was in a neck-and-neck fight with the National Conference. So successful were they in perpetrating this lie that it was believed enough by Indira Gandhi for her to be furious with Farooq's landslide victory, so furious that the Congress Party immediately after the election set about trying to topple Farooq's government. Baseless charges of massive rigging' were made, ironically, by the only party that had ever till then rigged elections in Kashmir.

These charges were reported as credible by the national newspapers so there was hardly any criticism of Indira Gandhi when, barely a year after the assembly election, she brought down Farooq Abdullah's government. This, in my view, was the beginning of the current Kashmir problem. The historic problem died in the seventies when the Bangladesh war and the execution of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto made the average Kashmiri suddenly see Pakistan through new eyes. During the 1983 assembly election I visited every constituency in the Valley other than Uri and everywhere I went I asked if plebiscite was still an issue and everywhere the answer was, No, this election is one in which we are participating as Indians'.

If Indira Gandhi's hubris had not got the better of her we would probably never had the uprising of 1989 that began the violence that has now resulted in a death toll of more than 50,000. Till 1986, despite the toppling of Farooq Abdullah's government, the situation in

Kashmir was retrievable. All that Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister by then with the largest mandate in Indian history, needed to have done was order fresh elections. Farooq, still hugely popular, would have won and the Congress Party which managed to get nearly 25% of the vote in 1983 could have built itself up to take on the National Conference at the next election. Rajiv, sadly, made the most crucial mistake of all: he insisted that the National Conference fight the 1987 assembly election in alliance with his Congress Party thereby causing both Kashmir's centrist parties to commit political suicide.

Farooq Abdullah's kowtowing to Rajiv after having been called a terrorist by the Congress Party and after the public humiliation of his government being dismissed for no reason was seen by the average Kashmir as yet another attempt to rub Kashmir's nose in the dirt. Yet another reminder that India's only Muslim-majority province would never be trusted. Inevitably, memories of Kashmir's historical problem with India came back to the surface and the old, secessionist forces dormant since Sheikh Abdullah's return as chief minister came back to haunt his son.

In a fair election these forces, which united to form the Muslim United Front (MUF), would probably have won no more than fifteen seats in the Kashmir Assembly. But, Farooq panicked and although he continues to deny that the 1987 assembly election was rigged the charges have managed to stick and are ironically still made by political leaders including Atal Behari Vajpayee. Farooq, in his second term as chief minister was too discredited to be able to hold Kashmir together and within months of his taking over although the tourists still continued to come and Hindi movies continued to be made there were rumours of young men having gone across the border to train as terrorists.

The Pakistan government was barely involved at this stage, the violent uprising that began after the Indian Home Minister's daughter was kidnapped in December 1989 took Pakistan by surprise. But, the average Indian does not see it this way. The Indian press and most Indian politicians have encouraged the belief that the Kashmir problem is entirely a creation of Pakistan. After the violence began Farooq Abdullah tried to prevent Jagmohan hated for his role in conniving to bring Farooq's earlier government down being sent up once more as Governor. When Delhi, now ruled by a weak, amateurish government under Vishwanath Pratap Singh, refused to listen Farooq resigned. Kashmiri anger exploded into the streets in the form of massive protests and these may have died their own death when Kashmiris realized that *azaadi* was not going to come so easily but Jagmohan, a municipal official from Delhi with no political sensitivity decided to use the jackboot. Peaceful, unarmed protesters were fired upon and so began a process of alienation from India that had never existed in the past.

Till the nineties if the Kashmiris had complaints about India they were mainly to do with the denial of basic political rights and the denial of the special status Kashmir was promised in 1947.

There were, till the nineties, no martyrs graveyards' filled with the graves of innocent men, women and children killed in crossfire'. Ironically, in one of them is buried Mirwaiz Maulvi

Farooq, traditionally one of Kashmir's most important religious leaders, who was killed by a militant group but whose death is blamed on the Indian government by most Kashmiris. So discredited did the Indian government become in the six months that Jagmohan was Governor in 1990 that it was unable to convince ordinary Kashmiris of the truth even when it was the truth.

It was in early 1990 that Pakistan began to involve itself in fomenting violence in the Valley. As almost its first move it set up a militant group called the Hizb ul Mujahideen (HUM) to take on the JKLF (Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front) which had started the violence by kidnapping Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Syed's daughter in December 1989. The JKLF was inconvenient for Pakistan because of its determined stand that the only solution to the Kashmir problem was to give the state independence. The HUM was more cooperative because, like the Jamaat-e-Islami whose militant wing it is believed to be, it takes the view that Kashmir should be merged with Pakistan.

Nearly all the militant groups that have come up since have been creations of Pakistan with the clear objective of establishing Pakistan's right over Kashmir. And, since Pakistan is one of the only two countries in the world Israel being the other which was created in the name of religion it was important to make Kashmiris aware that they were Muslims and so should recognize their natural affinity with Pakistan's Islamic republic.

In order to do this the nature of the militancy had to be changed and by the mid-nineties the beginnings of the change were became obvious. The militant groups, increasingly filled with foreign recruits from Afghanistan, Pakistan and other Muslim countries, began to enforce their version of Islam. Bars, cinemas, video libraries and beauty salons were forcibly closed as being un-Islamic.

Liquor bottles were smashed in the streets, women ordered to wear the *burqa* or risk having acid thrown in their faces and in the mosques where Kashmiri women had always been allowed to worship there were now more rigid Islamic rules applied so that women could no longer go. Shrines and *dargahs* at which both Hindu and Muslim Kashmiris worshipped like Hazratbal and Charar-e-Sharif also came under attack. Charar-e-Sharif was burned down in a battle with the Indian army and Hazratbal witnessed a siege for several days when militants opened fire on Indian troops from inside. Do the Kashmiris like this new version of Islam? Groups like the JKLF and Kashmiri leaders like Shabir Shah have tried to maintain the secular character of their struggle for freedom but have failed. They have spoken often about the tragedy of Kashmiri Hindus being forced out of the state but their appeals lack popular support. Ordinary Kashmiris are so bitter about Indian repression that Islamist militants called guest *mujahideen* are given support that they would not normally have had. Since the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11 there appears to be less support for the idea of drawing Kashmir's freedom movement into some kind of *jehad* for Islam but with the government of Atal Behari Vajpayee seen as a Hindu government the choice comes across as being between Hinduism and Islam.

So, will Kashmir be allowed one day to make the choice between India and Pakistan? Unlikely. No Indian government could survive a single day if it even considered the possibilities of a plebiscite under the UN resolutions. Kashmir has never been an election issue in India and south of Delhi there is little interest in Kashmir unless there is a war but most Indians are convinced that giving Kashmir up would be a threat to India's security. Between keeping Kashmir under control and fighting to keep the Siachen Glacier the Indian government is believed to be spending more than Rs 7 crores a day but nobody seems to mind because this is seen as vital investment in the country's security.

The average Indian does not trust Pakistan. After the Kargil episode this mistrust has assumed huge proportions. Indians believe that Atal Behari Vajpayee made a genuine attempt at friendship by going to Lahore on a bus in February 1999 and Pakistan's response in Kargil, two months later, is widely seen as evidence that Pakistan wants not peace with India but its total destruction. Pakistanis I have met in positions of high office both Generals and politicians admit that they believe that if India loses Kashmir it will be the beginning of some kind of domino effect and that other states will also demand secession. This is very far from being true because the one thing that India has succeeded in achieving in the past fifty years is a sense of national identity. Pakistanis also seem to believe that it is the myth' of Indian secularism that India seeks to protect by hanging on to Kashmir but, again, this is not true because secularism is no longer considered as important to the average Indian as economic growth and improved standards of living.

But, even Indian liberals admit that if India's borders are redrawn once more in the name of Islam or the unfinished agenda of Partition' it will become extremely difficult for Indian Muslims outside the Kashmir Valley. Unfortunately, since September 11, the belief that all Muslims are basically fanatics has increased among ordinary Hindus so there is little or no sympathy for the Kashmiris. This makes it harder for a government in Delhi to solve the domestic aspects of the problem although it needs to be said that the Vajpayee government has failed singularly to even come up with a policy for Kashmir.

Changed international realities have made it easier for them to evade the domestic side of the problem and to blame the whole thing on cross-border terrorism. Sadly, the government has the support of Indian public opinion where this is concerned so there is insufficient pressure on it to evolve a policy that would seek to make internal peace in Kashmir.

Which brings us to the question of whether the international aspects of the Kashmir problem would once more fade into the background as happened between 1971 (Simla Agreement) and 1989 if the Kashmir Valley became once more a peaceful place where tourists could flock and Hindi movies could once more be made.

This is possible but what then would happen to Pakistan's core issue' case? How can Pakistan now withdraw from its position that the only solution to the Kashmir problem is an international one that involves redrawing boundaries? How can it sustain its argument that the only thing preventing peace on the sub-continent is the absence of a solution in Kashmir?

Through the nineties Pakistani leaders have used Kashmir to whip up political support for themselves. I saw how well they had succeeded during a trip to Pakistan in the summer of 2001. Among the people I interviewed in the streets of Lahore and Karachi were unemployed workers who complained bitterly about General Pervez Musharraf's economic policies. Workers were being laid off, they said, and factories closed to meet conditions set by the International Monetary Fund. The general economic malaise in the country bothered them, they said, because things seemed to be getting worse by the day. They wanted friendship with India because they felt that if there was peace between the two countries they could cross the border and find work in India if they could not find it in Pakistan.

But, they added, they were prepared to die in the fight for Kashmir. First, Kashmir has to be given to Pakistan, they said, only then could there be peace. When I pointed out that this might never happen they were adamant that it would happen because they were all prepared to join the *jehad.* Shopkeepers, small businessmen and even villagers all said the same thing. So, we have a situation in which public opinion in India is almost unanimous that there can be no more redrawing of our borders and public opinion in Pakistan is almost unanimous that Kashmir has to come to Pakistan.

This leaves the sub-continent's leaders very little room for manoeuvre. No Indian leader can even consider giving Kashmir away and no Pakistani leader can give up the core issue'. Meanwhile, the people of Kashmir continue to be caught between the guns of India's security forces on one side and the guns of the militants on the other. Their faith in *azaadi* has waned as the years of violence have gone relentlessly by as has their faith in the militant groups who began the struggle for it. A whole generation of young Kashmiris has grown up without remembering a time when their lives were normal. Kashmir's political leaders, whether Farooq Abdullah or those that constitute the All Party Hurriyat Conference, seem unable to do much in the face of the governments of India and Pakistan taking it upon themselves to solve or prevent solution of the problem.

So, where do we go from here? There appear to be two roads to peace. The one favoured by India is peace without redrawing borders. This is based on the belief that if Pakistan stops cross-border terrorism the movement for *azaadi* will die a natural death because the average Kashmiri is weary of violence. When the next election is held and these days they tend to be proper elections then former militant leaders like Yasin Malik of the JKLF and Shabir Shah could contest and possibly defeat Farooq's National Conference. We could then go back to politics as usual as happened in Punjab and in Northeastern states like Assam and Nagaland. This can only happen, though, if Pakistan in view of its decision since September 11 to joint the coalition against terrorism decides to let Kashmir alone.

If it does not and the violence in the Valley continues to remain beyond the control of the Indian government then an international solution will have to, at some point, be sought. There is a growing view in India, though not in the government, that perhaps international mediation could be the way forward since Pakistan and India seem incapable of even speaking the same language any more. Even if this happens there is little likelihood of India agreeing to redraw

its borders.

The very most it could agree to would be a softer border that would allow movement between the two halves of Kashmir and, perhaps, greater autonomy to the state in keeping with the original promise to give it a special status. Even to give this much, though, would require a strong government in Delhi and this seems unlikely in the near future. If the coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party is defeated in the general election due in 2003 it will, in all likelihood, be replaced by a coalition led by the Congress Party. Since the Congress is currently led by a leader of Italian birth this government would have even less wiggle room than the present one because it would have to prove its nationalistic credentials at every step with Hindu nationalists breathing down its neck.

Besides, since Agra, the general view in India is that there can never be peace with Pakistan because Pakistani leaders whether in uniform or civvies cannot deliver it. Since the hunt for Osama bin Laden began and the United States chose to forget its earlier aversion to military dictators and take General Musharraf on board as a valued ally there is a certain loss of trust in the Americans as well. How can you fight terrorism if you take the support of countries that support terrorism is a question that is widely asked with many Indians, even in positions of power, concluding that the Americans are only interested in fighting their own war against terrorism not in the one India believes it is fighting in Kashmir.

The militancy in Kashmir has of late taken a very ugly turn with Hindu villagers and even priests being targeted in Jammu. The attempt to blow up the legislative assembly in Srinagar with a car bomb, shortly after September 11, has added to the impression that what India faces in the Kashmir Valley is not a cry for *azaadi* based on genuine grievances but an Islamic fundamentalist *jehad.* So, Osama bin Laden's war on the West has added an unexpected new dimension to the Kashmir problem.

There may, one day, be a solution in Kashmir that satisfies India, Pakistan and ordinary Kashmiris but right now not even the faintest glimmer of it is visible on the horizon. We should not conclude from this that we should just let things fester until there is a glimmer of hope. It is vital that India and Pakistan continue talking to each other, vital that we start some kind of peace process if only because two nuclear powers cannot afford to remain in a state of permanent hostility, vital that the process that began in Agra go forward even if we do not really even speak the same language any more.

This article, published by permission of Ushba International Publishers *was selected from the forthcoming volume* The Agra Summit and Beyond.

What Is The Un Doing?

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

During the Iraq War, many people asked, what is the UN doing? In fact, in a quietly significant way it was refusing validation for an action that Kofi Annan has called “not in conformity with the UN Charter,” or when pressed “illegal.”

The actual United Nations is often slow and inefficient in activity. When it does things, it often does them too late, or is too deferential to states-perpetrators. But perversely, simply by existing, it is supremely effective which is one of the reasons why so many American conservatives hate it.

The constant stream of visitors, tourists and others who make the trek to the United Nations, testify to its intangible numinous qualities. The U.N. Headquarters, international territory, is a symbol for billions across the world that there is more to global society than grim Hobbesian struggle between the governments and states.

That idea has evolved steadily. When founded, there were many countries that were refused membership. Now, the only country that, in my opinion, shamefully, is excluded is Taiwan. Statehood and sovereignty are now almost coterminous with membership of the world organization. The last few stragglers were the motley set of microstates who rushed to join after the invasion of Kuwait, thinking they were taking out anti-annexation insurance by doing so.

The very existence of the organization acts as a catalyst for the processes which are building a truly global society. In some of them, the United Nations, in the narrow organizational sense, of the Secretariat, the Assembly and the Security Council, may for a superficial observer, only have a tangential role, but on closer examination, it is clear that the U.N. is like the speck of sand in the oyster, the seed of a growing pearl of international order.

Ironically, although Americans may be loath to admit it, once a state achieves a U.N. seat establishing it is an accepted sovereign country, it also surrenders some of that sovereignty. It commits itself to abide by the United Nations Charter. Like all law, it is, as Shakespeare said, sometime honored more in the breach than the observance.

Cynics may point to the seeming impunity of recent U.S. and UK unilateral actions in Iraq, but this does not negate the point. At first, the two tried desperately to stay within the letter of the Charter even if they stretched it close to tearing point, and even as they broke it, they attempted to plead that they were in fact upholding it. Crimes may be committed in any society, but their commission does not negate the law, and in this case the “criminals” did not deny the law, rather they claimed to be interpreting it!

Indeed, the U.S. and UK positions were in their way reminiscent of Israel's in the wake of the recent ICJ opinion on the Wall. Their apologists simply disagreed with everyone else's interpretation of the Charter and International law. In the U.S. and UK case, while there was a clear consensus from the rest of the world that the Coalition had strayed beyond the Charter, no one actually put this to the test with a vote, in the Council, in the Assembly or in the ICJ.

In the case of Israel, some of their apologists concluded that since Israel did not agree with the Court's opinion, it was not binding, since International law is only consensual. Without negating the usefulness of consensus in both diplomacy and international law, this is, of course, nonsense. No system of law, international or domestic, can depend upon the consent of the lawbreaker to be effective.

Indeed, often when looking at the U.N. in operation, the principle of consensus is frustrating for activists and lobbyists. But trying to achieve a genuine consensus in an international context is often no bad thing, generally preferable to conflict.

However, in the end, whether we consider domestic law or international law, it is the views of the overwhelming majority of either national or international societies, not a complete consensus that validate legal systems.

In the end, law depends upon self-enforcement by those to whom it applies. People in general do not resort to robbery, rape and murder when there are no policemen present. Most people respect the law because they accept it has validity, both in terms of ethics, for its own sake, and also because of pragmatic reciprocity. We do not want to be robbed, raped or murdered, so it is to our advantage to uphold the laws forbidding such practices. Police action, in general, is only necessary to deal with the small minority who break the law.

In international terms, policing is even less reliable and frequent than in a domestic context, and consensus between states is more important. Increasingly, with the spread of democracy, *internal* consensus within states on international law is also important to keep governments in line. Most of the people in most democracies have a generally healthy respect for International Law, the United Nations, and its agencies and governments that fail to do so will pay an electoral price, as Spanish Prime Minister Aznar discovered.

Ironically, the only way for Blair to get a substantial part of British opinion behind him was to pretend that the invasion was on behalf of the United Nations! Even the Bush administration's attempts to get a U.N. resolution were motivated not only by the need to get an international consensus, but also to mobilize domestic support for it..

Back in the first Gulf War, Bush Senior's administration consciously used their ability to leverage support for Desert Storm in the Security Council to appeal to enough Democrat legislators to vote through the legal authorization for the American led liberation of Kuwait out of respect for the United Nations…

Last year's refusal of the members of the Security Council to vote for the invasion of Iraq was

in its own way an important victory for the United Nations and what it stands for. The failure to secure a vote for the invasion certainly rankled with the British and had dire consequences for the Bush administration, which found that even the U.S. operates in a global environment, where the rule of law is of primary importance.

Even more so was this the case with the American oil companies who knew that courts across the world accepted the United Nations Charter, and international law, and no one would buy Iraqi oil that did not have a clear ownership title from the Security Council. Across the world, national courts had to apply international rules.

As a result within months the Bush administration had to return to the U.N. because otherwise no one in the world would buy Iraqi oil for fear of litigation.

Even before then, the Bush administration had found that the countries that the U.S. had relied upon to garrison Iraq after its shock troops had toppled the regime there would not come forward to help because of the absence of a U.N. resolution. India, Pakistan, Turkey, not to mention most of the Europeans and Canada would have nothing to do with the invasion nor with shoring up the subsequent occupation.

It was an eloquent demonstration of the power of international law and order in the face of an outburst of lawlessness. Most UN member states sat down and refused to do what the bullying hyper power told them to do, or even to pretend approval. In a strange sense, it was almost Gandhian passive resistance on a global scale!

A cynic may say that the U.S. got away unpunished for its misdeed, but as in Grimm's fairy tales, getting what you wish for is often punishment enough in itself. Over a thousand dead Americans, approaching two hundred billion dollars spent, and no end in sight for a bloody entanglement vindicate all the warnings from home and abroad that the administration ignored.

Indeed, in terms of real-politik, it is largely because the majority of Security Council members, for whatever reasons, refused to endorse the war that the U.S. is now in no condition to invade any other substantial enemy, since it found, the crowings of isolationists notwithstanding, that it could not pull off such a stunt without the help of allies.

A year ago, it seemed that there was a real chance that the NeoConservatives in the Pentagon would bring about an invasion of Syria at least, and possibly Iran as well, with North Korea as another possible conflict point. In contrast, this June, the administration that had marched into Iraq waving the stars and stripes was trying to negotiate a withdrawal under the shade of the U.N.'s blue flag!

The position is even more ironic bearing in mind that Bush advisors like Richard Perle a year ago before were crowing, "The U.N. is dead, Thank God." The rest of the world can now thank the Deity with equal fervor that, for now at least, Perle's vision of a crusading America has been defeated by the sordid reality.

Some critics have suggested that the other members of the Security Council went too far in accommodating U.S. occupation demands in the resolutions this summer. This is unfair. Against the nugatory benefits of a "principled" stand, they had responsibilities to the Iraqi people, to help ameliorate their plight. In fact, while accepting the de-facto occupation, and the consequent need to work with Coalition Provisional Authority, from the beginning, the resolutions had sedulously avoided in any way vindicating or retrospectively legalizing the invasion.

Indeed, they carefully stated that the occupation had to follow the Fourth Geneva Convention and other provisions of law. Some Americans complained that they felt like Gulliver, tied down by a mass of legalistic Lilliputians. But the Lilliputian consensus won, they only progressively released the bindings in return for signs of the American Gulliver's acceptance of that consensus.

It must be said that many states were deeply concerned at the rent that the U.S. and the UK had made in the fabric of the U.N. Charter and international law. It may be an inglorious and, to some extent, an unjust solution, but there was a feeling that if the U.S. and UK could be encouraged back into the paths of righteousness, their renewed, although in the American case, entirely expedient, deference to the U.N. would, in some sense heal the wound in the Charter. The US is too big to punish, and the current administration possibly too thick skinned to submit to moral force from the rest of the global community.

It may not be a *just* response to what they did, but as we have seen reality, which includes the overwhelming world support for the Charter as well as the relative failure of their endeavor in Iraq, is constraining them so they will not rush to repeat their error. In that sense, the tear in the Charter has been healed.

It has not been comprehensively repudiated by the "Hyperpower," which, without admitting that it had broken the rules, at least is signalling acceptance that the rules exist.

This has been achieved in an almost metaphysical way. In the stage version of *Peter Pan*, children are all exhorted to declare their belief in fairies in order to revive the dying Tinkerbelle. We could almost say that the rest of the world's collective belief in international law revived the moribund law-abidingness of the evil Captain Hook, in the guise of the United States administration.

Of course, I do not believe in fairies. Nor indeed in metaphysics. But law is a social construct, so, as Mao said, generally held ideas do have a force in societies and that includes our global society. In reality, the US is not susceptible to external compulsion, but American citizens may be able to constrain their government and prevent its illegality, especially when spurred by the consequences for itself.

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The Philosophy Of Basketball (and Its Relation To Capitalism, Democracy And Socialism)

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

The rules of basketball have changed often over the years, so I hope no one will object if I offer a few modest revisions to make this truly wonderful game even better:

First, I would charge an admission fee not only to watch the game but to play in it. And the more one pays, the longer one gets to stay in the game.

Second, there should be a price paid for each shot taken, and the easier the shot, the more it should cost.

Third, as for fouls, one should be able to pay the referees, so that they never call any fouls on you (or walking or double dribble violations for that matter).

Fourth – and maybe most important – there is no good reason that the baskets should be the same height for both teams. It should be possible for the team that pays more to have its basket lowered, and for double that amount to have the basket the other team is going for raised.

Under present rules, those players who are taller and better coordinated and can run faster and jump higher have all the advantages. My rules would exchange the advantages enjoyed by these people for other advantages that would benefit a different group, one that has been poorly served by basketball as now played. That group is the rich. With my rules, the rich would possess all the "talent" (what it takes to win) and – more in keeping with what occurs in the rest of society – never lose a game.

"Whoa", I can hear some readers saying, "how is this going to make basketball a BETTER game"? Well, that depends, doesn't it, on what you think the game is all about, and on what you take to be its main purpose or meaning. Sure, one of the main things basketball does is enable us to have fun. But, like all games, basketball also provides people with a simplified model of how society works and – implicitly and often explicitly – how to get ahead in such a society. It does this through its rules and through what people do and experience when following (or watching others follow) these rules, and in the assumptions it encourages people to make regarding the relevance of these experiences for the rest of life. Basketball, then, is as much about education as it is about fun. Education is part of the deeper meaning of basketball. As a teacher, I take this pedogogical function of games like basketball very seriously. Well, how accurate a picture does basketball, as presently constituted, give us of the world in which we

live? Or – put a little differently – try calling a foul on your boss or landlord and see what happens to you.

Games, of course, receive a lot of help in socializing young people to systematically misunderstand their society from schools, churches, families, media, government and market exchanges, but only games are able to use the pleasure they generate to hide what it is they teach. Believing that what is so much fun cannot be part of education (something associated with schools, reading and tests) games have been spared most of the critical probing directed at these other means of socialization. However, if the ideas acquired at moments of pleasure are – as I suspect – both easier to learn and harder to discard, then treating basketball as if it were – well – ONLY a game marks an ideological surrender of monumental proportions.

The new rules that I have suggested for basketball would change all that. People who played or watched my version of the game would no longer expect being swift and agile along with persistence, teamwork and fair play to bring them success in life, but would learn something about how our society really works- $$$$$$$$$. Playing basketball by my rules would help prepare young people for life in capitalist society and, eventually, for doing away with what they found unfair and oppressive, rather than miseducating them about what the future holds in store. Admittedly, the game might be a little less fun, but in the process the naïve mantra, "Keep hope alive" would give way to the political imperative, "Organize to bring about the changes that you want".

At this point, some readers are probably thinking that if basketball is such bad education maybe we should get rid of it altogether. I would be inclined to agree if I didn't detect another equally important, equally hidden meaning in the game, and this time one that is wholly positive. To get at what it is we need only ask – what do both players and spectators enjoy most about basketball? I don't think it is the slam dunk or even the occasional circus shot. Rather, what really excites most of us about basketball is good teamwork, the times when the ball moves around between three, four and even five players, whose movements are perfectly coordinated, and the prize is an uncontested shot at the basket. Each player's skills, court sense and timing are on display, but it only "works" when the movements of each individual are transformed into the movement of a group, when the team as such rather than the individuals who compose it comes into focus. Putting our physical and mental energies into such successful acts of cooperation is very satisfying. It is also very unusual because there are few occasions in life where such intense cooperation is possible, and its fruits so immediate and evident. For players and viewers alike, it is a utopian moment, where they catch a glimpse of something wonderful, an ideal of community, that disappears as quickly as it appeared.

If basketball offers us this kind of utopian moment, why don't we hunger for more? I think we do, but for most of us it's disguised. We are not quite sure what it is that gives us this high, so we have trouble pinpointing what exactly is missing from the rest of our lives. According to this interpretation of its broader meaning, basketball is not so much a distorted education of what society is like but a utopian ideal of what it should be like. In truth, basketball contains both of these moments which are in an uneasy contradiction with each other, just as each is in

striking contradiction with the laws and customs of the society in which the game is played. The one, treating basketball as education, that is taking seriously its role in teaching us how society works and how to get ahead in such a society, calls for changing the rules to make basketball more like life; while the other, treating it as a utopian ideal, calls for trying to make life more like basketball. The choice before us, then, would appear to be whether to keep society as it is and revise (as I tried above) the rules of basketball (which would probably make the game a little less fun to play), or to keep basketball as it is and radically alter our society (which would retain or even increase all the fun). What cannot be chosen – not if we wish to be consistent and not if we wish to avoid constant frustration – is simply leaving things as they are, where basketball delivers poor education at the same time that it provokes unresolved utopian yearnings. I have already addressed what we could do to make basketball more like life, but what is involved in making life more like basketball?

The cooperation that we idealize in the game of basketball is essential to any functioning democracy. It is also at the core of what is still the best definition of "democracy": Abraham Lincoln's "government of, by and for the people". We in the U.S. have a democracy of sorts, but it is quite limited in scope and seriously flawed even in the political sphere where it does apply – as evidenced by the recent events in Florida and the obscene influence of big money in our elections. Still, despite such qualifications – and there are more – at least politically, we can be said to enjoy some kind of democracy. But work, education, culture, health, housing and communications are other important areas of our lives, and in every one of them a few people over whom we have no control simply tell us what to do. There is no accountability, no elections, no participation in decision making, and no chance to cooperate and experience the power and satisfaction that comes with cooperation. Rather than democracy, something akin to feudal relations rule over our social interactions in all these areas. Are we missing something? You bet we are, and the intense pleasure we get from being involved in or just watching good teamwork in basketball suggests that somewhere down inside us we know that, and even yearn for a life that would provide more opportunities to experience such positive feelings.

The comedian and political activist, Dick Gregory, said, "If democracy is such a good thing, let's have more of it". Seems obvious enough, and that certainly would increase the opportunities for people to cooperate and enjoy the psychic benefits that come with it. But what kind of society is it that "extends democracy into all walks of life"? According to Norman Thomas, a Protestant minister and one-time leader of the American Socialist Party, that's the best possible definition of "socialism". Could it be that the deepest, most hidden, and most profound meaning of basketball, one that underlies and helps explain its contradictory functions as miseducation and utopian ideal, is – socialism? Unfortunately, few of the people who love teamwork in basketball, which hides their desire for more cooperation in life, which in turn calls for the spread of democracy throughout society, are likely to admit that what they really want – and need – is socialism. For them, the term has been too sullied by the caricatures of socialism found in a few Third World countries, which were too poor for socialist relations to take root, and in our own capitalist media (and what other kind of media are there?), whose owners are too rich to tell the truth on this subject. But if the deepest meaning of basketball is – socialism, then why not exchange the term "socialism" in our discussion of

what to do for the term “basketball”?

Our goal? To make all of life as interesting, as fair, as cooperative and as much fun as basketball, whose rules and mode of play would then serve as excellent education for life in such a society. Our motto? “Basketball players of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your coaches, your bosses and your landlords.” Now there’s a game – and a world – worth celebrating.

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Camus, Sartre, and Us: The Story of a Friendship and the Quarrel That Ended It An Interview with Ron Aronson

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Ron Aronson is widely regarded as the preeminent scholar of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy in the English-speaking world. A professor of interdisciplinary studies at Wayne State University in Detroit, his books include Jean-Paul Sartre, Philosophy in the World (1980), The Dialectics of Disaster: A Preface to Hope (1983), Sartre's Second Critique (1987), "Stay Out of Politics": A Philosopher Views South Africa (1990), After Marxism (1995), and Camus and Sartre: The Story of a Friendship and the Quarrel That Ended It (2004) which will be published in paperback in April by the University of Chicago Press. A French translation of the book will appear in March from Editions Alvik. This interview took place at the Left of Center Bookstore in Chicago.

Postel: Why has it taken so long-half a century-for the full story of the Camus-Sartre relationship to be told?

Aronson: It was, of course, wonderful to have the whole story to myself, but it was curious that no one had ever told it before. In 1938 Camus read Sartre's *Nausea* with enormous enthusiasm. He discovered it and it had a great effect on him, as you can see in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. In 1939 he read Sartre's book of short stories, *The Wall.* He had been critical of *Nausea,* but by the time he read *The Wall,* he said, "This is a great writer." Sartre discovered Camus in 1942 and wrote a long review of his novel *The Stranger* in connection with the ideas of *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Clearly there was a kinship between the two of them before they even met.

Simone de Beauvoir recounts how they met in 1943, at the premiere of Sartre's play *The Flies.* This was followed by immediate friendship, particularly because Camus was marooned in France. An Algerian *pied-noir* (the term for the former French colonists of North Africa, especially Algeria), he couldn't go back home because of the war. As they became close, Sartre told him about his new play, *No Exit*. He asked Camus, an actor and leader of a theater troupe in Algiers, to play the lead. Previous writers have shown little interest in the fact that Garcin, the male lead in Sartre's most famous play, may have been developed with Camus in mind. But already this suggests that they may have been influencing each other. It is an interaction made to order for the literary biographer, yet no one has told the full story.

The deeper you go into the story, the more fascinating it becomes. As you continue to trace their interaction, you can observe each one influencing the other. In decisive places Sartre and

Camus shape themselves in relation to each other. For example, Sartre was sent to the United States by Camus in 1945 to write articles for the former Resistance newspaper he edited, *Combat*. Sartre gave a lecture at Columbia University which was never published in French during Camus's or his lifetime. It appeared in *Vogue* magazine during July, 1945, entitled "New Writing in France." In it Sartre spends the most time on "Albert Camus, who is 30 years old." He relates the plot of Camus's *The Plague*, his novel in progress (as a close friend, he happened to be privileged to read a draft). Sartre discusses Camus as a Resistance writer. Putting this lecture alongside Sartre's celebrated statement published a few months later demanding that the writer should be politically committed, we can see that Camus was a model for Sartre-the committed, engaged writer willing to risk himself as a member of the Resistance.

As both men continued to develop, Camus related to Sartre's ideas, and Sartre related to Camus the person. So, why did no one ever tell this story? In part it resembles a marriage gone sour, when, after an ugly divorce, both parties deny any trace of a connection. "He never had any effect on me." "I never loved her." Doris Lessing describes this attitude in *The Golden Notebook*. And that's really the sort of shutting off that Sartre and Camus did with each other. Each one refused to acknowledge that the other had an effect on them, and everyone close to them followed their lead. The biographers and commentators followed their lead. This is the personal reason the story remained untold, which we can all relate to.

Postel: There's also a political reason.

Aronson: Yes. The political reason was the Cold War. Sartre and Camus "broke up" in 1952, over the Cold War. Like the "war on terrorism," the Cold War was a war of "good" versus "evil." In a Manichean war, whichever side you're on is the good side, and the other side is the evil side. Dramatically this made their conflict totally uninteresting. It was not a tragedy, but a morality play. And in a morality play, good wins, evil loses, and you pay little attention to the story. This is what happened to the Sartre-Camus relationship. No one was interested in the story, because everyone had to take sides-the famous Sartrean idea: you must choose. In President Bush's words: "Either you're with us or you're against us." Sartre and Camus too: you're with us or you're with the enemy. Which side are you on? You're with Camus or with Sartre. For Camus, Sartre became the incarnation of the devil-and he still is for many people. For Sartre, Camus was politically vapid-and still is to many.

But in fact it is a very interesting story-morally, politically, philosophically, and personally. No one thought it was worth telling. And so not long after the end of the Cold War, I found myself saying, "Wait a second. It's not that simple. If you start looking at what actually happened, it was profoundly interesting. There was a genuine relationship between them.

Postel: Did you once see the schism in these either/or, Manichean terms, back in the day?

Aronson: Yes, definitely. As I saw it then, Sartre was right. The radical Left, myself included, sided with Sartre. The moderate Left sided with Camus. The radicals saw the moderate Left as always selling out. The moderate Left saw the radicals as being addicted to violence.

Postel: And you chose Sartre's side?

Aronson: It wasn't even a question of choosing. Sartre came with the terrain.

Postel: What sort of presence did Camus have in your imagination at that point? Where did he figure in?

Aronson: He was the Other. In the either/or, he was the Other, who one didn't want to be. He was an anti-Communist. If you were on Sartre's side, you had to be against Camus. If you were on Camus's side, you had to be against Sartre.

Postel: Today, some might even say you're more sympathetic to Camus than you are to Sartre-as did the *Village Voice* reviewer, who praised you for it. How did your appreciation for Camus eventually deepen?

Aronson: I was asked to do an introduction to a collection of the documents of the Sartre-Camus conflict. The documents include the 1952 review in Sartre's journal, *Les Temps modernes,* by Sartre's young protégé Francis Jeanson, who slammed Camus' book *The Rebel.* The second document is Camus's angry letter to the journal, "To the Editor"-he refused to say "Cher Sartre." This is a hostile 16-page reply to the hostile review. And then Sartre wrote an even longer reply to Camus, in which he wiped the floor with him. Then Jeanson concluded with a 30-page reply. These are the documents.

David Sprintzen, the author of an excellent book on Camus, had this project in mind for years. He wanted to present the documents to the public-these primary sources-with essays by various people. I was to write an introductory essay. So I wrote a lengthy essay about my fascination with the Sartre-Camus debate. It was the first time I had read the two together. The Cold War had ended, which had changed everything for me: I no longer had to choose. The either/or was over. As a result, I started seeing Camus with great sympathy. And then I read much more by Camus, and I realized that, in spite of his faults, I loved his work. There's something so attractive and appealing about Camus as a writer, as a person, as a sensibility. Very different from Sartre. Sartre was a political and philosophical genius; Camus was a literary genius. Sartre's relationship with his body was very problematic, as you can see from his writing; Camus is the sensuous writer, totally at home with his body, with the sun and the sand. You can feel the alienation in Sartre's writing and the heat in Camus'.

Postel: Sartre was the philosopher who dabbled in literature, while Camus was the writer who dabbled in philosophy.

Aronson: Exactly. As I appreciated Camus for himself, the either/or about Communism was fading into the background. I could begin to appreciate Camus's arguments and feel much more sympathetic to him. This 25-page introduction wound up being 75 pages. I sent it off to the editor and he had no problem with the length. He never said anything negative about it except, when I got it back, he had written an introduction to my introduction. I had been psychologically and politically and philosophically working my way to a more balanced sense of

the Cold War, and of Sartre and Camus-of the friendship, of the break, of the issues. I had begun to appreciate both sides, and felt an immense pleasure in this. And then when I read Sprintzen's introduction, I concluded that he was spinning it Camus' way: Camus was right; Sartre was wrong. I asked him to change or withdrawal his introduction, and when he didn't, I withdrew from the project.

And then I found out that an essay by Sartre's biographer, John Gerassi, who was sharply pro-Sartre and anti-Camus, was rejected. I felt that the book was becoming another post-Cold War effort to vindicate Camus. So I sent my essay off to my editor at the University of Chicago Press, who said, "This should be a book." And so I became enthusiastic about the idea of telling the whole story.

Postel: And here it is.

Aronson: And here it is. My goal was to refuse to take sides. This is a moving story, a meaningful story. In some ways, a beautiful story. And a tragedy.

Postel: What is the story's beauty?

Aronson: My book is the biography of the relationship. Most of the other biographers had said, or written as if, the two weren't important to each other. Patrick McCarthy, for example, argues that the relationship didn't last very long, only a few months at best. And all of them suggest that the two didn't care very much about each other. But Simone de Beauvoir said to her biographer, Deidre Bair, that their early relationship was like a love affair. Sartre was involved with Camus as if he was falling in love, and Beauvoir was very disturbed by this. She insisted that "Sartre was the strongest heterosexual I know"-as if to make sure that no one would suspect any homosexuality. But she also tells us that Sartre was talking about Camus the way one talks about a lover. Clearly Sartre felt a very powerful connection with Camus.

Postel: And the connection was important, based on that sense that they were opposites.

Aronson: They were opposites, yes.

Postel: Camus is beautiful; Sartre is unattractive.

Aronson: Right.

Postel: Camus is younger. He's from Algeria.

Aronson: Right.

Postel: He's working-class; Sartre is bourgeois.

Aronson: In his review of my book in *The Nation,* Russell Jacoby takes issue with my sense of their strong connection by stressing their differences and arguing that theirs was an

“accidental” relationship. But so often in falling in love you’re attracted to your opposite. With Sartre and Camus, it’s very clear that opposites attracted. Camus came to Paris from a colonial backwater, and Sartre introduced him to famous Parisian intellectuals and artists like Picasso, and he took Camus into his and Beauvoir’s circle. I don’t think Camus was an opportunist but rather a *pied-noir* being brought into the exciting world of Paris. Sartre did this for Camus. What Camus offered Sartre was his political involvement, having come naturally to something Sartre wrestled with for years.

Postel: You’re talking about their respective roles in the Resistance.

Aronson: Yes, for Camus, being a political intellectual, entering into the Resistance as a newspaper editor, was not something he pondered endlessly, but came to spontaneously. He never discussed it in his journal. He said, this is just something one does. But it is striking how many times Sartre reflected on it. Most of his plays until the 1950s asked: How do you commit yourself? How do you become politically effective? This was a major issue for Sartre. During the liberation of Paris in August, 1944, Sartre was in the national theater group of the resistance. He was given a rusty old pistol and he went with other theater people to guard the Comedie Française to ensure that the Germans didn’t blow it up as they withdrew. He was part of the troop that was guarding it.

And Camus was the editor of *Combat*, the underground newspaper that was now publishing openly. As editor, he walked around Paris observing what was happening as the Germans were departing and as the French were taking the city back. Knowing that Sartre was at the Comedie Française he walked into the theatre. And Sartre, who had apparently spent some time walking across Paris to get there, and was exhausted, was slumped in his theater seat, asleep. Camus went up to Sartre and woke him up, saying, “At least your theater seat is pointed in the direction of history.”

Postel: [laughter]

Aronson: Sartre had obviously carried on about being in history’s direction. And Camus was poking affectionate fun at his friend, who could do no more than point his theatre seat in history’s direction, while Camus was putting out a newspaper and influencing events. This was where things stood between them in August of 1944. Camus was the serious political activist, and Sartre was the wall-eyed philosopher who was always thinking about how to become involved but could never pull it off.

Postel: In 1933, when the Nazis came to power in Germany, Sartre happened to be studying in Berlin. And there is no account in Sartre’s writings or his diaries that he had anything to say about the Third Reich. In fact, he spent every day during this period, during this historical turning point, in the library with his head buried in the writings of Edmund Husserl, a philosopher who was persecuted by the Nazis for being a Jew.

Aronson: Hitler took power in January of 1933, and Sartre went to Berlin in the fall of that year. German writers like Adorno and Mann were leaving. They were traveling in the other

direction while Sartre was in Berlin studying German philosophy. He was disconnected from what was happening historically.

Postel: And in some sense this forms the backdrop to this tension between Sartre and Camus: Sartre had to prove what a committed intellectual he was.

Aronson: Yes.

Postel: How would you characterize the friendship's trajectory?

Aronson: In researching and writing this book I had no access to unpublished letters. I had access to only a single unpublished work and only when, as the book was being typeset, I was able to see the manuscript of a play Camus had written in 1946. During this period people were writing spoofs about the great genius Sartre. Boris Vian, Sartre's friend and a jazz musician and novelist, wrote a book in which one of the main characters, Jean-Sol Partre, writes dozens of articles each week and is working on an encyclopedia of vomit. His former student, Jean Kanapa, a Communist, wrote a novel attacking Sartre. This prodigious intellectual was being written about and talked about everywhere. And Camus, too, wrote a play-I think only three people besides me have seen it-called *L'Impromptu des philosophes* (*The Philosophers' Farce*). The main character is M. Néant-M. Nothingness. He carries around a big fat book that no one has ever read. For people in Paris during this period, and for twenty years afterwards, this was a famous joke.

Postel: *Being and Nothingness.*

Aronson: Yes. Everybody owned it; few read it. And this character is carrying this big, fat book no one has ever read, and, as in Moliere, he visits a provincial mayor and traduces the family. He seduces them into his philosophy, which is about absurdity, responsibility, freedom, and nothingness.

Postel: This is *during* their friendship.

Aronson: *During* their friendship. Camus wrote a play about this famous French intellectual who is seducing people with his ideas and who, it turns out, has escaped from an insane asylum. The play ends, after a whole family is taken over by his philosophy, when the director of the insane asylum comes to recapture him and bring him back to the asylum, and so everybody returns to their old way of life. Obviously this would have been another of the famous Sartre spoofs of the time, except that Camus never put it on as a play, and never had it published. I told Catherine Camus, his daughter, that it should be performed because it's delightful. It's great fun. The point is that, in reading the play, you realize that Camus was making fun of his good friend. He took great pleasure in this, and the spoof suggests that he saw his good friend as a rather strange kind of beast.

Postel: Fascinating.

Aronson: This was a friendship of two men who became famous as soon as Paris was liberated. Their names were on everyone's lips. One of them was the editor of one of the most important new French newspapers, *Combat*. The other was the editor of the most important new French magazine, *Les Temps modernes*. The two publications cooperated, and both sought to create a new non-Communist Left-Sartre acting through a magazine, Camus through a newspaper. Sartre wrote for *Combat* and Camus declined being on the editorial board of Sartre's new magazine only because he was too busy.

Postel: Was that the real reason?

Aronson: Your comment indicates a problem. Everybody writing about this is obsessed with seeing the differences between them from the beginning. Again, a la Lessing, once the divorce occurs everyone looks at the early years only to find the seeds of the split. So commentators and biographers claim to find the seeds of their breakup in 1944 or 1945. Like you, they ask why they weren't working together on the same newspaper, or the same journal. And they claim to find the seeds of hostility and tension, the way we do after a divorce.

But in fact, in 1946, they were still, as Catherine Camus said to me, *copains*, pals. Of course there were differences. There were disagreements. But they were both on the Left. Communism wasn't to become an issue between them until after 1949. The Cold War had not started, and after the Liberation they were very much involved in the same or similar projects, and working together.

Now the fascinating thing is that in exploring and discussing this I only looked at a single unpublished work, the one-act play. I did not look at any unpublished letters where one was criticizing the other. As far as I know, there aren't any. But as we look at their published writings, we begin to notice Sartre and Camus replying to each other.

Postel: Not by name, though.

Aronson: Not by name. Without using names, Camus was replying to Sartre here, Sartre was replying to Camus there. And they were part of a common milieu, the Parisian non-Communist literary and intellectual Left. In 1947 the Cold War was beginning. President Harry Truman went to Rio de Janeiro to announce the Western Hemisphere version of NATO, the Rio Pact. And he announced it saying that Communism was forbidden in the Western Hemisphere; we're going to defend ourselves against subversion in our half of the world. Camus read about this in Paris and was furious. He said that Truman was creating a new war. Although he was already an anti-Communist and already working on the ideas that grew into *The Rebel*, he didn't accept the coming of the Cold War.

Camus wrote an open letter, in which he attacked Truman and the Rio Pact, and he attacked the American efforts to create a cold war. Why is this important? Only because-and no one ever noticed this before, which is a scholar's delight-we see, in the Sartre bibliography by Contat and Rybalka, an open letter attributed to Sartre dated December, 1947. And upon inspection it turns out that this is, remarkably, the Camus letter revised. The Camus letter was rewritten

and given Sartre's name. What happened? Well, to figure it out, we have to read Simone de Beauvoir's letters to Nelson Algren and her memoirs. In these places she talks about a series of meetings they attended in the Fall of 1947. We can piece together what happened: Camus brought the letter to the first meeting, the goal of which was to set up a non-Communist Left independent of NATO and Washington, and also independent of Moscow. They sought a "third way"-a French path to socialism that would be independent of East and West. And obviously they started with Camus' text, and it was passed around and they reworked it. The main person reworking it was Sartre. Beauvoir talks about how they met with this group several times in the Fall. She tells us that every comma, every period was reworked. The text they came up with wound up in Sartre's collected works.

Postel: They were co-thinkers.

Aronson: Co-thinkers. This was Sartre's first properly political activity. I find it fascinating that Sartre's first real political activity is to rework a text of his friend Camus, with Camus as one of the participants.

Postel: So they were collaborators, fellow travelers. They were thinking about the same problems, trying to shape a third way. But something obviously went horribly wrong.

Aronson: Yes, and I think it's worth looking at this in terms of the historical situation. They were not only specific individuals. They became themselves in their historical environment, which made certain demands on each of them, or pushed one in a certain direction and the other in the opposite direction. The Cold War was beginning to impose itself on them, and beginning to push and pull them. And at the same time, they began to get irritated and bothered by each other. Sartre thought that Camus was going along too much with the French establishment. Sartre was too radical for Camus' taste. It was in and through the demands their situations placed on them that that Sartre became the revolutionary Sartre and Camus became the reformist Camus. And each one was part of the other's situation: he became the reformist Camus *against* the revolutionary Sartre. So as we see each man develop, we see how and why Sartre embraces violence. We see how and why Camus criticizes violence. And the Cold-War issue between them became: will you accept violence in the process of embracing social change? After waiting as long as possible, Sartre attacked Camus for avoiding the issue, and after waiting as long as possible, Camus attacked Sartre for being violent. But each man is in a way attacking his alter ego. He's attacking the person he chose not to be, or not to become. But this shaping of each against the other took place under the pressure of the Cold War. If the Cold War hadn't existed, they might have been able to remain friends.

Postel: So you see the dissolution as having been imposed from outside by the Cold War-its logic, its ethos, the polarizations that it generated.

Aronson: Yes, except that both men were active agents in this process. Both furthered the Cold-War polarization. One of the last friendly encounters between them, which stretched over a period of several weeks, was during the spring of 1951. Sartre's play *The Devil and the Good*

Lord was in rehearsal. Sartre was at the theater and Camus went there to pick up the love of his life, the actress Maria Casares. A lot of the interaction between them had to do with women, because they were both involved with countless women, and sometimes there was tension and even real anger about it. Beauvoir, in one of her 1970s interviews with Sartre, asked, "Didn't the breakup have to do with a woman?" And he suggested that this was an important part of the story. It's not inconceivable that Maria Casares may have been one of those women. She was the female lead in *The Devil and the Good Lord.* And Sartre and Camus were watching the rehearsals, while Camus corrected the proofs for *The Rebel*. *The Rebel* was one of the major Cold War French treatises against Communism, against revolution. Still friends, Sartre asked Camus for his excellent chapter on Nietzsche to be published in *Le Temps modernes* in the summer of 1951. And Camus agreed. In the play Sartre was intellectually working through the opposite question to the one Camus posed in *The Rebel*: how do you transform the world while still being a part of it? Sartre's position was deeply thought out: we have to use the means of this world to make this world a better place. And if this means embracing violence, so be it, because that may be the only tool available to us.

Postel: So if it means getting your hands dirty…

Aronson: Yes, "dirty hands," exactly.

Postel: Sartre says that Camus is too preoccupied with keeping his hands clean.

Aronson: Exactly. But he doesn't criticize Camus in the play, only later. Camus was watching the rehearsals of the play in which Sartre is embracing dirty hands for the purpose of revolutionary change. And he was correcting the proofs of *The Rebel*, which rejects this position. Towards the end of *The Rebel* Camus discusses not only Sartre but the play. He criticizes the play, which is no surprise because, after all, *The Rebel* rejects the idea of revolution, while in *The Devil and the Good Lord* Sartre embraces it. At this point they were developing *against* each other. They could not avoid this, after all, because they were the two dominant political intellectuals in France. Each man became the symbol for and leader of forces well beyond himself. Each man came to mean much more than he said. Perhaps that is the privilege, and the burden, of their greatness.

Postel: You lament the new consensus that has emerged which holds that Camus was right and Sartre was wrong about the Cold War. But wherein, exactly, is the error in the claim that Camus was right? Wasn't he, essentially?

Aronson: Camus was half-right. He had a profound insight into the way in which anti-systemic or revolutionary violence, once justified, can become a law unto itself. And he also had insights into how some spirits seek to overcome the world's absurdity by violently reshaping it. Intellectuals-and policymakers-often approach using violence with the kind of steely abstractness he describes, willing to sacrifice whatever number of lives in the service of a better future. Marxists and Commmunists did this, but so have all wielders of power and their intellectual spokespeople. By itself Camus's insight is only a half-truth, and it functions among

the latter-day Camuseans and “Cold-War vindicationists” (Allen Hunter’s term) to indict the violences we don’t like, while excusing those we find useful. The war in Iraq is one example. Aren’t we remaking the world to our own liking there? Camus was equally selective: while devoting virtually all of his political energy for several years to attacking Communism, he was not above using his anti-Communism against the FLN in Algeria, or approving of the disastrous Suez operation of 1956.

Postel: If he was half-right, what about the other half?

Aronson: This leads us to the unresolved dimension of the Sartre-Camus conflict, the aspect of it that is still very much with us today and needs addressing. The other half of the story is Sartre’s equally compelling insight into systemic violence. Sartre understood deeply the violences built into capitalism and colonialism, which he found no less appalling than Camus found revolutionary violence. He illuminated, as no one else has, the everyday structured violence of oppressive social relations, the violence that comes to be depersonalized and experienced as “the way things are.” Like Camus, he was selective, and thus half-wrong, and for a period he championed overthrowing these violences by any means necessary, including terrorism.

Danny Postel *is a contributing editor to the London-based magazine openDemocracy.net and to* Dædalus*. His work has appeared in* The Chronicle of Higher Education, Exquisite Corpse, The Washington Post Book World, The Nation, *and* Philosophy & Social Criticism.

A Visit To Leonid Lerman’s Studio

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

* *photos by Sam Sharif*

The work of Leonid Lerman marks a serious departure from the main trends that dominate contemporary sculpture. Whereas abstraction and a retreat from the human form has been a predominant impulse in post-war western art, Lerman’s work embraces human form, but one ensnared in the artist’s own struggle with human meaning, language, and

the desire to express the authenticity of human experience. His sculpture struggles with the very essence of the problem of human meaning, interpretation, language and the indecipherable gap between subjective experience and objective knowledge. Refusing visual comfort to the viewer, his work forces the evolution of new forms of visual experience and has broadened the horizons of modern sculpture.

Educated as a monument sculptor in Soviet Russia, Lerman’s aesthetic has been shaped by an impulse for inner freedom and a struggle against conformity. Out of the backdrop of socialist realism in which he was educated, he developed an artistic impulse that emphasizes sensuousness while not abandoning a commitment to reflection and thought attaining a curious power by shattering reification and privileging intuition and spirit over reflection and matter.

Three Poems

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

Three Poems

by
Andy Clausen and Bo Baba

A Million to One

I felt the fire
with no heat or burn
I endured the unmanifested wound
no doctor could diagnose
no healing teacher
no priest had a clue

Sleep would not arrive
a smile would have
shattered my face
a simple pleasure
would have frozen
my heart with fear

The trek was long
the time was short
Now I had arrived
back in the arms
where the trip began
Breath Inside The Breath
against all odds I have learned
to recognize You

God Vacana

The stove is a god
electricity is god
The air-conditioner is a god
a rock in the middle of the road
is god
when it looks like an elephant
or a dick

A bump on a log is god
the atom bomb also god
A megaton is god
a microgram god
The feminine principle god
beauty wealth health
elusive gods who ambush
The automatic coffee maker is a god
the refrigerator
the ten billion grass blades
of the front lawn, everyone a god

Gods gods gods godz they're everywhere
there's no place to walk
One can't move without sacrilege
one can't talk without blaspheming

There's only one god
It is Substance, It is Entirely Nature
It is You My Wife and Lover
Your sound is your name
I hear you in the smallest move of time
O Breath Inside The Breath

Poor Man's Vacana

The rich will give fabulous
(to one such as I)
amounts of wealth & credit
to many noble & lofty causes
What can
a poor man
offer?
The rich will build
temples libraries museums
universities cathedrals
bridges
If you ask for my labor
please know
it's all I have to sell
My legs are trucks
of cement and brick
steel and glass
My torso is a field

where the produce
feeding the world
lives dies lives
My head is the tower
where the histories
the books the knowledge
of all humans reside
My heart pumps the deepest notes
of all true love songs
All that is standing permanent
will fall
All that is moving temporary
will always be here
Yes, Breath Inside The Breath

Andy Clausen *is a coeditor of* Poems for the Nation (Seven Stories Press)*, a collection of contemporary political poems compiled by the late poet Allen Ginsberg. Clausen is the author of nine books of poetry, including* 40th Century Man: Selected Verse 1996-1966 (Autonomedia)*, and* Without Doubt (Zeitgeist Press).

Bo Baba *is a mystic poet who scoffs at mysticism.*

For information about the new book by Andy Clausen and Bo Baba, Songs of Bo Baba*, write to:*

Shivastan Publishing
54E Tinker St.
Woodstock, NY 12498

History Lessons & Founding Myths

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

History Lessons: How Textbooks From Around the World Portray U.S. History, by Dana Lindaman and Kyle Ward

Founding Myths: Stories That Hide our Patriotic Past, by Ray Raphael

For thousands of years political thinkers have recognized that myths are essential instruments of political power. Plato's vision of a well-ordered republic famously employed a Myth of Metals to justify inequality. Similarly, Nietzsche argued that myths were necessary in the creation of national identity and, indeed, for human life to propel itself forward.

Two recent books, Dana Lindaman and Kyle Ward's *History Lessons* and Ray Raphael's *Founding Myths,* make great strides toward challenging some conventional myths and broaden our understanding of American history. Raphael works within the interstices of American mythology to reveal the genealogy of fictional stories central to the American "founding." Lindaman and Ward demythologize American history by compiling textbooks from nations with which the US has engaged. From their vantage points, both reveal the highly myopic and provincial perspective that often shape American understanding of American history and, indeed, all national myths.

Two central questions underscore both books: Why is it important to challenge the myths that constitute American folklore? And what have been and are likely to be the consequences of these myths? If they are simply benign stories of heroism that make Americans feel proud and help forge a national identity, why not let them persist?

One of the brightest and most illustrative moments of Raphael's book is his short chapter on the famed order given by American generals at the Battle of Bunker Hill to "wait until you see the whites of their eyes," which has taught generations of Americans that the Revolutionary War was an intimate and personal war of brave individuals confronting their British oppressors. As Raphael explains, "In Revolutionary times, we prefer to believe, the glory of war was not diminished by impersonal slaughter." Thus, the war of independence would be seen quite differently if the bloodshed were the result of out and out massacre, as war often is. More importantly, this myth propagates a dangerous view of war that World War I diaries have refuted and the poems of Siegfried Sassoon have given voice to; the fact is that people can often motivate themselves to kill other humans only so long as they *can't* see the "whites" of their opponents eyes, that is, dehumanization drives war. It is for this very reason that generations of war psychologists have had to desensitize soldiers in order to kill victory often depends upon the namelessness and facelessness of "the enemy."

The glorification of war, as Raphael illustrates with his demystification of Paul Revere's ride,

the fictitious Molly Pitcher, and Sam Adams as patriot par excellence, requires that heroes and their stories be continuously created and maintained. Raphael sees a paradox, here, arguing that "The image of a perfect American in a mythic past hides our Revolutionary roots, and this we do not need." In reconsidering American history, Raphael contends that Americans will be able to discover that only stories of real people doing real deeds can be the source of a true patriotism, and to do he seeks to peal away the layers.

While Raphael questions the widespread historical assumptions that constitute American identity, Lindaman and Ward are revisionist historians in the most literal sense. Revisionist history is an inevitably controversial practice as Americans-as is true of any people-are uncomfortable questioning the veracity of the stories they were told as children. But Lindaman and Ward return "revisionism" to its perspectivist roots to re-vision, or take a second look at, a historical moment from a different vantage point.

This is precisely what anyone truly concerned with understanding history must do. As we have seen, from Herodotus and Thucydides to such contemporary historians as Doris Kearns Goodwin and Arthur Schlesinger, all historians take perspectives. Sometimes they even lie for tragic effect or narrative flow. Recognizing this, Lindaman and Ward help us to reconsider our own history from perspectives that official American doctrine does not allow. As one might expect, these perspectives are not attempts at rewriting "Truth," but rather of making it clear that Americans are as biased in the writing of history as other nations. Just as Raphael shows us how perspective and the national imperatives that shape it effect how we see ourselves, Lindaman and Ward demonstrate how other nations view the history of their involvement with the United States.

One of the most exciting of their chapters deals with what Cubans simply call "The Missile Crisis." Unlike American textbooks, which point to an unprovoked act of aggression by Soviet Premiere Nikita Khrushchev, Cuban textbooks describe the "crisis" as a reaction to continued threats from American "imperialist forces" such as the Bay of Pigs Invasion of 1961, as well as a logical response to assassination attempts on Fidel Castro. An excerpt from a Canadian text reveals yet another perspective, focusing on Kennedy's unilateralism: "Neither [Canadian PM] Diefenbaker nor his ministers were consulted-much less informed-about the decision [to ready American military forces and nuclear capabilities for war]. The prime minister was furious that a megalomaniac American president could, in effect, push the button that would destroy Canada."

Several of Lindaman and Ward's entries serve to broaden the usual treatment of events offered by American textbooks. A chapter from Nigeria on the Atlantic slave trade, for example, frankly acknowledges the financial benefits Nigeria received from selling off its own people, while an excerpt from Zimbabwe blasts its master, Great Britain, for forcing the African colony into slavery. The British entry, in turn, praises itself for being among the first nations to ban slavery.

Lindaman and Ward's book is timely and important. At a moment when the credibility and

standing of the United States in the world has been called into question, and where political candidates increasingly need to prove their willingness to act unilaterally in order to be considered “strong” by the American electorate, understanding how the world is taught to see America is in the best interest of the nation. This is a matter of pragmatic political strategy if not to attain respect and trust, then as a matter of long term national security. Whether or not he is right, George W. Bush’s claim that the United States has always been a force for good is not a view shared around the world, and many important clues to the “global test” that John Kerry rightly suggested the United States should consider can be found in *History Lessons*.

Perhaps more important, these books call into question whether a nation so deeply invested in a set of national myths can make decisions that will make it stronger or help it to pursue the equality or justice to which American founding documents lay claim. For example, the contemporary myth of a cheerful heterosexual nuclear family that has never in fact existed is being used to deny rights to gay and lesbian citizens. Similarly, a decade ago, Reagan’s legend of the “welfare queen” conditioned many Americans to believe that efforts to combat poverty were nothing more than a waste of tax dollars. National mythologies that conveniently serve the interests of economic or religious factions, or that are used to mobilize a nation for war, can have real and serious consequences.

These revisionist historians do not advocate denying America the right to a past. But the spirit that unites both books is the conviction that any nation’s guiding assumptions must be continually re-examined before they can serve as a sound basis for future action. *History Lessons* and *Founding Myths* show that looking back and reconsidering history is a prerequisite of the very possibility of moving forward.

Dan Skinner *is a graduate student in political science at the CUNY Graduate Center.*

Leo Strauss And The Politics Of American Empire, By Anne Norton

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

Dear Anne Norton,

I found your book an engaging read for the memories it evoked and for the information it provided on the mindset of people whom we need to examine seriously. You brings to life the milieu from which Straussianism emerged, stirring vivid memories of the University of Chicago's Political Science department some 30 years ago. Not only the familiar names and stories, but your descriptions of student attitudes, of the style and method of the classes in political thought (in my case, those on Hegel's Phenomenology and on Plato's Parmenides) in that awful room in Pick Hall, made it all seem like it happened only yesterday. I close my eyes and almost hear the stilted-style voices.

But I was less impressed than you by that formality or by their close reading of a single text. As to secrecy and the "secret teachings," your encounter with "The Lion and the Ass" reminded me of just how silly I took all that to be. But I was never one of those worshipful "little men in the front who would scurry into action with tape recorders" as another lecture began (p. 23). I appreciate that assertions of male superiority are galling but I do wish you had found a less sweeping way to express justified contempt. After all, even little men with soft hands may conceivably prove useful allies in the struggle against American empire.

The great strength of your book is that throughout you show how the practice of Straussians in power is utterly at odds with their philosophical pretensions, and how their practice gives cause for deep concern. You also point out how an interest in natural right has become an attempt to impose a singular view of nature upon science and society, how those whose theory and self-understanding centers on their own sense of persecution have become the persecutors of others, how, in order to justify their own invasions of far away places, supposedly close students of Thucydides now, rather than reading the Sicilian expedition as a warning of the awful consequences of a policy rooted in arrogance and bad judgment, urge that Thucydides got it wrong.

I further appreciate your disclosure of their prejudices and hypocrisies: their opposition to the further opening up of the educational system to African Americans, despite the fact that in their younger days they themselves benefited from a similar opening; their sexual behavior at odds with their pronouncements on family values; their posturing as advocates of the rights of women in distant parts of the world, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, to be set beside their intellectualized fear of and hostility to women's equality at home; their disparagement of the very media they themselves have corrupted with their ignoble lies and with their skill in

esoteric and manipulative writing. In all these matters and more, their reprehensible mode of thinking bear a very troubling resemblance to contemporary American domestic and foreign policy. More parallels will spring to the minds of your readers. It is all a bit frightening, to say the least.

But are we falling under the domination of the Straussians? Are they so powerful throughout the US government and in important places in American culture? Or are they merely influential in a limited number of places in political and cultural systems? Are they, perhaps, little more than useful idiots used by those who are truly powerful, only to be discarded when they are no longer useful? The major problems I have with your book relate to these nagging questions.

You say you tell us how the teachings of Leo Strauss made their way from the quiet corners of classrooms and dorms, bookstores and labs,
into the precincts of power, and what became of them when they came there" (p. 33). But I don't believe you do depict the movement of people and ideas. While you don't show how Straussians managed to get their jobs in government, you do point to people who are the bearers of Strauss's teachings and now occupy positions of great power. We regularly encounter the claim in newspapers, in BBC documentaries, on web sites, that Strauss's students are the driving force in American politics.

Such a claim has been made before. Notoriously, in Britain from the mid-Nineteenth Century forward, all top jobs in government, culture and, eventually, even industry went to people who graduated from Oxford and Cambridge with degrees in the classics-a consequence of Benjamin Jowett's success in having the reform of the British Civil Service linked to jobs for his boys. But even then, there was power and there was Power. So I raise the possibility that we may be giving the Straussians far more credit than they deserve. Why might we be doing that?

For us, and for many we have known, the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago was extraordinarily special. What was thought and said there was-strange though this seemed to outsiders-taken to be of crucial significance. Yet it's but a short step to imagining that any group of people with roots in that Department must also be of great consequence should they become entrenched elsewhere. So, while many espouse a conspiracy theory of Strauss's role, is there a possibility that we tend to fall into a sort of ancestral institution worship? Is it perhaps there is a touch of guilt by association lurking here: "I write this book because I have debts to pay and ghosts to lay, and because I was made, somewhat against my will, the carrier of an oral history" (p.ix).

Despite your stories of their 'take no prisoners' approach to trying to take control of one small academic department, remember that even with their master on hand they did not succeed. Some of those you name in your Preface helped stop them cold. Moreover, as you say, it was only the coming together of two quite different concerns and teachings that gave the Straussian movement political 'legs.' I'm referring to the intersection of some students orbiting about Strauss with those orbiting about Wohlstetter, the nuclear strategist (pp. 8-9, 17-18, 182-186). This surely suggests that the bearers of the Straussian myth have risen to

prominence in the Washington firmament through the fashioning of alliances with the bearers of yet other myths. But do they necessarily dominate these alliances? From being arrivistes in academia, where they always felt insecure-this is part of your description of Allan Bloom, Donald Kagan, and Werner Dannhauser (pp. 50, 67-70)-surely they have now become arrivistes in the Washington corridors of power, not confident masters of all they survey? (I find myself recalling Wolfowitz slyly sleeking his hair with spit in Michael Moore's "9/11.")

This is not to deny that they have some influence, some even a great deal. But you may be crediting them with being more consequential that they are. How connected and coordinated are they and their policies? Their common educational experience surely would not in itself constitute an effective ideology bringing coordination and cohesion to their actions? You emphasize the sometimes bitter tensions among the several Straussian sub-schools (pp. 8-9). If I may interject a short Straussian story: One of my friends reported back from his job interview at a California institution how shocked he had been to be summoned into a distinguished professor's office and subjected to a diatribe against the "traitors" on the faculty at Chicago. And my friend wasn't even a theorist! Can we really believe that such people could maintain any long-term association with each other, especially when their personal careers are at stake? I'm willing to concede that they play a part in the present system of domination. But we shouldn't too readily credit them with playing an extraordinary part, not least because that would hamper us from arriving at a useful understanding of how that system of domination is organized and how it functions.

Another concern I have is that Straussians allying themselves with others, such as Wohlstetter, seems to be something you almost regret. You seem to be venturing a 'pump don't work 'cause the vandal stole the handle' defense of some genuine sort of Straussianism. I take you to be saying Straussianism is a valuable contribution to political thought; too bad that some fraudulently claim that Strauss is guiding their exploitation of power. Is your book is an attempt to distinguish the good, to whom you are indebted, from the bad?

You assert such a distinction: "The conception of philosophy, the breadth of learning found in Strauss and among his students stands in sharp contrast to the stubborn ignorance of the Straussians. . . The Straussians have set themselves to guard the gates Strauss opened. . . They have not kept faith with learning (p. 226)." You regret the stand against Islam of the Bush administration the faithless Straussians are a well-recognized part of. (Previously, you explored how Straussians look remarkably like their global foes, the romanticizing devotees of Sayyid Qutb, like Strauss a critic of modernity (pp. 110-115).) This brings me to my final problem with your book.

Let me get at it by referring to your criticism of Thomas Pangle for seeming to ignore a work of Derrida of crucial relevance to the argument he
is making: this pointed non-citation is, you say, a classic Straussian mode of argument (pp.100-101). What, then, should we make of the fact that you
ignore the works of Shadia Drury, much cited in recent years? Her two books, Leo Strauss and the American Right (1997) and The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss (1988), cover much the same

ground, while her purpose at least partly overlaps with yours. She, for example, thinks Straussianism is “the dominant ideology of the Republican party [which] threatens to remake America in its own image” (1997: p. 178). Had she been writing now rather than 7 years ago she might assert that their aims were even more grandiose than that.

You, as your title emphasizes, think the Straussians aim to create an American empire, to carry out a project of universal dominion. Drury’s style is, however, less conversational than the one you employ. But the fact that you will likely thereby reach a larger audience makes your passing her over in silence even more problematical. Since you are seeking to use Strauss to criticize the Straussians and since you would seem to be seeking to rescue ‘genuine’ Straussianism from Strauss’s misguided and unworthy followers, then you must disagree with Drury, who views Strauss, the philosophical Straussians and the political Straussians wielding (some) power in Washington as all facets of the one highly questionable enterprise. She notes, for example, that Strauss “taught some of his students to be statesmen and gentlemen while teaching others to be philosophers,’ and that this dual approach is integral to his political thought. The former is “the incarnation of the overwhelming success of traditional religion into being fit for civilized life,” while the latter must find a way to live and rule without disturbing such “pious illusions” (1988: pp. 189-190). This is Drury’s analysis of Strauss’s concern with “Athens and Jerusalem.’ And she concludes, in opposition to the position you take,

[N]eoconservatism is the legacy of Leo Strauss. It echoes all the dominant features of his philosophy-the political importance of religion, the necessity of nationalism, the language of nihilism, the sense of crisis, the friend/foe mentality, the hostility towards women, the rejection of modernity, the nostalgia for the past, and the abhorrence of liberalism
(1997: p. 178).

This reads almost like a list of your chapter topics. Yet for her this is what Strauss is all about, while for you it is only a description of bad Straussians. If the differences I’ve sketched were simply scholarly ones, they might nevertheless be interesting to explore in order to assess whose version was the more accurate one-though this would not be the place to attempt it. And like Pangle’s silence with respect to Derrida, your silence with respect to Drury-why give space to the arguments of your opposition?- would be explicable, even if
regrettable. But since your project is, as is Drury’s, the larger political one of saving the United States and the world from the Straussians, it seems to me you should want to explore in debate with her the true scope and depth of the threat, to make sure that we actually do address the disease as well as its symptoms. From that point of view, your silence is even more regrettable.

I am not forgetting that I expressed doubt as to whether the Straussian role is as crucial in American politics as you-and in her different way,
Drury-take it to be. That is another exploration that needs to be undertaken if the project to dominate is to be properly understood. Given the electoral disaster of 2004, which is likely to lead to more hideous brutalities in the effort to impose universal dominion, such explorations as these have become even more urgent. I take your book to contribute to these necessary explorations. But so much more remains to be done.

Sincerely, Robin Melville

The War At Home: The Domestic Costs Of Bush's Militarism by Frances Fox Piven

By | 2005: Vol 4, No. 1

Imperialism used to be a theory; today, it is a rhetoric. The word shadows us wherever we go: on placards at anti-war demonstrations, sprinkled through the pages of left publications, and sprouting up in one conversation after another. Few seem to have noticed that the word has left behind the precise meanings it had several decades ago; it seems to have become more a token of radicalism than a tool of critical analysis. The question needs to be asked: Is the concept of imperialism useful today? In taking account of what she calls "the domestic political dynamics that accompanied America's unilateral turn toward preemptive war," Frances Fox Piven addresses this question.

For J.A. Hobson and Vladimir Lenin-the authors of the classic works on imperialism-the term denoted a global pattern of intertwined economic and political domination by a few wealthy nations.[1] For Hobson, imperialism was a policy sought by certain "parasitical" sectors of capital. Because they needed new sites for exporting surplus, these capitalists wanted their governments to acquire and defend colonies. Lenin argued, to the contrary, that imperialism was not an optional policy but a structural necessity within the new finance-dominated form of capitalism. The debate between proponents of the two theories, correlated as it is with the conflict between reformist and revolutionary socialisms, has obscured what the theories have in common. However, their similarity may, today, be more important than their differences. Hobson and Lenin agreed that capital's needs *beyond* the borders of its home countries drove colonialism, which in turn brought wars. International economics and international politics were joined by a tight bond-in Lenin's view, inevitably, and in Hobson's, for as long as pro-colonialist sectors of capital were able to shape policy to their own liking. For both theories, thus, the globalizing interests of capital drove colonialism and war-making.

Piven quietly sets aside the idea that capital's push for colonial expansion is the central cause of international conflict today. She writes:

Explanations focusing on imperialism assume the main reason for war in Iraq was to shore up American domination abroad. I argue that another reason for war was to shore up America's rulers at home….[W]ith the political lift gained by war-making, the Bush regime was also able to push rapidly ahead with its right wing domestic policy agenda [of] extracting wealth from the American people.

To say there is "another reason for war" is to make an amendment that collapses the old theories of imperialism. The story Piven tells is one in which-at least in the case of President George W. Bush's war in Iraq-elites seek war because militarist policies facilitate capital's

power at home. In Piven's account, the new American colonialism is simply the price of war, not the structural imperative behind it. If Piven is right, the link between war and the interests of capital is far more indirect and circumstantial than Hobson's and Lenin's theories of imperialism would have us expect. Capitalism and colonialism, rather than forming a seamless whole, happen to coincide for the United States at the moment, and there is no particular reason to expect they will do so regularly or for long at a time.

Piven notes that war "always has a home front." Wars have consequences for those whose countries fight them, even when the wars are abroad, and war's domestic constituents and opponents contend with each other about those consequences. In this book, she traces the domestic political consequences of the war in Iraq: those that we can see already, as well as others, vastly different, that might emerge in the near or nearish future.

The immediate consequence of the Iraq war for American politics, Piven argues, has been a swelling of nationalism and authority-worship centered on the person of President Bush, an "emotional fervor" that "smoothed the way for huge advances in the domestic neo-conservative agenda." If we can presume that Bush and his advisors anticipated this upswing in their level of popular support-which seems reasonable-then we can see the Iraq war as a domestic "power strategy" on the part of the administration and its allies, a move that has aided the administration's base of the haves and have-mores in their mission of "extracting wealth from the American people," Piven writes.

Note that for Piven the relevant attribute of capital in this context is not its drive for foreign markets or resources, but its more fundamental need to secure its power in relation to its domestic working class, the better to generate profits. In any contemporary advanced capitalist country, this means rolling back the achievements of social democratic, liberal, and labor movements. The familiar neo-conservative agenda follows: cutting taxes on profits and on the income and assets of the wealthy, undercutting social welfare programs both fiscally and politically, providing tax-funded giveaways to corporations, and deregulating industries. The bulk of Piven's book is a careful-even exhausting-recounting of the Bush administration's pursuit of this agenda.

Piven recounts Bush's massive tax cuts, along with deregulatory and corporate-welfare policies targeting not only the energy industry-Bush's closest corporate ally-but also the mass media, the pharmaceutical industry, gun makers, and sugar growers. She notes the administration's feeble response to the unprecedented corporate scandals of the past four years, as well as the increased trend toward the capital-friendly abuse of science. The heart of her story, however, is the administration's social policy assault on the working class and the poor. Contemporary business elites in the US, she notes, have three primary policy goals: reducing or even reversing redistribution of wealth, opening up new areas for profiteering (such as social service provision), and weakening the buffers that protect workers from labor market forces. This is the context in which Piven places the Bush administration's attacks on labor rights and social welfare programs. The damage Bush has done, or is poised to do, is stunning: Medicaid funding limitations, for-profit privatization of social services, drastic cuts to low-income housing

subsidies, barriers to Earned Income Tax Credit applications, new restrictions on eligibility for public assistance, rollbacks of workplace safety and organizing rights, a proposed "guest worker" program that resembles indentured servitude without the payoff of citizenship at the end, and continuation of the longstanding right-wing strategy of stigmatizing welfare recipients by ensuring that only the most socially marginal groups are eligible for certain high-profile programs. Bush has even skimped on funding for his signature social policy initiative: testing-centered education reform. Lurking in the wings is an even more radical assault on what Piven, elsewhere, has called the American social compact, as Bush's advisors prepare strategies for privatizing Medicare and Social Security-the programs that represent the most important gestures the American government has ever made toward a universalistic welfare state.

At times, reading the book's middle chapters feels like plowing through a box of index note cards: fact after fact after fact, at first infuriating, then dizzying, then numbing. When you read these chapters (which you should), be careful. Distracted readers might fail to notice that through these patient details, Piven has captured something crucial for anyone who seeks to understand this administration's policy success. The audaciousness of the Bush regime's program lies not only in its extent, but also in its stealth. There have been no loud proclamations of a new policy paradigm, no history-making neo-conservative broadcasts equivalent to Franklin Roosevelt's call for a "second Bill of Rights" or Lyndon Johnson's declaration of an "unconditional war on poverty." Instead, Piven observes, the Bush administration has announced policy shifts at times unlikely to get press attention, said one thing and done another, chipped steadily at the welfare state rather than blasting it suddenly.

The Bush regime's quiet persistence in demolishing social welfare programs-as well as what Piven calls the "crusading harshness" that seems to be its animating spirit-is perhaps best illustrated by an example that, Piven comments, represents the administration at its most "gratuitously mean-spirited":

In his 2003 State of Union message, the president boasted of a new $450 million program for mentoring the children of prisoners. His budget proposals shortly afterwards allocated $150 million, and also eliminated a number of other programs that reached those same children, with the result that there was an overall reduction of $39 million. And…the 2004 budget proposed to reduce other after-school services for children by $400 million.

Who are these guys?

The Bush regime's power rests on the continued unity of the various Republican constituencies: "evangelists, antitax groups, pro-business interests, libertarians, antilabor groups, and gun enthusiasts" along with the "military-industrial establishment." The bond that unites Pentagon and military-industry elites, corporate interests, and the grassroots footsoldiers of the right, Piven proposes, is the ideological clarity delivered by neo-conservative thinkers. The neo-conservative intellectuals, from their posts in the think tanks and publications allied with the Republican Party-and, now, from within the Bush administration-have promulgated a ready-made justification for the militarist foreign policy that, in turn,

provides the political cover for the right's domestic agenda and electoral success. Pentagon pragmatists and bottom-line capitalists might not share the neo-cons' confidence in preemptive attacks or their enthusiasm for the military introduction of liberal democracy to the Arab world, but this does not matter. Policies need public rationales, and if the case for war in Iraq prepared by the likes of Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz had not existed, someone would have had to invent it.

Neo-conservative ideology has not only helped to hold together the Republican base, Piven writes. It has also "recast the president and his party as the anointed saviors of America at war." In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, Bush's combination of religious rhetoric, military bravado, and appeals to Americans' latent hunger for authority has proven powerful. This mix of themes has taken President Bush from being a weak and flailing executive to being re-elected with more votes than any other candidate for President has ever received.

The catch, for President Bush and his constituents, is that their use of the Iraq war to underpin a pro-capital policy offensive may generate its own collapse. Bush's simultaneous pursuit of war and new benefits for elites, Piven writes, "violates the lessons of history." Wars, she notes, tend to become less popular with the fading of the nationalistic fervor they spark at first, and political elites find they must compensate for this somehow. Thus, working-class and left movements have often won major political and economic concessions from elites during or immediately following wars. The voting franchise was expanded in Britain towards the end of World War I and in the US, for 18-20 year olds, during the Vietnam War. World War II saw 90 percent tax rates on the rich in the US and, after the war, the construction of Britain's modern welfare state and the introduction of generous veterans' benefits in the US. Bush's attacks on the general welfare and on civil liberties contradict this pattern. As US support for the war declines, Piven suggests, Bush may yet be forced to make policy concessions or even to face domestic regime change. Nationalism may be war's immediate consequence, but discontent follows soon after, and discontent has political consequences of its own.

Statisticians may question whether Piven's examples indicate a significant correlation between war and rights-expansions, but this would be missing her point. Piven's argument is not that wars automatically lead to greater political and economic rights for working people, but that wars create political openings for those who would push for such rights. Piven's analysis of the 2004 presidential election campaign as a tug-of-war between Americans' desire for greater economic equality and their enthusiasm for military nationalism rings true. That war beat economics on November 2, however, does not mean it will continue to do so. While stronger Republican control of Congress and a perpetually complacent mass media make it no more likely than before that the administration's actions will be subject to intense formal scrutiny, it nevertheless becomes increasingly hard for anyone to ignore the failure of Bush's foreign policy. Iraq becomes bloodier by the day, and an Iran-like constitutional theocracy now is among the *best* foreseeable scenarios there. Still, Bush's "war president" glow has not yet dimmed enough to bring about his defeat. While cultural conservatism played a significant role in the 2004 election, evidence is mounting that Bush's image as a strong commander in chief mattered more.[2] Many voters chose Bush because they still saw the Iraq war as the decision

of a bold leader, and as part of a larger “war on terrorism” crucial to American security. Prospects for regime change at home-or at least for squeezing some concessions from the Bush administration-seem to rest on whether and when economic discontent can overcome wartime nationalistic support for the President.

The questions that emerge from Piven’s argument, thus, begin with: *Who* will raise demands for economic equality? Piven underlines the notion that left movements “cannot flourish without Democrats in power,” since movements’ capacity for shaking up the status quo is muted when the governing party feels free to ignore them. But this is an argument about the conditions under which left movements can win major victories-not about the conditions under which they can orient themselves and begin to grow. Piven implies that left movements in the US must continue to press their economic demands and must continue to link those demands to electoral politics, aiming at an end to the current Republican regime. As she aptly notes, there are “no promises for our political future.” Still, Piven makes an important contribution to post-election left strategies by pointing out the gap between Bush’s wartime policies and the historical precedents, and by identifying this gap as the administration’s greatest area of vulnerability.

Piven’s other contribution in this book is to question how closely international politics and capital’s global interests are intertwined. By making a strong argument for the central importance of domestic politics in shaping the Iraq war, she refutes the idea that either of the classic theories of imperialism might be sufficient to explain that war-and leaves open the possibility that they may not be useful at all. If the old theories of imperialism no longer have purchase in explaining war, perhaps we should dispense with both the theory and rhetoric of anti-imperialism. Thinking past old theories of imperialism would force people on the left to re-examine when and why we are anti-war, as well as what we want to do about wars we oppose. Since Hobson’s and Lenin’s theories of imperialism saw a link between globalized capitalism and war, they implied an anti-war politics that had socialism at its heart and a socialist politics that was necessarily anti-war. In contrast, Piven’s alternative to anti-imperialist theory suggests a connection between anti-war movements and the politics of economic equality as contingent as that between war and capitalist interests, one that has to do with the relationships of both to domestic social policy, not with direct causal ties between international economic and political dynamics. A left that takes Piven’s arguments to heart will recognize that opposing wars like that in Iraq entails fighting “the war at home.”

An American left that emphasizes domestic needs over foreign entanglements, of course, risks turning toward isolationism. To move in that direction would be a betrayal of humanist values and is, I am sure, far from what Piven herself has in mind. If Piven’s argument is right, however, the internationalism contemporary anti-war and anti-colonialist movements need can not be predicated on anti-imperialism. When ideas about structural imperatives have been discredited, what do we have left but raw principles? As much as we need a domestic politics that seeks to advance what Karl Marx called “the political economy of the working class,” perhaps we need a left foreign policy that owes less to Hobson and Lenin-and Marx-and more to Immanuel Kant and Thomas Paine.

Notes

[1] J.A. Hobson, *Imperialism, A Study* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967) ;Vladimir Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," in *The Lenin Anthology,* edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975).

[2] See, for example: Steve Rosenthal, "So We Lost Ohio. The Question is, Why?" *The Washington Post* (December 5, 2004), p. B3.

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The Great Unraveling & The Roaring Nineties

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The Great Unraveling: Losing Our Way in the New Century, by Paul Krugman

The Roaring Nineties: Why We're Paying the Price for the Greediest Decade in History, by Joseph Stiglitz

Paul Krugman's collection of opinion pieces from the *New York Times* exposes the utter shamefulness of a dark ongoing chapter in American political life that threatens not only the US but the whole world. I encourage everyone to read it. Krugman used to be just another well-published university economics teacher of the dreary "mainstream" or neoclassical variety. But in the mid-1990s he gave up the pure academic life when he began writing for magazines like *Fortune* and *Slate*. His direct approach and plain English admirably suited these new venues. Success followed, including an offer from the *New York Times* for which since January 2000 he has written a noteworthy twice-weekly column. During that year's presidential campaign, Krugman began forcefully attacking Bush and Bush's policies, especially Bushonomics and was almost the sole mainstream voice to be brave enough to do so. Since the election he has continued his excoriating critiques in many columns, which have become essential reading for Democrats and the political classes, making Krugman the preeminent US critical columnist of the Bush era.

Beyond the superb anti-Bush assaults, Krugman however, may not be the innocent he likes his liberal public to believe. Economists seldom are. Learning why is part of understanding the origins of the state of affairs Krugman so effectively derides. A good place to start is Joseph Stiglitz's *The Roaring Nineties: Why we're paying the price for the greediest decade in history*. This is another of those wonderfully improbable creations: a mass-audience book by an economist. But unlike Krugman, who is little known outside his own country, Stiglitz debunks idiocies, especially economic ones, on the world stage. He does so with special qualifications. I refer not to his "Nobel Prize in Economics", awarded for his mathematical formalization of a phenomenon well-understood for generations, but as the former Chief Economist of the World Bank. In books, in internationally syndicated columns and from the podiums of the world's leading universities, Stiglitz has described his profound shock at discovering the incompetence and arrogance of the technocratic class, particularly its economists, at both the Word Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Unlike most economists, Stiglitz is self-critical. He also and this distinguishes him categorically from Krugman, whatever his other virtues is not afraid to kick the rhetorical scared cows of neoclassical economics. Krugman likes to portray himself as slightly to the left, but when the

chips are down he defends neoliberalism fervently. The central issue of "free trade" demonstrates the profound differences between these two books and their authors. No less so than at the Bush administration in his nifty New York Times column critiques, Krugman becomes livid at anyone criticizing the World Trade Organization (WTO), whose *raison d'être* is the enforcement of the neoliberal's notion of "free trade. Krugman calls such criticism "global schmobal." He devotes a whole section to this subject, but with one exception he assiduously avoids specifying any of the many cogent criticisms of the WTO's purist version of "free trade". He lets drop that poor nations have criticized the WTO regime for not allowing them to use tariffs to protect and develop their infant industries and then wades in with the following spectacular untruth.

> *The raw fact is that every successful example of economic development this past century every case of a poor nation that worked its way up to a more or less decent, or at least dramatically better, standard of living has taken place via globalization, that is, by producing for the world market rather than trying for self-sufficiency. (pp. 368-9)*

This is untrue, like if I said that the Sun orbits the Earth. All of today's rich nations relied upon tariff protection and subsidies to develop their manufacturing base. From the 14th century onward Britain used activist policies to promote its infant industries, especially its weaving industry which, when unprotected, was unable to compete against the Low Countries. It was only when Britain became technically superior that it started advocating free trade to less developed nations, notably Germany and the USA, not only as a way of exploiting their markets but also hopefully of preventing their industrial development. Later, colonialism became the means by which the countries of industrial Europe imposed free trade on the rest of the world. But there was the huge exception of the USA. Did it decide to voluntarily practice free trade in the form of no tariffs. Of course not. Quite the opposite. From the Civil War to the Second World War the American economy was the world's most heavily protected economy, as it sought to become industrially self-sufficient in virtually everything. It succeeded and in consequence became the world's wealthiest nation and so then, almost inevitably, an advocate of the elimination of tariffs. This centuries old strategy for keeping the poor poor, into which neoliberalism and the likes of Krugman have breathed new life, is an example of what has become known as "Kicking the Ladder Away" through the book of the same name by the Korean-born University of Cambridge economist Ha-Joon Chang.

But there is another dimension to the "free trade" strategy enforced by the WTO, one that Siglitz, unlike Krugman, is upfront about and that accounts for the inverted commas. There are two primary routes to protectionism, two ways of eliminating international competition, two ways of curtailing free trade. One method, government tariffs, which favors developing nations, the WTO is committed to eliminating. But the other method of curtailing free trade and which favors rich nations and rich individuals at the direct expense of the poor, the establishment and enforcement of patent monopolies, the WTO (and implicitly Krugman),

zealously supports. Krugman's book gives the impression that the Clinton administration was unfailingly scrupulous in its support of free trade. But Stiglitz, who was associated with the Clinton administration as well as the WTO, describes in his book how Clinton's administration campaigned long, hard and effectively against free trade by bringing the enforcement of patents under the ambit of the WTO. Stiglitz spells out some of the consequences.

> *"Intellectual property rights typically make some better off (the drug companies) and many worse off (those who otherwise might have been able to purchase the drugs)." [209]*
>
> *"Market economies only lead to efficient outcomes when there is competition and intellectual property rights undermine the very basis of competition." [208]*
>
> *"Patents often represent privatization of a public resource, of ideas that are largely based on publicly funded research." [208]*
>
> *"Intellectual property rights need to balance the concern of users of knowledge with those of producers. Too tight an intellectual property regime can actually harm the pace of innovation; after all, knowledge is the most important input into the production of knowledge. We knew that the argument that without intellectual property rights, research would be stifled was just wrong: in fact, basic research, the production of ideas that underlay so many of the advances in technology, from transistors to lasers, from computers to the internet was not protected by intellectual property rights . . . " [208]*

Just as the USA in the 19th century extensively deployed tariffs to protect its infant industries, so it also refused to recognize international patents. The Washington administration passed a law to that effect. In an address to Congress in 1790, George Washington explained that the refusal to recognize foreign patents would give "effectual encouragement . . . to the introduction of new and useful inventions from abroad" [210] The law remained in force until 1836. Patent monopolies work like tariffs except that they are collected by private companies, rather than by governments. But they tend to be levied at much higher rates, especially on medicines which can be several multiples of 100 percent. For a notorious example, anti-retroviral drugs that are used to treat HIV/AIDA have a patent-protected price of over $8,000 a year and generic equivalent costs of less than $300. Acceptance of WTO rules means that developing countries are not only giving up their rights to free trade in medicines, but also condemning many of their citizens, in some cases millions, to premature death. This is the WTO that Krugman's book, after one savors his anti-Bush sallies, supports.

Stiglitz recently observed that economics has suffered "a triumph of ideology over science", the triumphant ideology being neoliberalism. Krugman's support of the WTO's cruel policies can be taken as an example. But it seems to me that there is another causal dimension to "the great unraveling" and to "the greediest decade", one that not only Krugman but also Stiglitz

fails to address, at least not directly. It is ethics. In particular, economics and ethics. Neither book includes the word in their long indexes. This reflects the banishment of ethical questions from academic economics, the hothouse in which these two authors' sensibilities took shape.

Economics has deluded itself into believing that it is above right and wrong, that in the name of "efficiency" (efficiency for whom?) and in the shape of algebraic formulas all questions of who gets what, when and where can and should be decided. Today the economist's training typically makes no mention of ethics, and certainly offers no exposure to ethical questions and debates, not even to the fact that the modern economics of Adam Smith grew directly out of his ethical concerns. Thus while both these books are foremost concerned with ethical failure, neither author is capable of dealing with it directly. To do so would require them, since they are speaking to us as economists, to in some way relate these ethical failings concerning economic matters to *economics*. Such a discourse no longer exists, or at least not for these men.

There also are the not unknown questions regarding Krugman's ethics as an individual, especially as a writer. Given the Enron content of *The Great Unraveling* and its embarrassing preface, especially its "Why me?" section, it would be negligent as a reviewer not to the mention the notorious $50,000. Krugman was one of half a dozen pundits and journalists whose good will for Enron was seeded with checks for $50,000 and more in the late nineties. Ostensibly they were being paid for serving on an Enron advisory board, but as Krugman, to give him credit, confessed to the *Daily Princetonian* (22 February 2002), "This was an advisory panel that had no function that I was aware of." Instead, continued Krugman, their lucrative association with Enron "was all part of the way they built an image." Krugman's contribution to that swindling image was a puff piece on Enron that appeared in *Fortune* in 1999. Despite this recent background (presumably because he thinks his readers will not know about it), Krugman likes to portray the integrity of rank and file big-city journalists as shamefully shabby compared to his own. For example in his book's preface he writes:

> *But I'm not part of the gang I work from central New Jersey, and continue to live the life of a college professor so I never bought into the shared assumptions. Moreover, I couldn't be bullied in the usual ways. The stock in trade of most journalists is inside information leaks from highly placed sources, up-close-and-personal interviews with the powerful. This leaves them vulnerable: they can be seduced . . . But I rely almost entirely on numbers and analyses that are in the public domain; I don't need to be in the good graces of top officials, so I also have no need to display the deference that characterizes many journalists. (xxvii)*

Let's call this highly questionable, perhaps even self-deceiving. Likewise with "the greediest decade", the Bush administration and the ideology that defined them. All that is certain is that in the name of neoliberalism the public realm has in our time been overtaken by an ethical void. In their different ways, these two books are absolute must-reads that chart and illustrate

the crimes that ensued.

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Hope Dies Last: Keeping Faith in Difficult Times, by Studs Terkel

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H*ope Dies Last* is the latest of Studs Terkel's books on modern social history, following such gems as Hard Times, The Good War,' and, most recently, Will The Circle Be Unbroken? All these oral histories have been honed rigorously into compulsive readability from extensive interviews with a wide gamut of people, formerly folks who often appeared on his Chicago radio program and, after retirement, from free-ranging interviews, resulting here in a brave and honorable exposure of the dark side of social life. In his "memory books," as he dubs them, Terkel offers a vivid sample' of citizens, from a rebel priest who discover that viciously exploited Mayan Indians need social ameliorative mechanisms more urgently than spiritual uplift: to maverick economist John Kenneth Galbraith, who detests the Bush regime, to hardy folk singer Pete Seeger and dozens more, known and unknown, who have strived to improve the human lot in a rapacious world.

There has always been a moral, political or even religious leaning in social comment. John Ball preached in the Peasant's Revolt in the 14th century: "When Adam delved and Eve sported, Who was then the gentleman?" His thanks was a cruel death at the hands of treacherous English lords. More reflectively, in 1751, poet Thomas Gray wrote of

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood

("Elegy in a Country Churchyard")

Gray did the grand tour of Classical Europe with the imperious and supercilious figure of Sir Robert Walpole as his companion, so he may be forgiven for a somewhat patronizing and elevated perspective, but like many other intelligent people throughout the long ages, he knew the score. Studs Terkel's methods in his classic radio interviews was to ask questions, and to expand the answers into material for further questionings. In each unique case, out of this patient method emerges, without pressure and with whatever tact is needed, a capsulated autobiography of protest and of opposition to iniquity. I was aware of this beguiling technique when he interviewed me in 1986, and in his hands it worked excellently.

When I first encountered Terkel I was very fresh to North America, from largely 18th century Dublin, via commercial London, a limitless Victorian sprawl of connected villages. Studs' WFMT radio studio was located on the top of a high steel and concrete building serviced by a lengthy lift ascent to a reception desk where Studs shortly appeared, sprightly, elderly, and

agreeably. Seated with my wife and a Chicago friend Studs, knowing less of me than I of him, started to probe into the cavity of my being. Knowing, at least my Irish and somewhat radical origins in the theater and art, he startled me by introducing, by a signal to a recording engineer, the loud melodious bawlings of my old and very dead friend Brendan Behan, the writer and playwright. Up in the cloudless August sky above Lake Michigan, that vast sea where the water is astonishingly saltless, I suddenly got the feeling that the Americans had discovered reincarnation. This eerily apt surprise was followed by a tape of the Wildean utterances of Michael MacLiammor, actor and impresario of Dublin's Gate Theater where I had toiled in younger days. MacLiammor commented sonorously and appositely on the essence of Irish art. Out of this and similar devices Studs was able to taste my personality and draw out a few signal experiences and we went on from there. Afterwards, as he presented me with a couple of volumes of his earlier works, he looked at me wryly and said, "I know what you are. You are a survivor" Indeed. And so inscribed the books.

In his pellucid preface to this collection Terkel quotes Thomas Paine as an apostle of democratic truth. Paine was a fearless and perceptive man whether alighting in England, France or America. In 1791 he wrote: "Freedom has been hunted around the globe. Reason was considered as a rebellion: and the slavery of fear had made men afraid to think. But such is the irresistible nature of truth, that it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing." More than any man in word or print Terkel has coaxed riveting truths out of many otherwise neglected witnesses to the dark side of the human condition, witnesses who also achieved varying degrees of victory in their endeavors.

The people interviewed in these autobiographical expositions are drawn mostly from the more critical and combative ranks of contemporary society. Galbraith, the nonagenarian ex-ambassador and economist, harks his memories from the sinking of the Titanic. The Ship of state still ignores warning signals; "Private affluence and public squalor" is making a dismal comeback (if it ever went away). "But today it's not so easy as with the Herculean task of the New Deal. Today capitalism has passed out of the hands of the capitalists and is the plaything of managers and self-appointed boards. Enron is only one such example," he laments. With the pessimism of old age and hard experience, he can think of no quick or painless cure.

Admiral Gene Laroque was born in 1918 in a small town, worked his way through university in the depression years and, rather to his surprise, soon enough found himself in command of seven fighting ships in the second world war. He critically muses about many past wars: Europe, the Pacific, Korea, Vietnam: and smaller conflicts like Grenada, Panama and Iraq, Being a military man he argues sincerely but not entirely convincingly – that Army or Naval people are less belligerent than civilians like John F. Kennedy, or for that matter, Bush junior. Eisenhower, who knew something about them, avoided wars.

Other contributors to Terkel's social history are a bit more earthbound. A philosophical and canny Mel Leventhal describes some petty squabbles between blacks and whites during the civil rights struggle. Tim Black, aged 86, describes his tribulations in the classroom as a black teacher in underprivileged areas in Chicago. Some of the more striking Village hampdens are

women. Deborah Bayley provides a fascinating account of her dauntless dedication to education and of her protests when the neighborhood in which she ran her school were “developed. That is to say, the Latinos, blacks and poor whites that originally filled the neighborhood were squeezed out and condominiums built for wealthier people. She insolently hung a card on her home with deliberately crude lettering saying, “Beware. Noisy white trash.” It became quite famous and its temporary replacement with a Christmas holly wreath caused a local outcry and even an anxious inquiry from the local police.

Writer Clancy Sigal, an acquaintance, born in Chicago to a radical socialist single mother very early became deeply involved in left wing politics. In the despicable McCarthy era the FBI even compiled a big file portraying him as the single-handed center of a Marxist conspiracy to destroy the government.” A most impressive credential, is it not? He spent the next 30 years in Paris and then London before returning to a much changed USA. He is still involved in anti-war work and gets excited by the opportunity for dissent. Terkel also draws out several trade union organizers of powerless exploited workers, and speaks to victims of slum landlords who tell of their strife and their resilient hopes. Fragments of Terkeldom – of gripping and revealing oral histories – turn up everywhere these days but not so systematically or persuasively as in Studs’ volumes. He is the Gibbon of discontent and righteous anger, and Chicago is fortunate indeed to claim this necessary and agreeable Recording Angel. “Hope Springs Eternal” is a common belief but as Studs points out, Poor people never lose hope, they can’t afford to.”