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What's The Matter With Capitalism?

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The Demise of the Critique of Capitalism

Capitalism's effects on society, culture, individuality, politics are vast and all-encompassing. It is impossible to explore all of its dynamics in a single essay, but there is above all a salient reality that we can glimpse through any critical analysis of capitalism in modern life, especially in America. That is the realization that capitalism erects a set of institutions and a culture that is inherently anathema to democracy—or at least any conception of democracy that is worth discussing or of which we would want to be a part. Questioning capitalism has been made obsolete. The supposed "end of history" had come with the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism. To call capitalism into question evokes a sense of irrelevance; a kind of anachronistic feel clings to the anti-capitalist slogans and diatribes one reads in typically left-wing discourse. But the critique of capitalism cannot, and should not, be relegated to such simplistic and narrow grounds. It may, in fact, be better to expose capitalism to the political values that informed America's democratic republican experiment. When we do this, we find that American political thought has been, more often than not, hostile to the effects of capitalism and to the very nature of capitalism itself. Specifically the way that capitalism began to weave webs of economic relation characterized by dependence and servitude, construct social and economic hierarchies that were reminiscent of the aristocracy of Europe, and pervert popular government toward the interests of the few at the expense of the entire political community.

The critique of capitalism has been overshadowed today by a large-scale acceptance of modern forms of economic life. Theories for this abound, but there is little question that it has much to do with the overtaking by economics and market ideas of political life. The political scientist C. B. MacPherson was correct when he noted that "The central concern has become the market value of things. Economic relations between people have in effect been reduced to relations between things: the underlying economic relations of dependence and control between people have dropped out of sight."[1] Capitalism—especially the kind of unbridled capitalism that has been flourishing over the past 25 years in America—has led to ballooning inequality, the return of social hierarchy and privilege, a new culture of consumption, and the debasement of political life. But how this happens is a complex story, and it begins with the passive acceptance of capitalism as a way of life which has seeped into the depths of how we think and feel. The waning of the critical mind toward capitalism therefore has, I think, dire consequences for democratic political life and it begins with the workplace itself.

The Culture of Working Life

"If we live amorally for a good part of the day," asked Emile Durkheim, "how can we keep the

springs of morality from going slack on us?" The majority of an average person's daily life is spent in the workplace, an institution that encourages, more often than not, individual self-interest, competition, and consists of, more often than not, outright banality. As a central institution in modern society, it is centered on a passive acceptance of authority and economic dependence—all of which have concrete social and political consequences outside of the workplace. "It is therefore extremely important," continues Durkheim, "that economic life should be regulated, should have its moral standards raised . . . that individuals should cease to live thus within a moral vacuum where the life-blood drains away even from individual morality."[2]

The expansion of inequality, the dumbing down of cultural life which cultivates an increasingly narrow sense of self and society, and the demise of critical attitudes toward economic life—all of these things spring, I think, from a more central source: the culture of working life itself. What has been called the "new capitalism" has created a situation wherein the industrial working class of the past has been divided into two separate spheres: on the one hand, a bureaucratically-minded organizational life of office work on the one hand, and the low-wage, low-skilled service sector on the other. Both of these are essential to look at in detail, but each have different effects.

Aldous Huxley was quite prescient in his novel, *Brave New World*—set in a place and time that, in contrast to Orwell's *1984*, saw repression and conformity not forced from above, but entered into willingly from every level of society. Commenting on the demise of the individual in modern life, he points out in his long essay—published much later than the novel, in 1958—*Brave New World Revisited* that "in order to fit into these organizations, individuals have had to deindividualize themselves, have had to deny their native diversity and conform to a standard pattern, have had to do their best to become automata."[3] For Huxley, this was the result of "over-organization," or the massive institutionalization of society. Modern work-life, for most American citizens, resembles this situation. But things can, perhaps, be seen in a much worse light. At the essence of what has been called the "new capitalism" is not only mere conformity, the dissolution of individuality—masked, as I pointed out above, through the apparition of commodification and market choice—but, more importantly, subordination itself. Individuals are more subordinate to authority; they work longer hours within total institutions that are essentially anti-democratic in nature; and this has had the consequence of ingraining with them feelings and attitudes of the acceptance of hierarchy, of inequality, of even a desire to subordinate himself to figures of authority. It must be asked what the prospects of democratic attitudes, life, politics are under such a culture of working life.

Even more, as the middle class is incorporated into a new culture of hierarchy and subordination, they are increasingly receiving the benefits of middle class life from what is becoming a permanent coolie labor force. The "necessity" and even tolerance of illegal immigration—specifically from Central America—has arisen due to the consumptive benefits of middle class. How many placed in modern economic life are supported by illegal immigrant labor: from roofers, to landscapers, to cooks in restaurants—all of them provide the same service: cheap labor which allows the middle class more affordable access to those goods and

services and, of course, larger profit margins per worker for contractors and mid-range businesses. Americans are unwilling to face the extent to which their lifestyles are in fact dependent on this form of low-skilled servitude and the permanent underclass that is slowly being erected—one which will become legally sanctioned under any kind of "guest worker program"—will be, in one way or the other, justified and accepted by most Americans in years to come.

But even more than the structural realities, there is a sense of resignation, on both fronts, which confronts workers under contemporary capitalism. As Richard Sennett, in his recent book *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, has found, "A stereotype holds that Americans are aggressive competitors in business. Beneath this stereotype lies a different, more passive mentality. Americans of the middling sort I've interviewed in the past decade have tended to accept structural change with resignation, as though the loss of security at work and in schools run like businesses are inevitable: you can do little about such basic shifts, even if they hurt you."[4] The growing apathy toward the economic institutions to which they belong, the increasing penetration of the culture of subordination among working life, and the growing acceptance of relations of servitude and dependence lead, I think, to an overall erosion of democratic life. And it is this which, I think, is the most alarming consequence of an unfettered capitalism: the very destruction of democracy itself.

The Decline and Fall of Democratic Life

But summing the effects of capitalism that I have laid out above is not enough to communicate the deeper problematic of capitalism and its relation to broader political and social life. The most important dimension of the impact of capitalism has been what I will call here the erosion of democratic life, or, perhaps, a democratic sensibility. If the history of resisting capitalism on political grounds was premised on the notion that, under capitalism, social relations between people would degrade into relations of servitude rather than that of relations of free citizens, then it is a history that needs to be revised. But when I say this, I am not pointing my thoughts toward European radical traditions and the bulwark of Marxism (although one could in fact do that). Modern readers may find it deeply ironic in fact that some of the most robust political critiques of capitalism actually spring from America itself—not the socialistic or communistic movements of the early twentieth-century or the movements of the 1960s, but from the time when capitalism was first emerging in American economic life.

The early nineteenth-century saw the emergence of a robust critical account of capitalist economic relations. What these critics saw was the incongruence between the emerging relations of market capitalism and the supposed promises of America's "republican civilization." What they saw was that the new forms of economic life that were emerging were creating relations of dependence and servitude that would, in time, erode America's democratic republic. What was central to their concern was the erosion of democratic life, the emergence of inequality, and the demolition of public life in favor of private interests. This has been a concern of western political thought since the days of classical Greece, and the concern for republicanism was always premised on the notion that political power should be in balance

and not fall into the hands of the minority who would, in time, exploit the public for their own ends.

This concern gave an insurgent flavor to western political ideas, from Aristotle through Machiavelli, Locke, Kant, Jefferson, and Marx—and early nineteenth-century social critics saw the emerging capitalism for what it was. Reflecting on the emergence of wealthy industrialists and their newly found political power, John Vethake noted in the *New York Evening Post* in 1835 that "relatively considered, it is now precisely as if all things were in a state of nature; the strong tyrannize over the weak; live, as it were, in a continual victory, and glut themselves on incessant plunder."[5] Theodore Sedgwick, writing in the same year in his book *What Is a Monopoly?* was resolute in his analysis: "It must necessarily follow, to every person whose mind is cast in that republican mold, the die of which is not yet, thanks God, broken, that the principle of corporate grants is wholly adverse to the genius of our institutions; that it originates in that arrogant and interfering temper on the part of the Government which seeks to meddle with, direct, and control private exertions. . . Every corporate grant is directly in the teeth of the doctrine of equal rights, for it gives to one set of men the exercise of privileges which the main body can never enjoy."[6]

This revulsion of the new economic life—it was not known yet as capitalism *per se*, that term would need to wait another 60 years—which these thinkers unleashed was not hard for most Americans to see around them. Unlike today, a vibrant public sphere made critical ideas more current, and writers like Theophilus Fisk, addressing workers in Boston in 1835, would write that "the history of the producers of wealth, of the industrious classes, is that of a continued warfare of *honesty* against *fraud*, *weakness* against *power*, *justice* against *oppression*."[7] There was no mistaking the consequences of emerging wealth, but also of the wage system itself. American critics were among the first and most consistently vocal critics of what they referred to as "wage servitude." The reason was simple: it violated the most basic tenets of republican government because individuals were forced into relations of dependence and control by others; the return of aristocracy, of feudal social relations were seen as on the horizon. Wage labor was not simply an economic relation, it was seen at the time as a relation of social power, and in this sense, it needed to be resisted, and true freedom retained. "You must abolish the system or accept its consequences," wrote Orestes Brownson about the wage system in 1848 in his essay "The Laboring Masses." "No man can serve both God and Mammon. If you will serve the devil, you must look to the devil for your wages; we know no other way."[8]

These writers and critics were not on the fringe of American society, they were not radical quacks. They were also hardly few in number. Beginning in about 1825, writers such as William Gouge, Langton Byllseby, John Pickering, David Henshaw, Stephen Simpson, Gilbert Vale, William Leggett, and Thomas Skidmore—there were many others, all similarly forgotten today—began to take up a critique of the emerging economic hierarchy being created by a nascent capitalism. They were the voice of the republican ideas that gave birth to the original project of American political life: to live under conditions of freedom and to promote the association of free citizens. Of course, this was a doctrine which would have to undergo much reworking before black slaves, women, and other immigrant groups would be included, but

there is no denying that the fervor they expressed against economic life and its effects on American democracy would slowly be drowned out by the conformity and conservative rhetoric (and reality) of the present. The republican political argument was clear from the beginning: individuals cannot be live in a condition of true freedom if they are enmeshed in socio-economic relations which deprive them of their autonomy, force them into relations of dependence, and reduce them as near as possible to conditions of servitude to others. Contemporary American capitalism—I will not go into other forms of capitalism around the globe—does just this, although it is something quite beneath the political consciousness of most Americans.

But how else to explain the erosion of secular associational life—what Robert Putnam has fancifully called "social capital"—or the growing political apathy of citizens? What of the banality and puerile nature of popular culture, the commodification of everyday life, the dumbing down of political discourse, and the irrationality of the public sphere which has been subjected to privatization and market forces. American democratic life—democratic life in general—is anathema to unbridled capitalism. Resistance to it first requires that we see democracy as more than voting and political representation, but as a form of life that embraces all elements of social life and social relations. Capitalism, with its emphasis on consumption, self-interest, the hegemony of the logic of the market as the coordinating logic of modern life, the ethic of privatization and its disintegrating influence on the public sphere, is quickly eroding the foundations of democratic life.

Confronting capitalism requires, among other things, the reconstitution of the radicalism that inspired early American anti-capitalist sentiment. It was able to respond to the anti-democratic tendencies arising from the new institutions of wage labor and the agglomeration of wealth and property in the hands of the few. It is a tradition which also needs to be linked with the concerns of social democratic and labor movements in Europe in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries and the impulses that drove them; and it requires, above all, constructing a vision of political life that is in stark contrast with the present: one that emphasizes an anti-authoritarian ethos and the renewal of a sense of public purpose. It then requires the translation of these concerns into the political discourse of everyday life as well as into something programmatic within social movements. Only in this way can anti-capitalism move from its current status of immaturity to one that can reclaim a truly democratic impulse. And if the French philosopher Michel Foucault was right in claiming that "society must be defended," there should be no illusion about the moral and political necessity in reconstituting a robust critical discourse against the corrosive effects of modern capitalism.

Notes

1 C. B. MacPherson, *The Rise and Fall of Economic Justice and Other Essays* p. 102 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

2 Emile Durkheim, *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* p. 12 (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958).

[3] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited* p. 25 (New York: Perennial Library, 1965).

[4] Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism* pp. 9-10 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

[5] *Social Theories of Jacksonian Democracy*, Joseph Blau (ed.) p. 213 (Cambridge: Hackett Publishers, 2003).

[6] Ibid. p. 222.

[7] Theophilus Fisk, "Capital against Labor: An Address Delivered at Julien Hall before the Mechanics of Boston on Wednesday Evening, May 20, 1835," *New York Evening Post*, August 6, 1835, p. 2.

[8] Orestes Brownson, "The Laboring Masses," p. 52 in Alvan Ryan, (ed.) *The Brownson Reader* (New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1955).

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The Market As Purgatory

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The New Capitalism has become a Weltanschauung. It is no longer content with the economy. It now seeks a corner on our life and thought.

Capitalism has changed its face. The elation of 1989 seems far behind, when the collapse of the socialist camp was celebrated generally as the triumph of the market economy. Only the conservative sociologist Niklas Luhmann, himself not one to long nostalgically for socialism, had no wish to speak of victory: In his opinion, the most one might say was that the collapse of socialism had preceded that of capitalism.

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To argue with Luhmann over the prophetic quality of his pronouncement is no longer possible, as he, in the meantime, has died. Still it is certain that capitalism's stock throughout the world, and even in the Western countries of its birth, has sunk dramatically. Equally certain, it has long since ceased to be a problem only for the Left. All the authors whom we queried in our series on the "Future of Capitalism," whether scientist, philosopher or writer, whether from Europe, America or the Third World, whether conservative, liberal of leftist, all were of the opinion that capitalism, which had, for centuries, brought fabulous prosperity to the West, could only be viewed today as a kind of threat.

Even the Entrepreneur Sees Himself a Victim

Even captains of industry, making the rounds of the television talk shows, anxiously shake their heads and assert–and believably–that they are at the mercy of a free market, which allows no leeway for their decision-making. They don't want to order mass layoffs, the return on capital demands it; they don't want to relocate factories abroad, but the competition forces them to; they don't want to shut companies or to gut them, but the market with its remorseless fluctuations makes this, unhappily, unavoidable.

This is an astonishing turn of events. Describing capitalism as a system of inexorable compulsion used to be, rather, the specialty of leftist critique. What is prompting businessmen today to adopt the language of Marxist alienation as a self-description? Is it merely a rhetorical trick for deflecting personal responsibility onto the system? Or are they beginning to feel themselves victims of that alienation which consists in having to act otherwise than how one actually wants to act?

The social philosopher Hartmut Rosa of the University of Jena recently proposed a minimal definition of the classical concept of Marxist alienation, which fits our contemporary situation quite well: Whoever, operating in the capitalist market, feels himself compelled, for his own survival, toward some goal, which, outside the market, he would never seek. No one wishes to destroy the environment, but the necessity of cutting production costs compels him to do it; everybody would like to help society's under-dogs, but the necessity of cutting social spending causes the State to place them beyond the pale; everyone suffers from the hysterical progression of technological innovations, but competition forces producers to keep on manufacturing new products.

Now, this shrinking down to nothing of business's range of freedom used to be the classical argument which leftist criticism leveled against the system. And so it wanted to see the system toppled, since the blandishments of social-democratic reform and moralistic appeals to legal principles solved nothing. A good Marxist always knew that the entrepreneur is not a bad person, only that he cannot act otherwise than as the system dictates.

The traditional defenders of capitalism, however, contested this characterization of the system, the language of inexorable historical processes being, to them, nothing but a flimsy construct of philosophy-of-history. They never would have asserted that all political will and all political morality must bow to the peculiar logic of capitalism.

And today? What has happened that social democrats, to whose historical credit has always been the taming of capitalism, hold it, meanwhile, to be a system that can no longer be tamed? What has changed with the New Capitalism that it is experienced as compulsion by its own supporters and beneficiaries?

It is globalization. Here, then, the generally accepted, but on closer examination, curious answer. For globalization, in this context, denotes nothing other than the expansion of market competition beyond national boundaries, to encompass the world. The cheapest manufacturers of rich countries are competing with the still cheaper manufacturers of poor countries. This means, in the first instance, only that capitalism has grown. Can it be that it has only changed its face? Or is it that its expansion into underdeveloped countries amounts to a reversion to an earlier phase of its own development, one that now again conforms to the classical Marxist description?

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that capitalism truly is a system, which brings unavoidably all that it does bring to mankind; its future prospects, then, don't look good. For it is not to be supposed that the citizens of the developed countries, where capitalism has been tamed, will accept its reversion to its untamed condition without resistance. The founding of a German party of the Left outside the Social Democratic Party, is only the first sign of a political resistance, which, before long, could assume a pre-revolutionary form.

Let us assume, contrariwise, that capitalism is no system, and its effronteries not inevitable'what then? Then the talk of the inexorable demands of the system would be the

merest ideology, akin to communist propaganda, only that this time, it would be deployed by the champions of free markets and carried forward by means of capital itself for the intimidation of society and the steady rise of the rate of return.

Market Law as Nature's Law

This possibility might seem, at first sight, suspiciously naïve. It has, however, some surprising validations. Preeminent among them is the superfluity of world-explanatory armor with which the new ideologues appears bedecked on stage. In their effort to immunize the market economy against every form of criticism, they take a distinctive step that even surpasses Marx, in that they treat the principle of competition as a quasi-Law of Nature.

The rules governing free markets are, for them, not rules which society has given itself (and which it can also take away), but an eternal Force, comparable to the force of gravity, against which it is senseless to protest. A nation, which restricts economic competition domestically, will therefore lose out in the competition between nations.

The New Economism explains all social phenomena in accordance with this same pattern, even in the cultural sphere (the rise and fall of artistic genres) and in education (the decline of the classical Gymnasium.) In other words, the new market ideology teaches a simpleminded kind of Darwinism. The development of human culture realizes itself, in this perspective, with no one at the wheel, like evolution.

Such an assertion of eternal laws by which the future can be predicted is indeed, in the classic definition of Hannah Arendt, the essential hallmark of all totalitarian movements. One is absolved from every form of moral consideration, since who will be the victim and who the victor has been determined from the outset. The demise of those slated for destruction [whose market positions are hurting] cannot be prevented, it can only be accelerated; thus, in the case of National Socialism, the destruction of the alleged racial inferiors would be accelerated, as, with the Bolsheviks, would be the destruction of the so-called dying classes.

This will-to-acceleration is a further characteristic of the neo-capitalist ideologues, which they share with the totalitarian movements of the past. They by no means wish it to be seen by what means the victorious example of Western business methods have spread across the earth, especially if it was through free trade agreements advanced through extortion, or, in the case of especially refractory nations, through war. Nothing was more characteristic than the American media's triumphant yawp over the transistor-listening, Coca-Cola drinking, gum-chewing Afghanis; it seemed, for a moment, as if the original war aim, the liberation from a terror-regime, paled utterly beside the victory of Western consumer culture.

But only seemed so. For the capitalist ideology, the liberation of the Afghanis actually arrives in tandem with those products of which the people had traditionally been deprived. This also connects the New Economism with the totalitarian movements: It preaches, naturally, not only an end to certain insults and injuries, but promises an end to all insults and injuries. Its

promise of freedom, democracy and prosperity is by no means vouchsafed to all men, but only to those who submit to the economic program that serves as the source of all blessings.

This linking of the eternal with the incidental, of universal human rights with the particulars of one modern economic approach, and the erasure of democracy's historical claim to have existed prior to capitalism, signalize (as do all distortions of the truth) the ideological character of Economism. It has even tried to maintain that capitalism is, in itself, already a democratic institution, insofar as the consumer, with each purchase at the cash register, votes, and the market, in its own self-interest, eschews discrimination.

This confident masking of conditions, which even in dictatorships, capitalism has hitherto accomplished with brilliance, and which even the Apartheid regime in South Africa didn't seriously impede, shows most clearly, perhaps, that it is demagoguery that is operating here rather than empire. The assertion that popular sovereignty is already immanent in consumerism, is not too far from the Bolshevik argument that held parliaments and the rule of law superfluous given that true popular sovereignty was already established with the common ownership of property.

And the propaganda of the Bush regime, in fact, conforms, as it preaches the exporting of democracy ' not, indeed, through the creation of democratic institutions, at least not if these do not entail unfettered economic competition. The American effort to open all that was formerly State-organized and controlled to the free market – including education, the water supply, and transportation infrastructure – betrays what is truly at issue: an Imperium that seeks to imprint its image upon the entire world. Not just its democracy, but also its economy and its way of life.

Private Enterprise's War Against the State

The New Capitalism is a totalitarian movement also in that it neither can nor will come to rest until it has comprehended the entire earth, and placed into private hands all that had once been subject State or citizenry. This demonic will-to-self-replication and the leveling of all differences stands exactly at the center of Hannah Arendt's famous study The Origins of Totalitarianism (1955). Among these origins belongs the distinctive hostility to the State exhibited by totalitarian ideologies, which, not by accident, wish to see themselves not as parties but rather as movements. All that is rule-bound, manageable and therefore static must melt into air before the dynamic principle of the Movement. All that is individual, traditional, culturally specific and intractable must pass through Capitalism, as through the purifying fires of Purgatory, to emerge in a world that is uniform and redeemed.

The awkward thing, even for the true believer, is that can never be specified when the Movement's goals will have found their fulfillment. "Those who march off to impose their image upon the world cannot be satisfied with only a mediocre portrait. The defective reflection of themselves will prompt them tear up the copy, and begin again from scratch", wrote the Indian author Amitav Gosh in our series, and one could continue with Hannah Arendt: "The unbounded process of an endless accumulation of power, which offers and enjoys an ever-

renewed expansion for expansion's sake, requires a constant supply of new material in order to renew itself, and not grind to a halt." Or, once again, with Amitav Gosh: "The melding of Capitalism and Imperium means a program of permanent war ' an idea which once intoxicated the Trotskyites and which the neo-conservatives have now embraced with their project for the New American Century."

The point of this, if one may pursue the totalitarian analogy, lies not in the satisfaction of ends, but the maintenance of a state of constant uncertainty, so people can be kept from developing the faculty of judgment, and thus kept from acts of resistance. Herein lies the reason for the characteristic anti-intellectualism of the New Capitalism, which seeks everywhere to discredit potentially critical forms of high culture, in favor of a vacuous mass entertainment (allegedly because high culture can't be competitive.) "The consistent suppression of all the higher forms of intellectual activity under the modern leaders of the masses has", again according to Hannah Arendt, "a deeper origin than the natural animosity to all that one doesn't understand. Total dominance can allow no breathing room for free initiative. "

Similarly, the American sociologist Richard Sennett has described, in our series, the paralysis of independent initiative. "The new insecurity is not at all an unintended outcome of an unstable market; it is programmed into the New Capitalism. It is not an unwanted, but a desired element." And further: it is embedded deeply in the organizational structure of the modern enterprise with its flat hierarchies constant changes at the managerial level. "The continual purges, the sudden ups and downs of work careers hinder any ability to really learn the job at hand and the development of a secure working-life experience" writes, no longer Richard Sennett on the New Capitalism, but Hannah Arendt, again, on the Soviet bureaucracy under Stalin.

Flat Hierarchies as an Element of Total Domination

The advantages are obvious of such a structure in which "finally, there are no remaining intermediate levels between the Leader and the ruled": "In the absence of any secure hierarchy, the dictator remains absolutely independent of his subordinates, and can execute at any time the extraordinarily rapid twists and turns of his policies." Let one substitute "CEO" for "leader" (or "dictator") and "business plan" for "policies" and one has a rather exact picture of a company, which, true to the ideals of "shareholder value," can be market-flexible, that is, it can operate nimbly, at will, and without any concern for colleague or customer.

With this sinister, organizational change, which has moved the production facilities of the New Capitalism itself to where they border on the totalitarian movements, we can perhaps bring our conspectus to a close. The parallels are obvious. They do raise the question of why capitalism, which, throughout its history, has more or less managed to get by without hectoring and the ideological promising of panaceas, must, in the home stretch, seek refuge in crude propaganda lies and utopian manifestoes.

Some date the turn-around from 1989 and the end of socialist challengers who had forced

capitalism to assume a human face. And has it now cast off the mask? With equal justice it might be said that it has only now put on the ferocious mask. This wouldn't have happened in 1989, then, but with the market crash of 2000 and the attack of Islamic fundamentalism on the World Trade Center, when it would have been apparent that capitalism, also, could collapse, or had, at any rate internal as well as external enemies, who were not to be placated with fine words alone. It wouldn't be the first example in history of an imperial system, which, feeling threatened, turns vicious, posing a danger to civilized humanity.

This article originally appeared in the German weekly, Die Zeit *and was translated from the German by Jeff Craig Mille*r.

Where Did The Future Go?

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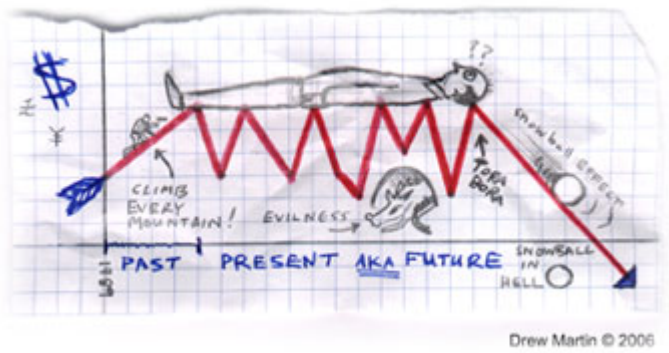

Once upon a time, capital had a dream of the future. For those with the patience and fortitude to abide its travails, the new day would bring growth, progress and the promise of a better life. For those workers of the world who could secure a seat on the bus, the trip to tomorrow would take them to a market utopia. While the past was littered with the corpses of colonialism, slavery and genocide and the present offered endless toil, the future was a time apart. The fortunate would be freed from work in the form of retirement and leave the earth secure in the knowledge that their kids would do better than they had. The passage of biological time between generations would be reinscribed as upward mobility giving the movement of time itself a positive connotation. Needless to say, most of the world's peoples, still awaiting their moment of development to come, never got to live the dream, or pursued another under the banner of socialism.

For the last twenty-five years those who might have been lulled by capital's utopian chords have been subject to a rude awakening. The paradisiacal wing of the social compact has taken flight. If capital's old ways of seeking popularity have frayed around the edges, the new and different are still very much open to debate. In the three decades since the utopian promises of the welfare state have beat their retreat, finance has been in ascendance. Much has been said about what the regime of investment means for capital itself, but less focus has been given to the implications of finance's rule for the experience of daily life.[1] One shift lies in how finance asks people to imagine their future or more specifically to see the future as already at hand. Given how much capitalism had once staked on the future, the political implications of that change merit careful attention, especially if we are to see in finance more than novel means of domination. The last time finance led the charge, it was called the age of imperialism. Today we suffer imperialism's renaissance.

It has long been observed on the left that the consumptionist cornucopia was not all that it was cracked up to be. The neoconservative movement has emerged with a mandate to re-enchant capitalism by infusing it with their own brand of liberation theology. Fueled by this evangelical impulse, freedom need not wait for the future'it can be had in the here and now. But emancipation has a price, really a value with its attendant political economy. Patience and forbearance must give way to incessant agressivity in the face of evil and vigilant opportunism for the prospect of good. A future deferred reflects intolerable ethical indolence. For the future to come now, the present moment must be lived pre-emptively.

Pre-emption is where foreign and domestic policy meet, where the American Dream encounters the U.S. imperium, where the internal obstacles to the ownership society become entangled with the war on terror. The emphasis in state economic management has shifted from promoting growth to curbing inflation, from Keynesian pump-priming to Monetarist adjustment of prime interest rates. From the perspective of growth, the future flies in friendly skies. But the specter of inflation makes those same skies unnavigable for investment. Even the sunniest returns on securities will be clouded by inflation, and make the multitudes too queasy to entrust their fate to a market metaphysic. That, at least is the logic of curbing inflation before it can form, of pre-empting uncertainty so that people can undertake risk in financial markets. In the late seventies and early eighties, this ascent of a monetarist state and financial capital launched the normalization of risk embrace. Domestic tranquility and a secure future underwritten by corporate capital and the welfare state would be traded for the sovereign self-management advertised by a governing coalition of neoliberals and neoconservatives. The former champion small government (deregulation) and big markets (privatization), while the later advance an interventionist state (in affairs both private and international) and a moralizing economy (redemption through investment).

No longer divided between labor and capital, society's central cleavage would be played out along the lines of risk'the prospect of a return in excess of expectation. Those capable of embracing it, investors all, would be the managers if not masters of their own lives. Those who could not would be cast as populations "at risk," and be the targets of all manner of domestic wars (on drugs, crime, kids and culture). In practice, this financialization of daily life did not banish labor, but elaborated it in the domestic sphere.[2] The home would revert to its originary Greek status as *oikos*'the root of economy'now the scene where money not flesh would be constantly fondled as all manner of futures (pensions, kids educations, debt disbursements, home mortgages) would be worked over into the wee hours. And capital, far from being democratized and distributed, was not only concentrated, but also reincarnated as a plethora of financial instruments. Local debts like home mortgages, car and consumer loans were repackaged as tradable securities (securitization), and equities were disassembled into constituent elements to hedge differential risks such as fluctuating currency or interest rates (derivatives).

The expansion of this economy of risk has been both financial and demographic. Financial markets trade more in a month than the entire annual global gross domestic product. The derivatives markets alone are now valued at over $ 100 trillion.[3] In the past twenty-five years participation by U.S. households in the stock market has gone from under a tenth to over one-half of them. Pensions have changed from defined benefit (a percentage of final salary) to predominantly defined contribution (a percentage of current salary managed in myriad retirement accounts).[4] As financial capital concentrates wealth (so much of CEO compensation bloat is in stocks and options), the burdens of risk have become more widely distributed. Guarantees of domestic security have been replaced with buy-ins to securitization. For those able to take the risk rather than be taken by it, the future comes crashing into the present.

The risk-capable'momentarily crystalized in the now largely defunct day trader'are the poster children of neoliberalism. The "at-risk" are the human dart boards of the neocons. In 1983, then Secretary of Education William Bennett issued the polemic "A Nation At Risk" which fingered low test scores among public school children as a threat to national security via compromised market competitiveness.[5] A new regime of discipline and punish, with tightly controlled content standards, turned education into a battlefield that now buries its dead (before they survive to become fully grown threats) in a cemetery called "No Child Left Behind." In 1981, Reagan's Secretary of State Alexander Haig, identified international terrorism'understood as one big family with the USSR behind it'to be a rampant threat.[6] The culture wars treated those artists who might create obscene work as a moral contagion that needed defunding. The war on drugs sanctioned use of military intervention for domestic police activities so as to reverse the time of investigation and punishment. The 1970 statute for combating organized crime (the anti-racketeering or RICO Act) was increasingly applied to political organizations. This legal framework for surveillance, property seizure and prosecution of "shadowy networks" would be folded into the PATRIOT Act passed after September 11, 2001. In sum, these domestic wars would pave the way for the war on terror, an antagonism presented as unbounded in time or space.[7]

While anti-communism was metaphorized spatially as containment'impermeable boundaries between them and us, friend and foe'anti-terrorism eschews spatial differentiation for shared temporality'the terrorists are among us, it's only a question of time before they strike again. With spaces of foreign and domestic commingled, securitized so to speak, the terrorist is the bad object of risk embrace, one who places all good risk abiders at risk. This threat is itself inflationary, foretelling a flight from healthy speculative activity (to wit, the advice on how Americans can help after 911: "go shopping"). The only plausible response to this generalized state of affairs is pre-emption. Hence, highly delimited wars against historically specific former client states Afghanistan and Iraq were restaged as fronts in a war without end. Certainly containment was but a cover for intervention'a berm to stop the growth of an alternate system with its own field of dreams. But combating terror is an instance of what the military calls "forward deterrence," a snatching of anti-systemic, unbounded future threats into the claws of momentary present gain. In this respect, the confluence of approaches to foreign and domestic policy, their coalescence around the figure of risk is not one of coincidence or simple conjuncture. Instead, the political and moral economy of risk that constructs the neoliberal/neoconservative condominium is foundational to the present imperial complex that leaves us cataleptic.

Risk and finance share a present tense. Yet, while imperialism has returned full throated to the councils of international relations, finance is rarely seated at the table. The absence is curious, given that finance, a hybrid of industrial and banking capital forged of a profit squeeze that finds release in imperial race war, was central to Rudolf Hilferding's seminal marxist formulation of the concept.[8] Perhaps this is because imperialism is most commonly discussed as a feature of national (U.S.) or corporate (oil) interest. The problem with this convention is that it attributes both omnipotence and omniscience to capital'namely that it always does what is best for it. Nearly three years after Bush declared mission accomplished in Iraq this claim is

increasingly difficult to sustain, as is the notion that toppling foreign governments is the best way to secure oil access. No doubt, capital seeks to make sense of the world in terms of itself, but the consequence has more to do with patterns of operation than certainty of outcome. The current imperialism is indebted to all the others, but can be specified in terms of how finance organizes (and disorganizes) a way of life.

Finance is capital for others, the means by which the terms of mutual indebtedness are expanded and put into effect, the medium by which capital nestles and shrivels amidst ever more intricate byways of human association. The twin formations of contemporary finance'securitization and derivatives'are more saliently principles of movement, the first forcing association or assembly out of disparate risks, debts and productive capacities, the second disassembling and dispersing established equities or entities. If war is an expression and not simply an instrument of imperialism, we should expect to find in its path traces of these financial logics. While thoroughly destructive of human life and all that it has created, war also needs to be examined for what it produces. The twin wars prosecuted in the wake of the fallen towers took on the logics of finance in their own organization as well as their material efficacy.

The invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 are the first fully realized applications of what is called the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).[9] As military policy (it is also an historical perspective on the relation between organizational and technological change in ways of fighting), the RMA purports to eliminate the "fog of war." By precisely coordinating intelligence about enemy positions with delivery of munitions the compromise to decision-making in the heat of battle that results in needless casualties, is eliminated. The made-for-TV versions of this scheme was "shock and awe" or "full spectrum dominance." In practice, the RMA, or force transformation, applies risk management rubrics to the battlefield. Risk is to be transferred from U.S. combatants to civilians by use of intelligence gathering and technologically sophisticated weaponry.

The idea that local enemy positions can be fully mapped and rationalized in a comprehensive informational grid is consistent with the process of securitization. The use of Special Forces and limited troop deployments for key operations is intended to leverage high risk to widely dispersed effects in a manner consistent with the derivative (a portion of the military capacity is cleaved from the entire force to maximize opportunity at a specific point of risk). The 18 day battle of Tora Bora, Afghanistan in the winter of 2002 was the largest in the campaign but deployed only 200 U.S. troops. Baghdad was declared fallen after armored convoys (also with but a few hundred soldiers) drove through downtown on the 4th and 7th of April, 2003 in what were called "thunder runs."[10] Both mobilizations represented tactically successful instances of RMA principles that resulted in strategic failure. Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein both got away, extensive informatics produced failed intelligence, and terror, as it came to be known, proliferated and was dispersed.

Led by risk, these wars reverse the Clausewitzian dicta that they are extensions of politics. Rather, politics, the sort brought by these imperial liberations, looks increasingly like war, and

war is conducted as an exercise in managing risk. Occupying forces are neither trained nor sufficient to restore order or affect development. Instead, territory is pacified for further opportunity to exercise the war on terror and to promote speculation through limited investment. It is not simply that monies allocated for reconstruction are inadequate to the task. By the time that the Coalition Provisional Authority nominally transferred power to the interim Iraqi government in June, 2004, only half of the $18.4 billion appropriated to remake Iraq had actually been allocated to contractors and only 140 of 2,300 projects had actually gotten underway.[11] The deferred expenditure was more than a sop to Halliburton and other favored U.S. companies. Those private transnationals were subcontracting to Iraqi start-ups, thereby generating a speculative bubble in the reconstruction trade that was meant to seed the fledgling economy.

Despite the volatility of the Iraqi electoral process, the new government's National Development Strategy for 2005-2007 closely mirrored the business plan outlined in Bush's 2002 National Security document (the one that called for preemptive strikes). Iraq is to be transformed into a "prosperous, market-oriented regional powerhouse" by "abandoning the centralized system of economic management that was the hallmark of the previous regime." The first item in a list steps for economic growth is, "maintaining low inflation within the context of sound monetary policy." Tourism is to become the vehicle for increasing employment, and the food rationing provided by the Public Distribution System is to be replaced by small cash handouts. Given the difficulties of moving around Iraq, banking on religious tourism seems wishful at best.[12]

But if Iraq is freed to follow a theocratic path difficult to achieve in the U.S., it will do so under the firm hand of monetarist control. So too, the menace posed by the previous (unnamed) regime is not aggression toward regional or domestic opponents, as once thought, but now appears to be the shroud of socialism itself under the guise of a centrally managed economy. The hasty devolution of power and precipitous exit strategies leaves Iraq riven with terror and pits a population against itself while purging the nation of even the minimal infrastructure of what had once supported a people under duress. For combatants and civilians the war has gone on too long, but it is brief by design and short by comparison to say the 32 year occupation by British forces after bombing the country into existence in 1921. The war on terror had brought to fruition a nation at risk, subjected colonialism to the protocols of self-management, and keyed the economy to speculative finance.

By historical measures, this is a strange imperialism indeed.[13] Not that one would want to choose from among them. Compared to Britain's civilizing mission of the nineteenth century, or even the United States' interest in development in the twentieth century, the present incarnation of military dominance stands apart as an empire of indifference. This sorry state of affairs is not most usefully understood as simply incompetent leadership or absence of vision'however much both are in evidence. Those earlier schemes for world-making yielded great wealth but also a mutual indebtedness to social life from which capital itself has depended upon but also tended to flee. Cultivated populations and elegant cities'what once could be said for Baghdad or for that matter New Orleans'are both the basis for and a

constraint upon the further expansion of capital. The two towns are, after all, linked by similar logics of reconstruction based upon risk management, now adopted as policy by the Office of Homeland Security which oversees the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA).[14]

The history of capitalism is one in which enormous human diversity has blossomed and been socially articulated along lines of class, race, nation, gender, sexuality, religiosity, as well as urbanism, technology, literacy, institutions of social welfare, specialized expertise'all of which can be captured by the term difference. An empire of indifference is a specific response to the multifarious discretions and capacities to live life that if not subjugated to the whims of accumulation can place a squeeze on its conditions of possibility. Clearly, George W. is never going to give a press conference in which he proclaims that capital made him do it. The motives for war are not reducible to some putative imperative of capital any more than the pursuit of wealth for profit adheres to a predictable rationale. Rather, when capital is treated as a social force one that generates modes of life and politics that it ultimately cannot abide, the political terms and possibilities of the present become more expansively legible.

As a social force, capital not only dispossesses people of old habits of life but also attaches them otherwise. Likewise, imperial occupation does not only sow chaos, but also introduces certain demands and desires that are self-ordering. The U.S. occupation of Iraq deployed shocking and awesome weapons of mass destruction against a nation that had none and liberated a country to the theocracy, torture, and terror cherished for itself but that it so dreads in others. It disordered the social economy and cleaved the population from its productive resources. These nefarious achievements came through techniques of bellicose securitization and the derivative war and left financialization in their wake. But financialization, like earlier imperial gifts, is a bit of a Trojan horse'something unexpected can still spill out.

When wealth is stripped of any specific application and aggregated as a great disposable mass and population is abandoned to be an ends in itself, liberated from an obligatory history, very different futures are brought into the present. The regimes of finance profit from the volatility they create and are too vertiginous to provide a stable picture of what the future might look like. The realm of future possibilities comes crashing into the present arena of necessity so that what seems compulsory is made volatile, evidently contingent, and called into question. Even the brief career of polled U.S. public support for the war suggests that the popular appeal of imperial hubris now decays more rapidly than had been the case for Vietnam or other such adventures.

Without durable strategic justification or a future that can be readily extrapolated from present action, every moment appears to be discretionary, manageable, decidable. The idea that there is a hundred trillion dollars or a capacity for geopolitical intervention that seems to be free to do anything and be anywhere at anytime, are equally unstable. The rule of indifference poses the conditions for a counter-movement of difference for itself and the political will and social wealth that would sustain it. The war on terror still battles the specter of communism

proclaimed to have been exorcized. We may mourn the loss of utopian schemes that might grant us a fix on what the future could look like, and even work to re-engage those creative energies and abilities.[15] But a left cognizant of how capital works on us, and on what it leaves to us, may also be best placed to make something of the future that is already to hand.

Notes

[1] An institutional and historical map of the rise of finance can be found in Robert Guttmann, *How Credit Money Shapes The Economy* (New York: Armonk, 1994). David Harvey provides the most incisive conceptualization of finance from a marxist perspective in *The Limits to Capital* (Oxford: Basil Blackburn, 1982).

[2] See, Randy Martin, *Financialization of Daily Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

[3] Edward Lipuma and Benjamin Lee, *Financial Derivatives and the Globalization of Risk* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 173.

[4] For a recent synopsis of these changes see, Mary Williams Walsh, "More Companies Ending Promises for Retirement" *The New York Times* January 9, 2006 1:1. Data are collected by the Employee Benefit Research Institute, accessible online at GOTOBUTTON BM_1_ www.ebri.org.

[5] A nation at risk : the imperative for educational reform : a report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education / by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1983).

[6] See, James William Gibson, *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 270.

[7] See, Frances Fox Piven,*The War at Home: The Domestic Costs of Bush's Militarism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004 and Lawrence Grossberg, *Caught in the Crossfire: Kids, Politics and America's Future* (Paradigm Publishers, 2005).

[8] Rudolph Hilferding, *Finance Capital* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981).

[9] See, Chris Hables Gray,*Postmodern War* (New York, Guilford, 1996),Manuel de Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), Colin Gray, *Strategy for Chaos: Revolutions in Military Affairs and the Evidence of History* (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

[10] Instructive accounts and assessments from inside the military establishment are provided by Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. See, his *The Lessons of Afghanistan: War Figthing, Intelligence, and Force Transformation* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2002); *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2003); *The War After The War: Strategic Lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan*

(Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2004).

[11] James Glanz and Erik Eckholm, “Reality Intrudes on Promises in Rebuilding of Iraq” *The New York Times* June 30, 2004, A1 and A11.

[12] See, Iraq’s *National Development Strategy, 2005-2007* GOTOBUTTON BM_2_ www.export.gov/iraq/pdf/iraq_development_strategy_063005.pdf.

[13] For a sobering historical perspective, see the contributions gathered in Lloyd Gardner and Marilyn Young, eds.,*The New American Empire: A 21st Century Teach-In On U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: The New Press, 2005).

[14] “Risk management is fundamental to managing the threat, while retaining our quality of life and living in freedom.” “Remarks for Secretary Michael Chertoff U.S. Department of Homeland Security George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute” Washington, D.C. March 16, 2005. GOTOBUTTON BM_I_http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=4391 Accessed April 15, 2005.

[15] Not to be missed in this regard is Fredric Jameson’s recent work on science fiction and utopia, *Archeologies of the Future* (London: Verso, 2005).

The Critique Of Capital: Reloaded

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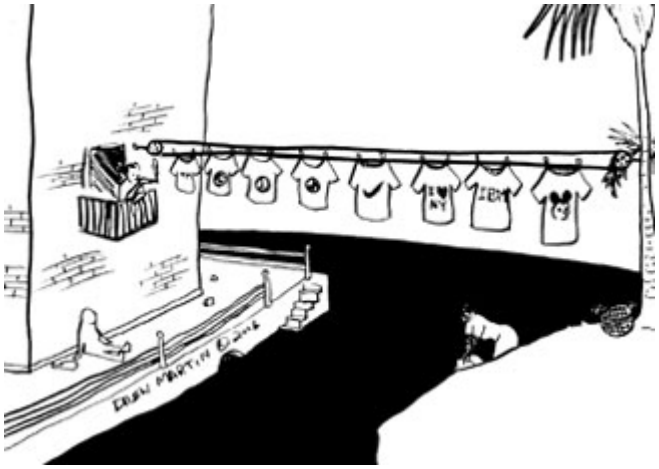

The end of the Cold War and the rise of globalization have made the stresses and strains of life under late capitalism apparent. The reigning theory of rational choice and its application in political economy, neoliberalism, have reduced all human interaction to exchange based on individual self-interest. Market logic rules from the linoleum-tiled aisles of Wal-Mart to the polished marble corridors of Washington DC. Not long ago, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher declared, "There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families." To be sure, it seems the whole of humanity has been set adrift to flounder in the swirling currents of uncertainty that presently mark the worldwide economic system. Cheap goods increasingly pull down the value of wages, and what economists call "externalities," such as pollution and social inequality, never factor into the equation. Yet rather than point out a need for a new critique of capital, this situation suggests that many of the traditional analytical tools of the left are more relevant than ever.

Much of the average American's paranoia about the effects of globalization focuses these days on China and India, but the reality is on display much closer to home. According to statistics compiled by the Migration Policy Institute, America's leading trading partner is in fact Canada (with Japan and Mexico coming in behind it), accounting for US $411 billion in trade in the year 2000 with more than US$1 billion crossing the border on any given day. Some two-thirds of that trade is shipped by truck with about 10 million trips being made annually across the US-Canadian border. A lot of this activity is connected to the automobile industry, which since the 1970s has increasingly disaggregated production in search of higher profits, a process greatly accelerated in the last decade by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a model of neoliberalist policy that eliminates all trade barriers between the USA, Canada, and Mexico.

The Detroit-Windsor border is the primary crossing point for US-Canadian trade, handling one-third of all annual volume. The largest share of Canada's trade with Mexico also passes through the Detroit-Windsor conduit. The preponderance of this activity is funneled through a single point, the Ambassador Bridge over the Detroit River, by itself accounting for more than one-quarter of all merchandise trade traffic between the US and Canada. Semi-tractor-trailer rigs constantly stream across the bridge in the same way tailed-finned Cadillacs once flowed from the assembly line of the old Clark Street Fleetwood plant that used to be just a few blocks away and is now a barren brownfield dotted with rubble.

Looking north from the middle of the Ambassador Bridge, the cylindrical glass-and-steel towers of General Motors Corporation's headquarters are visible on the downtown riverfront skyline. Stretching downriver to the south are coal and slag heaps, decaying loading docks, and in the hazy distance the smokestacks of the colossal River Rouge Plant, where Henry Ford perfected the techniques of vertically integrated mass production that bear the eponymous designation of Fordism. The street grid of the neighborhood around the bridge on the Detroit side has been cut up to accommodate the heavy traffic volume and provide walled holding areas for customs inspections and for security purposes. (The Detroit area is home to the largest Arab population outside the Middle East, fueling ever-lurking fears of a possible terrorist attack.) Looming in the background is the abandoned Michigan Central train station, designed in 1913 by Warren & Whetmore who also did Grand Central Terminal in New York City. Long ago rendered obsolete as railcars gave way to motor cars, its 12-story empty shell has been stripped bare of anything remotely of value by decades of scavengers.

Early in the twentieth century, Detroit set the pace for the modern age with the high output/high wage system first pioneered by Ford at his facilities in Highland Park, a small municipality completely surrounded by the city of Detroit, carved out of it pretty much as a tax dodge. The Highland Park plant is idle, a vast silent hulk that serves as a backdrop for a strip mall, named Model T Plaza, now occupying what was once the Ford Motor Company employee parking lot. The front of the grocery store anchoring the plaza has a replica of the Model T assembly line set above the checkout lanes; behind it is a downsized reproduction of Diego Rivera's magisterial mural cycle, *Detroit Industry.* The population of Detroit is now less than half its postwar peak and its unemployment rate more than double the national average. Nearly one-third of its residents live below the poverty line, a statistic rivaled only by New Orleans. Every street has abandoned buildings crumbling into ruin and many neighborhoods are reverting to open fields where wild game freely ranges. The city has been hollowed out like the manufacturing industries that once provided its working classes with some of the nation's highest living standards. And it wasn't a hurricane that wreaked the devastation. The Economic Policy Institute attributes tens of thousands of high-wage job losses and lower living standards in Michigan directly due to NAFTA, with the results for Canada and Mexico not any more encouraging.

While American automobile companies, their suppliers, and employees seem to be facing yet another crisis, automobile manufacturing continues to drive a large part of the worldwide economy. Automotive is still the world's largest industrial sector according to *Global Inc.,* an atlas of the global economic system. More people make cars worldwide than ever; they just aren't doing it in America or under a union contract. As a result of these changes and similar ones in other industries, real wages in the US have fallen over the past three decades and the social safety net is in tatters. In the 1950s, the former chairman of General Motors, Charles E. Wilson, famously quipped, "What's good for the country is good for General Motors and vice versa." With GM on the verge of declaring bankruptcy (and its parts-supplier spin-off Delphi already having done so), can the rest of America be that far behind?

Global Capital Unbound

Writing at the dénouement of the Second World War, Joseph E. Schumpeter took stock of the world likely to emerge afterward and predicted, more than a little ambivalently, that capitalism would increasingly take on socialist characteristics until being completely transformed. In *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy,* he notes that the unrivaled efficiency of large-scale capitalist production and its tendency toward monopoly lays the groundwork for socialism, as he defines it as centralized economic control under public ownership. Schumpeter acknowledges the prescience of Karl Marx's analysis of capitalism particularly considering his vantage point in the mid-nineteenth century. Marx saw sooner than most economists of his time the eclipse of entrepreneurial capitalism and the emergence of the managerial bureaucracy and rationalized efficiency of production under oligopolistic conditions. He correctly understood the role an advanced proletariat would play in bringing true socialism into being, especially in light of capitalism's need and astonishing ability to continually adapt to new circumstances. According to Schumpeter, what Marx got wrong was that he predicted the failures of capitalism would bring on revolution when in fact it would be its unparalleled success that would lead to a socialist order. However, the hindsight of the last half-century suggests that Marx may have been right there, too.

Schumpeter was writing at the dawn of the golden age of High Fordism (usually taken to extend from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s), on the eve of what Daniel Bell once termed "the treaty of Detroit," the détente achieved in the 1950 automobile union contract negotiation in which industry, labor, and government agreed to cooperate in the interests of all concerned. The resulting rise in productivity and stability would lay the foundation for what historian Lizbeth Cohen terms "the Consumers' Republic," the broad-based increase in living and consumption standards for many (though certainly not all) segments of American society during the period. Schumpeter's treatise would soon be countered by the analysis of mass society, in what's known as the critique of other-directedness, mounted beginning in the early 1950s by social commentators like David Riesman, C. Wright Mills, and William H. Whyte in books such as *The Lonely Crowd, White Collar,* and *The Organization Man.* At the same time, economist Kenneth J. Arrow's "impossibility theorem" claimed to mathematically prove that collective social decisions couldn't be derived from individual preferences. The impossibility theorem provided the basis for what was to become rational choice theory, the embrace of the "liberal individualist" vs. the "irrational collectivist" underpinning the ideology of American Cold War foreign policy, which ultimately carried over into the domestic arena with the decline of the welfare state beginning in the 1970s. (The genealogy of rational choice theory and its policy implications is outlined in S.M. Adamae's *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: the Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism.)*

Schumpeter notes that the revolutions of Soviet Russia and Maoist China failed to meet Marx's prescription of being driven by workers in the advanced industrial sectors of the capitalist economy, and as a result, they shouldn't be used to gauge the potential for success or failure of the communist vision. The demise of the Soviet Union and the unleashing of China's horde of low-wage labor into the capitalist production system underscore the apparent failings of their respective forms of socialism along the lines of Schumpeter's reading of Marx. And it's only in this time of global capitalism unbound that the incapacity of that now-unchallenged system to

equitably sustain itself is most obvious. Simply put, pulling the rug out from under the feet of workers, breaking the Treaty of Detroit, has done a lot to raise class consciousness. The crisis of the capitalist profit motive vis-à-vis administration of the nation-state, for example, appears to argue in favor of socialized medicine and pension reform in the United States in the eyes of many in both management and labor. (The US system of welfare capitalism, in which corporations assume responsibility for the long-term well being of employees, was engineered by the corporate sector, an obligation they have unilaterally abandoned and from which they shouldn't be excused. See Sanford M. Jacoby's *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism since the New Deal,* featuring a photo of downtown Detroit on its dust jacket.) It's no wonder that globalization, in particular as it has progressed under neoliberalism, has engendered a variety of discontents.

On one hand there are those trying to reform the capitalist system from within. From this perspective, the fall of the Soviet Union and the abuses of what should be more correctly understood as if not an ersatz communism then at least an incomplete one of twentieth-century experience has taken Marx off the table. The journalist William Grieder and John Bogle, founder of Vanguard mutual funds, are both in search of a soul for capitalism, a way of bringing the bonds of civility to bear on the narrow definition of rational self-interest asserted by neoliberalism. But much like the Tin Man of *The Wizard of Oz* whose search for a heart ends with his receiving a heart-shaped testimonial watch and chain to wear instead, their answer is regulation by the external forces of government and activist shareholders, a system of checks and balances bound by jurisdictions being world-historically transcended in the age of transnational capital. A similar tinkering is advocated by Nobel laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz and financier George Soros, who propose amending the transnational institutions of capitalist regulation, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, etc., to adopt a kinder, gentler brand of development, a way of harvesting value in the global economy along the lines of the abandoned Treaty of Detroit.

Another more holistic approach is offered by Paul Smith (co-founder of the retailer Smith & Hawken) and Jane Jacobs, who tie markets to ecology, seeing economic development as part of the natural process of human evolution. Smith and Jacobs, in *Natural Capitalism* and *The Nature of Economies,* respectively, advocate aligning economics with the cycles of nature–investing, nurturing, harvesting, and reinvesting anew–to assure long-term sustainability rather than the short-term focus on accumulation that the ever-forward-moving clock time of modernity seems to demand. While there is much to appreciate in these proposals, especially Jacobs' well-taken observations on the early vertical integration of the American automobile industry and its subsequent effects on the destruction of the city of Detroit under globalization, they require accepting responsibility of externalities for which there is absolutely no incentive in the current environment. They are perhaps cautionary tales doomed to go unheeded until it's too late.

Then there are those diaphanous studies of empire that deal in abstract metaphors appealing primarily to graduate students and devotees of literary criticism, abstruse cultural expression in lieu of political action.

Perhaps most promising is what's come to be known as the global justice movement. First coming to worldwide prominence with the Battle of Seattle in 1999, where protestors representing organized labor, environmentalists, consumer groups, and international fair-trade activists confronted World Trade Organization policymakers, it has all the makings of a global people's movement. Underlying its heterogeneous public face is an advanced understanding of media and social network theory. Coordinating efforts through the Internet and other global communications systems led to the worldwide protests of February 15, 2003, the largest-ever gathering of people on earth to protest the impending US invasion of Iraq. Since then, a loose affiliation of activists has shared information and resources to support a host of local actions in various parts of the world. While seemingly concerned with a wide range of social and political issues, the global justice movement essentially directs its efforts against two main concerns: the economic oppression and environmental exploitation that seem to go hand-in-hand with the global capitalist system. What it lacks is the theoretical underpinning an understanding of Marx's critique of capital could provide.

Most global justice activists see themselves as anti-capitalist; however, few have seemed willing to take the next step in accepting outright socialism, embracing anarchism instead. This is a result no doubt of perceived failures of Soviet-style communism along with the "one nation, two systems" disconnect of Chinese state-sponsored capitalism, coupled with residual disillusion over the inability of 1960s and 1970s social movements to affect lasting change. There's also the dominance of rational choice theory, the hegemony of self-interest, in virtually every aspect of public discourse, from economics to education to politics to reality TV. The global justice movement has made inequality a worldwide public issue, primarily in terms of the economic exploitation of workers and environmental degradation in lesser-developed countries by transnational corporations. Bringing that awareness and solidarity to workers in advanced sectors of the global economy, as advocated by Peter Bohmer of Evergreen College in Washington in a paper on Marxism and the global justice movement, opens possibilities for considering alternatives to capitalism that transcend national borders.

Rebooting the Critique of Capital for the Postmodern Age

Indeed, the economic structure of the postmodern world has arguably set the stage for the Marxist critique like no other time before. The slippery character of global capitalism reinforces Marx's admonishment of the Young Hegelians and social democrats in works like "The Jewish Question" and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that political solutions in and of themselves aren't sufficient to end exploitation without a realignment of property relations. "Sacrificing the crown to save the purse" is embodied in supra-state organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization, all nongovernmental entities dedicated to promoting the interests of global trade and capital flows as they are currently dominated by transnational corporations. There may be many nations but increasingly there's only one economy, physically dispersed yet managed through a worldwide telecommunications and information technology network by an international elite–what London School of Economics sociologist Leslie Sklair terms "the transnational capitalist class"–and its

subalterns.

Starting in the 1970s, in the wake of the initial restructurings of the global political economy that often goes under the rubric post-Fordist (which began initially in the automotive, apparel, and electronics industries and soon spread to other sectors), Immanuel Wallerstein and others affiliated with the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations at State University of New York-Binghamton developed world-system theory as a way of understanding the movement of capital and goods outside the boundaries of national markets. Given impetus by then current events, Wallerstein et. al. sought to explain from a broad historical-materialist perspective the apparent contradiction between an increasingly integrated global economy and the discrete system of nation-states that has come to characterize the geopolitical order, a condition having origins in "the long sixteenth century" of early European colonial expansion. Rather than focus on the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis, world-system theory speaks in terms of core, periphery, and semi-periphery, that is, the relationships of power within the international division of labor in the production of specific commodities from initial inputs typically in peripheral and semi-peripheral regions of the world to final output typically in the core.

One of the more fruitful analytical tools of world-system theory is the concept of the commodity chain, the complex of interlinked steps in the creation of value. In an article published in 1977 in the Braudel Center's journal *Review,* Wallerstein and Terence Hopkins define the concept thus: "Take an ultimate consumable item and trace back the set of inputs that culminated in this item–the prior transformations, the raw materials, the transportation mechanisms, the labor input into each of the material processes, the food inputs into the labor. This linked set of processes we call a commodity chain." This archeology of the means of production operates both on an economic and on a social level, seeking to uncover what from a Marxist perspective are the conditions of the reproduction of class power within the base and the superstructure of the capitalist system. (Be that is it may, world-system theory is often criticized for underemphasizing culture in favor of pure macroeconomic analysis.) Commodity chain analysis as practiced by the world-system theory school is primarily historical, analyzing the division of labor in the production and distribution of flour in the early European colonial era, for example, with a goal of demonstrating globalizing tendencies as being a function of capitalism from its very beginning.

The need to explain more recent developments in the global capitalist system has spawned a variant of world-system theory that is especially relevant to revitalizing the critique of capital in the present day. What's known as *global* commodity chain analysis emerged in the early 1990s to examine links in the division of labor in mass-industrial and so-called postindustrial segments of production. Generally associated with Duke University sociologist Gary Gereffi and colleagues, global commodity chain analysis seeks to identify where value is created in the various steps of production and by whom. Global commodity chain analysis offers an agenda of amelioration for peripheral and semi-peripheral actors to advance in the value-creating process, thereby attaining an element of self-determination in the economic segments within which they operate.

The primary way for exposing these opportunities is by understanding the governance structure of particular commodity chains. *Producer-driven* commodity chains tend to be resource-oriented and vertically integrated. *Buyer-driven* commodity chains tend to be demand-oriented and disaggregated. These governance structures tend to dominate the division of labor of long-run, standardized mass production on the one hand and the division of labor of short-run, flexible batch production on the other. These distinctions are those commonly assigned to Fordism and post-Fordism, respectively. Since the 1970s, global capitalist production is increasingly being organized around buyer-driven commodity chains. Outsourcing, independent contracting, just-in-time delivery, turnkey systems, and full-package services are just a few of the prevalent techniques in buyer-driven commodity chains. The opportunity for upgrading, then, depends on the ability to recognize and occupy positions in the chain that have the potential to offer the highest rewards. Yet, as Yale sociologist Jennifer Bair (whose unpublished paper on the evolution of commodity chain analysis informs this discussion) points out, empirical evidence suggests that "moving up" the commodity chain doesn't necessarily lead to greater rewards. What Giovanni Arrighi terms "the hierarchy of wealth" still determines asymmetrical relations of power within various commodity chains and, as important, between them. For example, Wal-Mart increasingly demands "value-added" services from suppliers without compromising on specifications for efficiency and cost reduction, squeezing ever-more profit from every segment along the chain.

There are also the barriers to entry from "intangible" aspects of production, such as branding, product design, marketing and promotion, etc., that constitute core activities of buyer-driven commodity chains and from which some of the greatest value is derived. For example, the so-called intangible value in a Nike basketball shoe is generally more than three times that of material production. Regulating intellectual property on a global level has become one of the primary concerns of transnational capital with nearly every nation now having some form of official oversight as a result of efforts to coordinate such control by the core. The Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) was adopted in the 1990s, and is overseen by the World Trade Organization. The World Intellectual Property Organization, a United Nations agency, also helps promote intellectual property rights around the world, especially among lesser-developed nations in the periphery and semi-periphery. (Among the UN's other efforts is World Book and Copyright Day, a series of events to promote "reading, publishing, and the protection of intellectual property through copyright" held annually throughout the world, this year on March 23.) If the aristocracy ruled over land and the bourgeoisie over labor, then the transnational capitalist class rules over language, the exchange of information, ideas, images, thought and expression, relations governed by loan contract, purchase order, and an increasingly vertically integrated global media and telecommunications network.

A kind of commodity chain analysis has been used with some success by the global justice movement, although whether activists fully comprehend its genealogy in the Marxist response to the modernization thesis and dependency theory in development studies is certainly open to question. Specifically, the notion of identifying lead firms and supplier relationships in the commodity chains of many consumer products has enabled pressure, generally in the form of

consumer boycotts, to be put on the leaders to develop and enforce codes of conduct among the suppliers, generally with respect to anti-sweatshop and environmentally friendly production. What's known as "peeling away the brand veneer" to expose the backward links of a commodity chain– examining production practices, environmental impacts, monopolistic competitive strategies, antiunion activities, etc., that are normally obscured under the "aura" of the brand–has forced companies such as Nike and The Gap to alter some of their business practices (or at least be circumspect about them) or face sanctions in the consumer marketplace. However, these efforts, though certainly well-intentioned and even effective to a certain extent, are tactical and rarely make connections across broad social categories or national borders beyond a general recognition of the exploitation of low-wage labor and resources in the peripheral and semi-peripheral sectors.

The most pressing limitations of commodity chain analysis are the external forces that bear upon the networks of firms and processes that are typically the objects of study. Bair cites regulatory factors, such as trade and monetary policies, and the institutions through which they are implemented that construct global commodity chains, for all intents and purposes dictating certain configurations of authority (and thus opportunity) and geographical distribution. And while the primary value of commodity chain analysis is its ability to "cut through the clutter" of the ossified geopolitical system in understanding the workings of global capital, there is also much to be gained by factoring the nation-state back in to better understand how nimble transnational corporations use comparative advantage to exploit opportunities for value accumulation. Another externality is the interdependency between commodity chains, i.e., the role particular links play within the different commodity chains of which they're a part. As Wallerstein notes, the output from an agricultural commodity chain is at the same time an input to an industrial one in that factory workers eat.

Then there's the issue of culture, which commodity chain analysis, like its forebear world-system theory, doesn't adequately address. What economists call "intangible" other social scientists recognize as "cultural production," a concept analyzed at depth most notably by Pierre Bourdieu and his disciples. Given the very tangible economic value of cultural production to the core of global capitalism, it's an aspect of commodity chain analysis that merits further scrutiny. For example, how does cultural production, in this reputed information age, bear on questions of economic dependency and social inequity for a world in which half of the population has never received a telephone call let alone swapped MP3s peer-to-peer? A "culture-revitalization" approach to development and commodity chain management has enabled Bolivian cooperatives to use local knowledge in producing for and accessing worldwide markets for fair-trade sustainable products, such as cocoa, quinoa, and textiles, while providing upward mobility for workers and educational opportunities for women, as Kevin Healy reports in his 2001 book, *Llamas, Weavings, and Organic Chocolate: Multicultural Grassroots Development in the Andes and Amazon of Bolivia.* Any consideration of cultural production, however, needs to retain its connection to a base/superstructure analysis, the need for which can be seen by looking at purely "culturalist" approaches to globalization.

The rapid growth over the past few decades of an integrated worldwide mass media and linked

network of consumer markets has spawned awareness of (and concern over) the potential convergence of communication and community on a global level, of global markets producing a global culture that is homogenizing, rootless, predictable, and ultimately devoid of meaning, a process American sociologist George Ritzer terms the "globalization of nothing." Against this vision of a burgeoning worldwide United Markets of Generica has emerged the riposte that globalization constitutes a hybridizing process, a creolization of global culture when consumed at the local level. This notion inheres in Roland Robertson's term "glocalization," asserting that the world gets more pluralistic as individuals and local groups adapt global culture to their own tastes and needs. Anthropologist Karen Tranberg Hansen argues, for example, that *salaula* (the Zambian term for secondhand clothes meaning "picked from the rummage bale") enables indigenous consumers in Africa to create unique meanings in their use of Western castoffs, thereby theoretically escaping to a significant degree dependence on their former colonial masters. Yet the glut of used Western clothing (which enter the commodity chain as charitable donations) coming into Zambia in the wake of International Monetary Fund-mandated reforms has decimated local cloth and garment manufacturing because these sectors simply can't compete with the high-quality low-cost imports. While it may be, as Hansen asserts, that*salaula* truly reflects the *sui generis* Zambian love of fashion, it's an eddy in a tide of global forces, more a defensive tack than a self-determined course of grassroots empowerment. On the other hand, Ritzer's concept of "grobalization" (a mashup of the words "growth" and "globalization") recognizes Arrighi's hierarchy of wealth as by and large propelling the global system in a particular direction, with media and commodities as key forces in the process.

A method that seems to strike the right balance is global system theory, which has emerged as one of the most useful tools for the critique of capital from an historical-materialist perspective in these postmodern times. Where world-system theory and global commodity chain analysis tend to minimize politics and culture in favor of economics, and global culture theory minimizes economics and politics in favor of culture, global system theory seeks to understand transnational capital in its many dimensions, tying base and superstructure together. First codified in book form in Sklair's 1991 *Sociology of the Global System,* the global system model is based on the transnational practices of non-nation-state actors across nation-state borders. These practices fall into three spheres: economic, political, and cultural-ideological. Each sphere has a major institution: the transnational corporation in economics, the transnational capitalist class in politics, and the culture-ideology of consumerism in culture-ideology. Each of these spheres and institutions operates within nation-states, between nation-states, and at the supra-state level. The goal of global system theory is to understand how transnational corporations, the transnational capitalist class, and the culture-ideology of consumerism work to transform the world along lines favorable to global capitalism. One of the most significant achievements of global system theory is bringing together production and consumption as a nexus of relations that serves to reproduce capital on a worldwide basis.

In particular is the way the culture-ideology of consumerism stimulates demand for new goods in the core through niche marketing to select status groups and promotes consumption generally in the periphery and semi-periphery to bring them into the global system. The global consumer-citizen constitutes a new form of subjectivity, a universalizingof identity politics in

the neoliberal individualist whose interests lie outside local, nation-state, and even international jurisdictions. The culture-ideology of consumerism is promoted primarily through the increasingly vertically integrated global media, which channel news, information, entertainment, and advertising through a transnational corporate hierarchy based for the most part in the core. Alongside these global image and idea factories are linked networks of goods and capital that flow worldwide. (Media theorist Robert McChesney has analyzed the growing interconnection between global media conglomerates, advertising agencies, and marketing firms as primary institutional structures for the culture-ideology of consumerism, although he doesn't use that term.) Much of the content of the culture-ideology of consumerism originates in the US, though this shouldn't be viewed as a process of Americanization specifically so much as an economic amortization of investments in cultural production for worldwide consumption. The flow from core to periphery and semi-periphery is more a matter of path determination: the images begin in the US as the world's primary consumer market and move downstream to realize economies of scale. The flow could as easily move in another direction as demonstrated by the growth of such cultural production as so-called world music. It should also be noted that the process isn't appreciably different structurally from the logic described by Raymond Williams in his mid-1970s study on the culture and technology of television. If anything, what needs to be better understood from an historical-materialist point of view is the role of the consumer in the global system. That requires examining traditional Marxist perspectives on the relationship between production and consumption in light of present circumstances.

The Production of Consumption

Marxist theory has traditionally had a "producerist" bias. (This is true for a good deal of social science as well: *The Encyclopedia of Sociology* has no entries for "consumption," "consumer society," or any variation on those terms.) If considered at all, consumption is typically understood as a site where material and social inequality are reproduced. As Marx sets out in Chapter 1 of *Capital,* commodities are mystifications of production, fetishes that obscure relationships of property and therefore class. For later theoreticians like Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno (as well as heirs like Stuart Ewen), commodity consumption constitutes consensus to the force of the economic and ideological hegemony of capital. Under the labor theory of value, commodities bearing the full value of the labor time required to produce them are purchased with worker wages that are discounted, allowing for the accumulation of surpluses that become the basis for subsequent exploitation. The culture-ideology of consumerism (conceptually linking bottom-up consensus and top-down force) doesn't contest Marx, especially as it describes the trickle down as it were from core to periphery and semi-periphery, so much as it opens up the possibility of using the concept for more critical ends.

While it may seem obvious, it's necessary at this point to acknowledge the appeal of the commodity as both a material and symbolic fulfillment of the promise of capitalist productivity. In her study of US living standards over a large part of the twentieth century, economist Clair Brown shows a dramatic increase from 1918, when mass consumables became more broadly available, and 1973, the point David Harvey and others identify as the postmodern turn, after which they decline on an absolute basis to 1988 when the study ends. Marx and Engels were

unabashed in the *Communist Manifesto* and elsewhere in their respect for capitalism's prodigious capability to provide a cornucopia of goods and to muster surplus accumulation to make broad social and political reforms possible. These observations made in the nineteenth century were to be fulfilled perhaps even beyond their expectations in the next century by the innovations initiated under Fordist production.

Marx anticipated the potential to greatly accelerate capitalist production through the *relative* surplus value realized by what Schumpeter terms "creative destruction" in contrast to the*absolute* surplus value of traditional working methods. *Absolute* surplus value is surplus value realized by expanding the total amount of labor time dedicated to commodity production, whereas *relative* surplus value is surplus value realized by increasing what can be produced within a particular time period as a result of technological innovation. This happened at Ford's Highland Park plant with the standardization of component parts, the harnessing of electricity, and, most importantly, the invention of the moving assembly line, which dissolves the work site into a flow, a dynamic mechanism for reaping labor power. The process is made visible in the full-scale version of Rivera's *Detroit Industry,* created for the Center Court of the Detroit Institute of Arts at the height of the Great Depression under the patronage of Henry Ford's only son, Edsel. The central panel of the mural features a gargantuan stamping press in the figure of the Aztec goddess of agriculture with gangs of men, arrayed like rows of maize, attached to the belts and pulleys of the line, representing the production cycle from the gestation of the automobile in raw materials until its harvest as a finished product at the end of the line.

The Fordist system increased productivity ten times and enabled prices to be cut in half, all the while making Henry Ford the world's richest man and its first billionaire. This was possible even though Ford doubled wages to an historic $5 a day in part to combat a staggering 380 percent worker turnover rate. As Antonio Gramsci notes in his essay on Americanism and Fordism, this unprecedented largesse also laid the foundation for the social and political system that drove mass consumption and the welfare state for most of the twentieth century. Mass media advertising helped stimulate desire to absorb expanded productivity through increased personal consumption, a process made easier with the availability of time payments for durable items such as cars, houses, and appliances. Modern brands also streamlined the consumer decision-making process, enabling faster turnover of product at the point of sale. But as Marx also foretells, relative surplus value only provides temporary productivity gains and capitalism must eventually return to the extraction of absolute surplus value. Even in the heyday of High Fordism, in the Pax Americana after the Treaty of Detroit, the net profit rate wobbled and toward the end of the period began to fall so that by 1975 it had declined nearly 60% from its postwar peak two decades earlier, as reported by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development statistics.

In the 1970s, the return of absolute surplus value took form in expanded total household work hours with the entry of more women into the workplace in non-managerial positions and an increase in the commitment of future labor in the dramatic growth in revolving credit debt. Accompanying this was a decrease in household net worth, primarily as a result of higher home

mortgage balances secured with lower down payments. This was coupled with the more primitive forms of accumulation that Harvey terms “accumulation by dispossession,” for example, in Detroit where tens of thousands of homeowners abandoned all claims to evaporating equity by fleeing a tumbling housing market, leaving properties to revert either to banks or the government. Absolute surplus value was also being realized with the initial forays into Mexico and overseas with outsourcing and the mobilizing of enormous new pools of low-wage labor pioneered by the automotive, apparel, and electronics industries. And yet consumption continued virtually unabated over the decade even as real incomes fell, US government statistics show. It’s in this period that logos first moved from the inside of clothing to the outside, when Nike and Esprit turned consumers into walking billboards for their products, when Calvin Klein and Gloria Vanderbilt transformed the utilitarian blue jean into a marker of democratized designer distinction, when the culture-ideology of consumerism connected with the transnational commodity chains of post-Fordism.

The producerist bias of conventional leftist perspectives casts consumption as passive, typically seeing the consumer as either a dupe of capitalist ideology or a victim of its material processes. (The culture industry of Horkheimer and Adorno, including advertising, is by their account an instrument of “mass deception.”) This in part responds to utilitarian notions of political economy that present consumption as a matter of rational choice. But consumption can and should also be viewed as an active form of expression. Active consumers express individual sovereignty throughidentities constructed by acquiring and displaying goods that convey information about themselves and their self-proclaimed position within a constellation of social networks. And as the reception theory of the Birmingham School of cultural studies maintains, these expressions may concede to capitalist hegemony, oppose it, or seek to negotiate a position somewhere in between.

One form of opposition is the consciously irrational potlatch of Burning Man, a festival of expenditure that takes place each year in the Nevada desert that bans corporate logos on any and all items brought into the festival campgrounds as well as financial transactions of any kind. (Although it hasn’t entirely escaped market logics: economies of gift giving, bartering, and other forms of symbolic exchange have arisen within the confines of the festival over the years.) Another opposition is the “brand boomerang” of culture jamming, often an adjunct of the global justice movement, that becomes a negotiation as it provides an incentive for producers to respond to consumer demands for environmental sustainability and an end to labor exploitation, ameliorating certain market failures of the global system. On Canal Street in New York City and at swap meets around the world, counterfeit designer handbags and other pirated items provide mechanisms for negotiating symbolic status markets at deeply discounted prices. Even in terms of consensus, producers in highly penetrated market segments acknowledge the authority of the consumer through the emphasis on trend spotting, cool hunting, “viral” marketing, and the like, constituting deference to a buyer-driven commodity chain of another sort. All of these positions must be factored alongside analyses of production of transnational capital in the global system.

De-Rationalizing Choice

One of Marx's primary intentions in undertaking his analysis of capital was to rebut the political economists of the English Enlightenment who sought to ground all human interaction and morality in the individual pursuit of self-interest. So too must the critique of capital in the present day confront political economy's more radical heirs, rational choice theory and neoliberalism. As S.M. Amadae points out in her historical account, *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: the Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism,* rational choice theory is the brainchild of the American military-industrial complex, a "regime of knowledge production" designed to provide the ideological underpinning for US foreign policy during the Cold War. It sought "objective" (i.e., quantifiable) criteria to guide decision-making in the bipolar power struggle (pun intended) against the Soviet Union and for doing so in a way that would not be subject to popular democratic political debate. Rational choice theory continues to drive the neoliberal assertion of individual sovereignty in all areas of life and the supposedly natural preeminence of so-called free markets. Its universalizing of absolute self-interest independent of all specific social contexts is the genetic code of the culture-ideology of consumerism within the global system.

Rational choice theory was initiated under the auspices of the RAND think tank (at the time still a division of military supplier Douglas Aircraft) with start-up capital provided by another Ford, in this case Henry's grandson Henry Ford II, who at the time controlled the Ford Foundation in addition to serving as chief executive of Ford Motor Company. Rational choice theory has its foundation in economics but has spread to other areas of political and social science research. Rational choice theory uses game and set theory to assess risk and uncertainty. One of its first accomplishments was to mathematically demonstrate a "missile gap" between the US and the Soviet Union that history has proven didn't really exist. It did, however, fuel a national debate that resulted in a massive arms build up, greatly benefiting military contractors like Douglas Aircraft. Mark L. Lichbach, a self-proclaimed adherent to rational choice theory in political science, acknowledges that it prevails most often in environments that are evidence poor. This admission is born out by recent empirical studies suggesting people are far more altruistic than rational choice thought experiments such as the Prisoner's Dilemma predict. (The Prisoner's Dilemma pits two suspects against one another with the logical outcome of each reasoning to protect them self by testifying against the other, resulting in a less than optimal outcome than would have been achieved if both had maintained their innocence.)

Rational choice theory also can't account for externalities, such as the reciprocal obligations of preexisting social relationships required for making and enforcing contracts and ensuring fair competition. (Even Adam Smith knew that!) Nor does it factor in the often irrational desires that decades of consumer research show drive actual purchase decisions in the marketplace, *rationalizing* choices rather than choosing *rationally* While rational choice theory can perhaps be waived off as academic (or maybe even ignored as the domain of socially inept libertarians flaming one another in Internet chat rooms), its real-world application, neoliberalism, has had and continues to have serious consequences. So-called free market reforms in both developed and lesser-developed nations have increased social and economic inequality and created turmoil for millions around the world. Structural adjustment programs and free-trade

agreements are the cannonballs for breaking down Chinese walls in the postmodern age, allowing for the unfettered flow of goods and capital for the benefit of the new transnational capitalist class. Nearly 20 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, rational choice theory and neoliberalism can now be seen for what they really are: increasingly apparent and thus unconvincing masks for the brutal way capitalism really works. In the face of this stark reality, resistance is growing. The global justice movement has made social and economic equality and environmental sustainability issues of concern at the highest policy levels and broadly throughout the world. South America, through a series of democratically elected progressive governments, is coming together to oppose the machinations of the global system, providing a model of self-determination for others in the periphery and semi-periphery. What needs to happen next is for these trends to galvanize and align with growing discontent among workers of all kinds within the core. The tools for doing this exist in the independent media and social movement networks sprouting up from the cracks of the global system.

Meanwhile back in Detroit, Super Bowl XL recently played to great fanfare. Prior to the Big Game, the city's homeless where rounded up and shuttled off to a shelter to watch the spectacle on large screen TVs out of the range of cameras and tourists. And the trucks continue to roll off the Ambassador Bridge.

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Anti-slavery And Anti-capitalism

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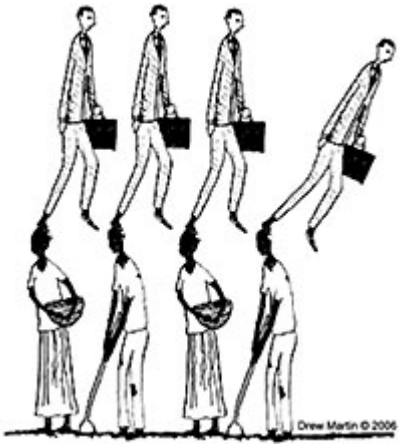
When Marx referred to workers in capitalism as “wage-slaves” he meant more than a striking phrase. For him, the analogy between slavery and capitalism offered a powerful contribution to anti-capitalist movements. The clue to that contribution lies in the Communist Manifesto’s summary of what differentiated communists from other leftists: the latter seek to raise wages, the former to abolish the wage system.



While slavery emerged at different times and places in world history, it always generated opponents. Among the enslaved and others, two kinds of opposition arose. The first focused on improving the slaves’ living conditions: these opponents demanded that slaves be better fed, clothed, housed, treated, and so on. The second made a very different demand: slavery as an institution had to be abolished. The two oppositions sometimes collaborated, but they sometimes fought each other bitterly. Then the first accused the second of an irresponsible utopianism that sacrificed action for the immediate improvement of slaves’ lives and aimed instead for what at best was a distant goal. The second retorted that so long as slavery survived as an institution, improvements for slaves would be difficult to achieve, insufficient, and insecure; moreover, by limiting the opposition’s goal to improving slaves’ conditions, slavery as an institution was condoned and the movement for abolition weakened.

Although slavery lasted for long periods in many places, eventually the second sort of opposition prevailed. Across much of the modern “civilized” world, slavery was abolished as an intrinsically immoral and inhumane institution regardless of whether the slaves’ enjoyed good conditions or not. The fourteenth amendment to the US Constitution outlawed the institution of slavery for all except prison inmates. Predictably, the de-facto slavery of prison inmates has everywhere generated, once again, the same two sorts of oppositions.

When Marx likened wage-workers to slaves, he brought the lessons of oppositions to slavery to the emerging movements against capitalism. Put bluntly, Marx argued against forms of anti-capitalism that limited themselves to improving workers’ living conditions. Fast-forwarding to today, Marx would criticize movements such as those for “a living wage” or “pension reform” or “welfare increases” or “saving social security” and so on. A Marxist opposition to capitalism is rather one focused on its abolition as a system. Marxists, he might say, are to capitalism what abolitionists were to slavery.

For Marx, the crux of the issue is that capitalism entails *exploitation*. A large part of the

population (productive laborers) produces a surplus that is appropriated and distributed by a small part of the population (capitalists). In capitalist enterprises, workers are hired only if the value that their labor adds (to the raw materials, tools, and equipment their work uses up) exceeds the value paid to them as wages for doing that labor. That excess value ' the surplus ' belongs to the capitalists since they own the outputs of production, sell them in markets, and thereby realize the surplus value in them. In the preferred language of capitalism, that surplus value comprises the "profits" of the capitalists, their "private property" to dispense in their own interests.

The less wages that capitalists must pay to workers, the more surplus they get for themselves. Exploitation thus situates tension, hostility, and conflict in the heart of production. Capitalists and workers are set into oppositional struggles. Moreover, those struggles ramify and provoke competitive struggles among capitalists and among workers. Alongside the outputs of capitalist production yielding impressive incomes and accumulating wealth, there are also the countless, ramifying social costs of the conflicts and competitions.

By excluding them from the surplus, exploitation also excludes workers from the tasks, skills, and rewards of organizing, managing, and directing production. Workers and capitalists thus become systemically unequal in ability, competence, and confidence. The inequalities anchored in capitalist production usually carry over to make the politics and cultures of capitalist societies similarly unequal. The absence of democracy in production undermines efforts to establish it in politics.

Capitalist exploitation would be difficult to sustain if it had to be imposed on workers resentful of their exploitation and its social effects. Hence, as with all other exploitative systems (e.g., feudalism and slavery), theories are advanced and disseminated by capitalism's organic intellectuals that make exploitation invisible and so function to deny its existence. Such theories parallel their counterparts in slavery and feudalism where it was argued that slaves and serfs were not exploited but were rather protected (saved from despair, poverty, and death), loved like children, culturally uplifted, and so on by their lords and masters.

Today, the hegemonic economic theory, called "neoclassical economics" for historical reasons, serves to make exploitation invisible. Building on the early formulation of such ideas by Adam Smith, neoclassical economics casts production as a process in which no surplus gets produced, nor appropriated, nor distributed. Instead, production is an harmonious collaboration: workers bring their labor, landlords their land, and capitalists their capital. All three contribute to production and all three share in its fruits according to their contributions: the workers' share is wages, the landlords' is rent, and the capitalists' is profit. It is a world of fairness and harmony. The inability of workers to contribute capital is explained by their failure to save out of their incomes and their resulting lack of capital to contribute to production. The capital in the hands of capitalists is not the fruit of exploitation, of taking a surplus from workers, but rather the fruit of their own virtuous frugality. Capitalism fairly rewards individuals for the contributions each brings to production. More than that, capitalism represents an engine of wealth production, economic growth, and thus the possibility for

everyone to become rich. Those who have failed to do so should chiefly blame themselves. To blame capitalism is not a valid social critique but rather the whining of losers.

Neoclassical economic theory, among other hegemonic sets of ideas, has worked well to support and justify capitalism and undermine the appeal of Marxist economic theory. One modality of its working has been the sedimentation into the popular consciousness of the notion of "the wage." It strikes vast numbers of people as somehow obvious, natural, and necessary that production be organized around a deal struck between a wage payer and wage receiver. And this is all the more remarkable in as much as the vast bulk of human history displays economic systems without wages (neither serfs, nor slaves, nor individuals who work alone, nor most collective work systems have used wages). Capitalism's history is in part the history of the deepening conceptual hegemony of the wage. Thus, for example, the individual peasant or craftsperson working alone has had to be renamed a "self-employed person" to revision a non-wage production system as if it were waged.

Naturalizing the wage concept works to naturalize capitalist relations of production, the employer/employee relation, not as one among alternative production systems but as somehow intrinsic to production itself. Workers, trade unions, and intellectuals often cannot imagine production without wages and hence wage payers juxtaposed to wage earners. This helps to make capitalism itself appear as necessary and eternal much as the parallel theories celebrating feudalism and slavery performed the same function for those systems of production. The naturalization of the wage system helps support the notion that the fundamental goal of workers' organization must be to raise wages.

Thus, no surprise attaches to the fact, these days, that one widespread kind of social criticism concentrates on softening capitalism's negative impacts on workers and the larger society. It seeks to raise workers' wages and benefits and to make governments limit capitalists' rapaciousness and the social costs of their competition. In the US, this is what "liberals" do: from the minimalist oppositions within the Democratic Party to the demands of social democrats and many "radicals" for major wage increases, major government interventions, and so on. What always frustrates liberals and radicals is the difficulty of achieving these improved workers' conditions and the insecurity and temporariness of whatever improvements they do achieve. Today they bemoan yet another roll-back of improvements, namely those won under FDR's New Deal, Kennedy's New Frontier, and so on.

Marxism is that other kind of opposition that demands the abolition of capitalism as a system. Since Marxists find capitalist exploitation to be as immoral and inhumane as slavery, they might logically seek a further amendment to the US Constitution that abolishes it as well. A Marxist program would seek to replace capitalist production by a non-wage system, one where the workers will not only produce surpluses but also be their own boards of directors. The "associated workers" would, as Marx suggested, appropriate their own surpluses and distribute them. The wage-payer versus wage-recipient division of people inside production would vanish. Every worker's job description would entail not only his/her technical responsibilities to produce a specific output but also her/his responsibilities as part of the

collective that appropriates and distributes the surplus. Monday to Thursday, each worker in each enterprise makes commodities, and every Friday, each worker functions as a member of that enterprise's board of directors. The stakes here are less obtaining higher wages than abolishing the wage system.

The point of such a Marxist program is to overcome the conflicts, wastes, and inequalities (economic, political, and cultural) that flow from the existence of capitalist exploitation whether or not wages are raised. The point is likewise to stress the incompatibility of any genuine democracy with the wage system and its usual social effects (and again whether wages are higher or lower).

Of course, in the struggle between such a Marxist perspective and its various critics, the latter will depict the programmatic advocacy of an end to the wage system as impracticable, utopian, or deluded. Those persuaded by neoclassical economics will simply dismiss or ignore not only the Marxist criticism of the wage system but Marxism altogether. For them, the wage system is not only eternal and necessary, but also fair and "efficient." For them, since there "is" no surplus, they need not read or learn Marxist theory and criticism, let alone debate it. So Marxist theory and its proponents can and are largely excluded from public discourse in the media, the schools, and politics.

For liberals suspicious of neoclassical economics ' or "neoliberalism" as it is now more often called – the Marxian program sketched above would be seen as utopian fantasy at best. Yet, not the least irony of Bush's America today is how his regime's relentless removal or reduction of the past reforms (high wages, pensions, medical insurance, social security, state social programs, etc.) makes a liberal politics today seem painfully deluded to so many. The liberals seem hopelessly weak, unable to stop let alone reverse the Bush juggernaut. Worse still, what they advocate are precisely the reforms now being dismantled and thus revealed as having been fundamentally insecure all along. The audience for capitalism's critics and opponents is thus being primed to listen rather attentively to Marxist claims that an abolition of the wage system offers not only a better society but also a far better basis for *securing* those improvements in wages and working conditions that mass action can achieve. What is needed now are Marxists able and willing to articulate those claims to that audience, to persuade ever more of capitalism's critics and opponents that abolition of exploitation and the wage system must be a component of their program for social change.

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Incendiary Images: Blasphemous Cartoons, Cosmopolitan Responsibility, And Critical Engagement

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

Culture is only true when implicitly critical, and the mind which forgets this revenges itself in the critics it breeds.

—- Theodor W. Adorno

The political cartoon has a long history. Some of it is bright and noble: Goya satirized the Catholic Inquisition with his wonderful cappricios; Daumier held up the mirror by which French society could see itself toward the latter part of the 19th century; George Grosz scandalized "good society" with his portraits of the decadent rich and the despondent victims of World War I; Art Spiegelman dared to use images employed by the Nazi propagandists to depict the lives of Jews amid the Holocaust while his teacher, the late Will Eisner, told the story of the fabrication known as "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" in The Plot.[1] Each of these artists used the cartoon to foster reflection, expose the excesses of the powerful, and build a feeling of humanity denied. The best evidenced a sense of critical engagement and cosmopolitan responsibility. Their work needed the protection accorded by civil liberties because it dared to contest the reigning belief and the arbitrary exercise of power.

But the tradition of the political cartoon also has another historical tendency. It can be found in the portrait of a lecherous Voltaire sodomizing his niece; the depiction of "little Sambo" and the slaves who love their slavery; the pornographic treatment of Jews in the pages of the Nazi rag,Der Sturmer, edited by the notorious Julius Streicher; or the caricatures of Gandhi and the victims of colonialism who deserve the exploitation they get. Cartoons such as these undermine reflection, toady to the powerful, and rub out any sense of a common humanity. They disfigure what Emmanuel Levinas called "the face of the other" and, when caught in the act, plead that they are "testing the limits" and immediately insist upon their right to free speech. This tradition defines the artistic context for those political cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed with a bomb in his turban, and the others with like-minded stereotypic and racist images, which provoked the rage of Muslims during February of 2006.

Jullands-Poste, a right-wing Danish newspaper, first published the twelve insulting cartoons in September of 2005. Haughtily aware of their civil liberties, ignoring the tensions within a newly multicultural society, and the cultural vulnerabilities of Muslim immigrants, the Danish editors said that they never would have published the cartoons "had they only known" about the violence that they would unleash. Part of the problem does stems from a general lack of

knowledge of the “other” that reigns in both the Occident and the Orient. The degree to which such ignorance is strong is the same degree to which any sense of cosmopolitan responsibility will prove weak. Nevertheless, there is something disingenuous about all of this.

When I was ready to send off A Rumor about the Jews: Anti-Semitism, Conspiracy, and the Protocols of Zion (Oxford University Press: New York, 2000) it occurred to me that few of my readers would actually have read the Protocols. It became a question for me of whether or not to include selections from this bigoted fabrication or not. Including some selections would obviously mean publicizing a work of anti-Semitic rubbish, possibly offending a number of Jews and on top of that, since my book was to appear simultaneously in English and German, perhaps running afoul of the hate speech provisions legislation existing in the Bundesrepublik. Cutting to the chase: I decided that including these offensive selections was necessary for pedagogic purposes. I was willing to deal with the fact that good pedagogic intentions can lead to unfortunate consequences and that one doesn’t always know in advance what kind of impact these selections might have.

In truth, however, none of this applies to the European editors who published the cartoons. There was no pedagogic intent involved. It does not take genius to figure out that lampooning the Prophet is a particular grievous blasphemy for the adherents of Islam. Any reasonably intelligent person should know that. No less than the Jews, the Muslims consider iconography blasphemous and the depiction of their Prophet an insult. Even if the original publication of the cartoons was driven by pedagogic intent, moreover, it was unnecessary for other editors of other papers to reprint them. They could easily have been described and, for those perversely interested, the initial website could have been noted so that, if members of the audience wished, they could still sneak a peek. It is not free speech that is involved here but the hypocrisy of commercial media seeking a sensation as well as a lack of cosmopolitan responsibility. Islamic demonstrations against the cartoons only broke out, indeed, roughly four months after their initial publication. That was after other conservative and anti-immigrant papers elsewhere in Europe had reprinted the images and mullahsboth within and outside Europe decided to turn them into a cause celebre. The cartoons were not used to edify and inform but to sell newspapers and build ratings. It was less the initial publication of the cartoons than their incessant reprinting that fanned the flames and turned the publishing of a few cartoons into a deadly provocation.

The intent behind their publication was evident from the start and the cartoons satirizing the Prophet soon enough gave birth to others and a variety of stunts. A group of Iranian soccer players were depicted as suicide bombers. A right-wing Italian politician, Roberto Calderoli, paraded in front of television cameras with an offensive cartoon emblazoned on his T-shirt thereby sparking deadly demonstrations against the Italian consulate in Libya. A “wall of separation” now exists not only in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The Danish People’s Party has gained support from the controversy unleashed by Jyllands-Posten or that its cultural editor, Flemming Rose, should now view the outrage against the cartoons as a “wake-up call” for the Danes. Little wonder that Rose, an ardent admirer of the neo-conservative and ultra-Zionist writer, Daniel Pipes, should have claimed that “Danish people are no longer willing to

pay taxes to help support someone called Ali who comes from a country with a different language and culture that is 5000 miles away (The New York Times 2/12/06)." The backlash is evident everywhere in Europe, which is now reconsidering bringing Turkey into the European Union, and especially in France where a new piece of legislation proposes making it more difficult for low-income immigrants to bring in relatives. Indeed, those who were most outraged were the same as those who published or supported the cartoons in the first place.[2]

Since 9/11, there has been a tendency to identify Islam as the enemy in the "war on terror." Western leaders have, admittedly, sought to draw distinctions between the majority of believers in Islam and its fanatical minority.[3] But this attempt has floundered on the reef of right-wing media demagoguery. The constant saber rattling of western nations in the Middle East, and a general privileging of Israeli interests. Western nations led by the United States are not radically at odds with the bulk of the Islamic community. All too predictably, however, a small circle of Islamic fanatics pounced on the cartoons to justify their own fanaticism. The breakdown of whatever cosmopolitan sensibility existed in the West was precisely what the Islamic radicals sought to bring about through the violence that they both fostered and manipulated.

The Danish imam, Abu Laban, sought to fan the flames of anger by distributing cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammed as a pig and a pedophile that had supposedly been "received" by Muslims in Denmark (The Economist 11 February 2006, pg. 25). The President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, blamed the cartoons on a Zionist "plot" to revenge the electoral victory of Hamas in Palestine. Syria played up the cartoons and approved mass demonstrations that deflected other issues like nuclear energy and terrorism. In Pakistan, where numerous villagers were recently killed by an "errant" U.S. missile, the cartoons sparked riots that were directed against the secular government of General Pervez Musharraf and his alliance with the United States. The protests were generated both from the top down and from the bottom up. Many took place in Europe but most, understandably, occurred in states with a Muslim majority or a sizable minority like Afghanistan and Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Indonesia, and the Sudan.

Flags were burned, official apologies were demanded (and refused), and protestors set fire to Danish and other western embassies throughout the Middle East. Death threats were made to the editors of papers that carried the cartoons. Nine were killed in Libya, ten in Afghanistan, and more than one hundred in Nigeria where, in the aftermath of Muslim attacks on churches and Catholic shops, Christian mobs revenged themselves on their neighbors. Cries of "Strike, strike, bin Laden" could be heard in Khartoum, Islamabad, and Gaza. Israel and the United States were excoriated, and millions of dollars in property were destroyed. In various places, demonstrators numbered in the tens of thousands. Dismissed were the majority of demonstrations that were generally peaceful and the voices of reason in the Muslim community ' like the Ayatollah Ali Sistani, leader of the Shi'ites in Iraq — who denounced the violence. It was not simply the number of demonstrators; it was their vehemence that sold the papers.

Reactionaries and enemies of the Enlightenment ethos in the Occident and in the Orient have

thus increasingly appeared as mirror images of one another. The mainstream media on both sides of the great divide have been irresponsible in their presentation of the controversy. One, ostensibly “free,” but dependent on the market; the other controlled by authoritarian figures who can only benefit from the displacement of resentment. Each has played down ideological and political distinctions among the supposed enemy of civilization and fanned the flames of a symbolic politics that permits no compromise. What was popularly considered a vindication for the “clash of civilizations” is better understood as a conflict between fanatics ignorant of the “other,” and themselves opposed by cosmopolitan voices within their respective communities, in both the East and the West.

Highlighting free speech without referring to the ethical sense of responsibility for its exercise ‘ a cosmopolitan responsibility under conditions of increasing globalization and the growing interface between radically different cultures — can only render liberal ideals abstract and produce what Herbert Marcuse once termed “repressive tolerance.” There has always been a tension between the imperatives of law and the dictates of morality and it is perverse to discuss one without reference to the other. Maintaining a commitment to free speech does not imply that any given media outlet must accept any piece of news or literature that comes across the desk of an editor. It is also not simply a matter of shouting “fire” in a crowded building. Editors for publishing houses and magazines routinely reject manuscripts and newspapers need not accept advertisements from neo-Nazis. Consensus determines the particularly “legitimate” range of political debate and criticism in the United States. Even sports commentators who once made far more timid racial remarks, or who insulted one specific community or another, were fired from their jobs. Most European nations also have laws against “hate speech:” Britain, in fact, still has a blasphemy law that criminalizes defaming the Christian God, Austria has just imprisoned the Holocaust denier David Irving, while the most famous Holocaust denier, Ernst Zundel, is facing trial on 14 charges in Germany.[4] The mullahs are surely correct when they note that denying the Holocaust, or inciting anti-Semitism, is usually considered a crime while insulting Islam and its Prophet is viewed as a legitimate expression of free speech.

As with everything else in this preposterous controversy, however, the outraged Muslim fanatics were as cynical as their opponents in exploiting an opportunity and too rarely question their own reliance upon the double standard. They say nothing about government-sponsored publication of works like the Protocols of Zion or the use of vile anti-Semitic textbooks throughout the Middle East. Such activity only further poisons the political atmosphere. The manifest inflammation of anti-immigrant feelings by the right-wing European media does not justify the attempts of Islamic fanatics and bigots to intensify anti-Semitic and anti-Western sentiments. Responding to these hateful anti-Islamic cartoons by placing an $11 million bounty on the head of the Danish cartoonists or creating a contest that would award a prize for the best caricature of the Holocaust shows a dearth of emotional maturity and cosmopolitan responsibility. Such posturing self-indulgence is indefensible and inexcusable: the victim thereby becomes defined by what he should oppose. It is best to recall Gandhi’s statement that responding to a grievance with the claim of “an eye for an eye” will quickly leave the whole world blind.

Two options present themselves. Either legislation that makes denying the Holocaust or defaming Christianity a crime must be extended to Islam or all such legislation must be wiped off the books. The problem with the first position is that racism would be driven underground and its purveyors might well turn into martyrs. Censoring critics of religious faith could easily enable reactionary religious institutions to insulate themselves from any type of meaningful criticism. What's more, historically, disastrous forms of "blowback" resulted every time the Left has sought to constrain civil liberties. With respect to the second position, however, expanding free speech in legal terms says little about issues of cosmopolitan responsibility regarding its exercise. There is little concern with abused sensibilities that might produce violence. Adherents of this stance are content to insist with Ronald Dworkin, the important political and legal theorist, that "religion must be tailored to democracy, not the other way around."[5]

Unfortunately, however, that is not enough. It is necessary to begin with the understanding that the word is not the deed. Commitment to expanding the realm of discourse is a fundamental element of the Enlightenment legacy and the best political traditions. Yet there is no reason why such a commitment cannot be linked with the insistence upon legal sanctions against violent acts of prejudice. Calls for special legislation directed against "hate crimes" also derive from the Enlightenment legacy. Such legislation was passed in the United States in the aftermath of the 1960s and it had a profound impact on organizations and mobs engaged in racist practices directed against people of color, gays, and other "outsiders."

It is imperative that progressives move beyond the present discursive impasse. In the aftermath of the cartoon controversy, free speech and civil liberties are seen as now part of the arsenal by which supposedly innocent right-wing editors in Europe can defend provincial and racist provocations while traditionalists and fundamentalist proponents of Islam insist upon protection from satire and criticism for themselves, though not the adherents to other religions, in the name of human dignity. Or, putting it another way, hypocritical beneficiaries of liberalism and equally hypocritical manipulators of religious faith have each gotten their fair share of the ideological profits from this debate. The endless platitudes converge in creating a climate of constraint and, for all the moral posturing, they expose a position that is content to let sleeping dogs lie.

This climate of constraint is insidious. Just recently, in fact, the debut of a play about Rachel Corrie ' the young activist who was killed by an Israeli bulldozer while trying to protect the home of a Palestinian family ' was cancelled due to fear of offending the Jewish community. Little time has been spent in this controversy on how religions and ethnic groups can use the outrage expressed by partisans of Islam as a precedent to shield its own dogmatists from criticism. Even less time has been wasted on those brave newspaper editors in Jordan and Yemen whose willingness to publish the cartoons not only genuinely tested the theocratic institutions and moral boundaries of their communities but cost them their jobs, their standing and ' ultimately ' perhaps even their lives. It is always easy for the powerful and complacent to forget that context counts when talking about the exercise of liberty. Those who really do think differently have ' as usual ' been abandoned.

Rational radicals will in the future not only have to confront a new form of repressive tolerance, but the repressive manipulation of "sensitivity" by those seemingly unaware that meaningful free speech has always had a bite. Critical thinkers will, by the same token, ever more surely have to develop criteria for making ethical — not simply legal — judgments about the role, the limits, and the possibilities of free expression. It is not enough simply to let the hand-wringing provincial defenders of the "liberal" state and the provincial upholders of "illiberal" religions continue baiting one another forever. The partisans of radical thinking must break the deadlock by beginning to reconsider the positive aims that critique should serve.

Caught between an imperative not to destroy free speech, and another imperative not to offend anyone by its exercise, the work of genuine radicals will become ever more difficult. They will increasingly have to justify their assault on the status quo in terms different from those employed by the phony rebels — the "shock jocks" and their ilk –who identify freedom with license. The controversy produced by these incendiary images has made it necessary to provide new social content and cosmopolitan meaning for the notion of liberty. That is a stiff challenge. It is, however, one that each generation of genuine radicals has had to face and it is unavoidable for those who would foster the cause of freedom.

Notes

[1] I had the honor of writing the afterword to this wonderful work by Will Eisner, *The Plot: The Secret Story of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

[2] James J. Zogby, "Press Misses Point in Cartoon Controversy" in http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/021406F.shtml

[3] See the excellent article by Sayeed Hasan Khan and Kurt Jacobsen, "Experiencing Islam, British Style" in *Economic and Political Weekly* 4 February 2006

[4] At his trial, surely, "observers are hoping for a mention of his pet theory that the Nazis invented UFOs, and still fly them from a base in Antarctica."*The Economist* (25 February, 2006), pg. 57.

[5] Ronald Dworkin, "Even Bigots and Holocaust Deniers Must Have Their Say" in *The Guardian* 2/14/06

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Israel’s Identity Crisis

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The theme of identity is a fateful and powerful motive force pervading the history of Zionism and of the State of Israel. Its stamp can be felt in the pictures we view viewed today of mass demonstrations, of streets slicked with oil and strewn with nails, of dummy bombs placed by “religious” soldiers in the Jerusalem bus station, or of the ceremony of “pulsa denura” (Aramaic for “whips of flame”) whereby 20 rabbis cursed Sharon and called to their God to send him the Angel of Death. One of these State-supported religious leaders then boasted on TV how, ten years ago, when such a ritual had lead to the murder of Rabin, he had danced for joy. Today we can see the increasing violence of settlers and their young children against Israeli soldiers and policemen, who since years are risking their lives to protect them.

Theodore Herzl’s Motivation

Theodore Herzl, accounted the founder of modern political Zionism, was already steeped in the question of identity. He belonged to that class of cultivated Western European intellectuals of the second half of the nineteenth century, who had lost their roots in traditional Judaism, and who, in the face of anti-Semitically-motivated opposition from their non-Jewish surroundings, would accept no further blows. As he was refused, as a Jew, unrestricted entry into the world of German culture he so much admired, he resolved to be the leader of his people, to lead them out of their affliction, to renew them spiritually, and so to triumph over anti-Semitism.

His near-obsessive dedication to the idea of a Jewish State had to be understood as a desperate search for this new identity. To this goal, he sacrificed his family, his fortune and his health, dying in 1904, at the age of only 44. His vehement disputes with Ahad Ha’am (Asher Ginsberg), the spiritual leader of so-called cultural Zionism, who died in 1927, centered, ultimately, on the character of the Jewish homeland then in the making. As against Herzl’s views on the achievements of the Enlightenment and of modern civilization, Ahad Ha’am posited the necessity of a “Jewish identity”, which, however, he understood more spiritually than religiously. This clash of beliefs continues today in Israel, with increasing ferocity, and in the most manifold ways. It is fragmenting a society in which mutually-hostile groups incapable of dialog, are not bound together by common values, not even recognizing national laws, as witness the open legal defiance by the nationalistic and religious opponents of the Gaza withdrawal. from Gaza and West Bank settlements.

Herein is reflected a history profoundly tragic, of irreconcilable life-approaches and societal standards which fail to converge on such higher-level humanistic values as social benevolence,

justice and peace. The inability to frame a constitution, incomprehensible for a self-styled democratic nation, is only one example of how Israeli society is breaking apart on the identity question.

A socialist and an atheist, David Ben Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, was not less eagerly anxious to lend a special identity in the form a "Jewish Character" to the State he had proclaimed. This task he assigned to the exponents of religious orthodoxy without accounting for the content of this slogan, and without any sense that such a task was non-delegable. Thus he took care that a numerically tiny minority would be mantled with a plenitude of concessions and privileges. Moreover, State functions calling for a religion-neutral approach, such as matters having to do with civil status and funerals, were vested exclusively in the orthodox rabbinate.

Jewish Universalism Betrayed

To maintain and expand this preferential status, the orthodox aggressively defend their monopolistic claim upon "Jewish Identity." To this end, they are ever-anxious to force their own doctrines and way of life upon inhabitants of a secular orientation. Such developments come at the expense of truly religious and humanistic values, as is illustrated by the orthodox groups, and many of their rabbis, in their militant opposition to withdrawal from the occupied territories in the interests of peace and coexistence with the Palestinians. They support themselves by citation to scripture, according to which God is supposed to have personally given to the Jews the land comprised in the present-day West Bank.

The militant settler groups in the occupied territories also invoke these archaic texts, becoming radicalized through a surfeit of identification. They see themselves as the descendents of the ancient, warlike Hebrew flock, carrying out the sacred mission of their warlike God, to liberate the Promised Land from the eternal enemies of the Jewish people, whom the Palestinians recall, and thus to usher in the messianic age. Their fundamentalism has assumed such threatening forms that, to cite one instance, the former chairman of the ideologically-aligned National Religious Party, former Minister Effi Eitam, in an interview in the daily Ha'aretz, could actually refer to Muslim control over the Temple Mount as unacceptable, and suggest that this problem will be solved, repeating the cry "the Temple Mount is in our hands."

Underlying the obsessive idea of erecting a Third Temple in the place of the Muslim holy sites, which haunts an increasing number of fanatics, is the heathenish principle of the site-specificity of the divine encounter. This stands in contradistinction to the universal Jewish ' and also the Hassidic ' conception of the "Shechina," the divine presence that manifests itself in all times and in all places.

Secular politicians, also, and many of their supporters cling, in the quest for identity, to the concept of a State with a "Jewish character," though they understand this more in a demographic sense. The difficulty that follows from this is the exclusion of the Palestinians living within Israel, as a threat to this State character. Thus long-time residents, a group

amounting to 20% of the population, would be rendered vulnerable to discrimination. “Jewish character,” understood demographically, is inconsistent with principles of equal justice and democracy, leads to permanent social tensions, impairs relations with Arab and other States, and provides arguments to anti-Semites throughout the world. The price for a demographically realized “Jewish character” is naturally to be paid by the non-Jewish population. One finds this chauvinistic spirit today among extreme right-wing groups, immigrants from the former-Soviet Union, and members of the ruling Likud party, who see themselves as the descendents of the Revisionist Zionism that emerged in the twenties of the last century.

This spirit, however, justifies not at all the characterization of Zionism as an efflux of European nationalism. The pioneers of Zionism acted on the assumptions of Jewish homelessness and of unalterable anti-Semitism as fixed realities. They were steeped in the idea of establishing a just society in the homeland they were creating. Intellectuals with the visionary instinct for the dynamic of the historical process such as Martin Buber, and above all, Judah Magnes, a co-founder and leader of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, saw in Arab-Jewish cooperation the right Zionist strategy, the sole possibility of a balance between the inarguable human rights of the Palestinians and the historical claims of the Jews.

Such cooperation between former victims of imperialism and a people with no colonial past would have been wiser, in the long run, than always seeking to rely on the great powers. Thus the nationalistic currents could have been comprehended in the newly proclaimed State of Israel, which, however, provided the setting for the grim threats of annihilation from the neighboring Arab states, and the 1939 British White Paper, which restricted immigration into Palestine by the existentially-menaced and uprooted Jews, notwithstanding their existing plight. Thus arose the problematic situation of a nation-state in the midst of a region of vital interest to the world economy, supporting itself with its own, and with America’s military might.

But Zionism also engendered creative identifications. They sprang, in part, from the search for a new self, often in reaction against the trauma of the misery of existence in the eastern European ghettos and shtetls. They arose, in the time before and after the founding of the State, so meaningfully in the collective agricultural settlements, the Kibbutzim, out of the endeavor for a new identity, for self-realization in the spirit of the best traditions of Judaism: justice, selflessness and equality. Out of it grew an alternate society and form of property, the “only realized Utopia” (Martin Buber), sustained by a new model of humanity represented by selfless pioneers, bound to the soil. The kibbutzniks were not defined by the currents of nationalism, stood for an understanding with the Arabs, and directed their energies toward personal and social self-actualization. Nothing reveals more clearly the change of direction of Israeli society than the decline of the Kibbutz movement.

Against Fictions

The missing clarification of the Zionist identity thematic may be seen in the 1948 Declaration of Statehood, whose grounding concept was insufficiently thought through and insufficiently

defined. Certain statements of intent in the Declaration, such as the promise of a constitution, and of equal treatment for Arab fellow-citizens, remain so vague that politicians to this day cannot come up with the institutions for their fulfillment. For a deeper inner conflict will have been pre-programmed: a conflict between humanistic values, such as the Jewish people had developed over millennia, projected and also handed on, and the new impulses in the wake of the founding of the State.

And so it is that in the six decades after the founding of the State of Israel, the founding goals of political Zionism, namely: the creation of a secure homeland for the Jews, with firmly recognized borders, and with a just society, are nowhere near fulfillment. Thus, the nearly ten years since the murder of the peace-seeking Prime Minister Rabin must be counted as lost. As the Palestinians' partner-in-conflict is incomparably stronger, with a far greater room for maneuvering, it might be expected that Israel, in its own self interest, would call a halt to this senseless circle of blame, and clear the ground for constructive dialog. This, however, can only come to pass when the themes of identity and of the character of the State are no longer held in thrall by emotionally super-charged and irrational fictions.

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The Neo-con Strategy To Fight The Cosmopolitan University

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

The recent outspokenness of conservative students has led to much speculation coming from the right, left, and center about the changing face of American youth. Are organizations like Students for Academic Freedom giving voice to a silenced group on campuses?[i] Is conservatism spreading as the new youth counter-culture movement in contrast to the progressive movements of the sixties?[ii] Is this just another aspect of the seemingly unstoppable conservative backlash against progressivism, as many on the left have argued?[iii] Before giving a 'yes or no' answer to these questions, we must ask three broader questions. 1) What do these students want? 2) Why do they want it? 3) How are they going about getting what they want? The first question involves the movement's aims, the second, its ideology, and the third requires us to look at its structure. By answering these questions, we will have a clearer idea about the nature of this emergent movement.

The rallying cry for the conservative student movement has been the demand for academic freedom. Matthew Festa, a conservative student columnist and winner of the right-wing Publius Fellowship, lauding free thought at his university (Loyola) and comparing it to other schools writes, "Most other universities say they pride themselves on academic freedom but in actuality practice thought control. I have read numerous stories of newspapers being stolen, students being prevented from speaking out, and people getting in trouble for being politically incorrect."[iv] There's no doubt about it, campus politics is a dirty business. Yet, these students argue that they are at a disadvantage by being punished for their beliefs by intolerant liberal professors. Enter David Horowitz, the Academic Bill of Rights, and Students for Academic Freedom.

The Academic Bill of Rights, authored by David Horowitz, consists of eight principles that Horowitz and members of Students for Academic Freedom believe both public and private universities should adopt. While insisting on the right to free thought for both students and professors, it seeks to enforce strict limitations on the views professors can express to their students.[v] For all the polite appeals to and invocations of freedom of speech, Students for Academic Freedom are not asking universities to change, they are telling them to change.

According to a report by The Journal Editorial Report, sixteen state legislatures have already adopted bills that limit what professors say and the notion of an academic bill of rights is being debated in congress.[vi] This may seem to be a somewhat counter-intuitive on the part of conservatives, but as Marissa Freimanis, a conservative student at Cal State Long Beach, put it when interviewed by The Journal Editorial Report, "if it takes the state to do that then that's what needs to happen." Freimanis uses nice words like "bring balance" and "pull to the center"

to describe what the state needs to do, but it does sound an awful lot like the censoring and monitoring of professors when we stop and think about the actual enforcement of these bills.

By now the aims should be pretty clear; these students want to change the university. It is hard not to be a little sympathetic. That word “freedom” pulls at just about everyone’s heartstrings. We know what these students want; they want to transform the university. They want the university to be monitored and to have it answer to some higher body, the state if need be. In order to control the university, it must be depoliticized so as to prevent the flaring up of passions and, heaven forbid, hurt feelings. It would be difficult to control student groups (that’s a different kind of fight), but it would certainly be easy to control faculty members because they have paychecks to worry about ‘ that’s where Freimanis’ state comes in. On the surface one might take this transformation as a legitimate desire to defend intellectual freedom, but there is also an ideology at play.

The conservative student movement must be placed within the context of recent history. We need only extend our memory back to the 1960s and the social upheaval that took place with universities at the heart, and was perhaps the generator, of the storm. Throughout much of the world, universities became a major galvanizing force for progressive change. They were a space for the questioning of authority and the overturning of norms. This is what conservatives hate about the university ‘ you never know what kind of threat to established views and institutions might emerge from that hotbed of thought. Suddenly, it became dangerous to send your kids to school because they might begin to question conventional wisdom. They might return home for summer vacation and actually take the ideas in those musty books seriously.

Irving Kristol has described the birth of neo-conservatism as a response to failure of liberalism, which culminated in the anarchy of the 60s. It’s not a coincidence that Kristol’s “disillusioned liberals” made the turn to neo-conservatism in the early 70s. These “disillusioned liberals” or “adversaries of the adversary culture” as Norman Podhoretz called them,[vii] who panicked about the political unrest within the university also included Podhoretz, Nathan Glazer, and Sydney Hook, among many others. Mrs. Kristol, the eminent conservative historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, has pointed to the counter-culture movement of the 60s that spread from the universities as one of the prime forces that has led to the modern fracturing of American society and, more importantly, its de-moralization.[viii] Clearly conservatives, young and old alike, have not forgotten that American universities were at the center of this upheaval. They do not want to see the same radical opposition within universities reemerge, especially at a point when they are mounting their most ambitious bid for power.

Bringing the conservative vision to campuses has nothing to do with making everyone read Burke, Hayek, and Goldwater. It means taming the university and forcing it to finally give in to authority. Conservative students who join the movement see their role as one forcing the university back to the “center” as Marissa Freimanis put it. They look back at the 60s and see only chaos. They find the promise of order comforting. Many kids want their college years to consist of good times and good grades. Perhaps that moment of perceiving those liberal kids on campus as a threat to a secure college life is the moment of young conservative self-

consciousness. In this respect, the interests of young conservatives and the older generation are united. Neither young nor old conservatives want to see American universities generate any more upheaval and the older generation is doing everything it can do to nurture and encourage the young.

The massive conservative political machine that includes politicians, pundits, think-thanks, magazines, publishing houses, church groups, etc. has banded together to bring their revolution to the campuses. On the front lines are conservative students. These kids are not new recruits.[ix] The leaders of conservatism only want the converted. Prove yourself in the fight against those progressives on campus and you can move up in the movement. Bully the progressives on campus and make enough of a racket about how they persecute you, then just wait for the higher ups to take notice and recognize your potential for leadership. The American Enterprise Institute, America's Future Foundation, Campus Watch, Clare Booth Luce Policy Institute, Eagle Forum Collegians, Focus on the Family, The Heritage Foundation, The Leadership Institute, Young America's Foundation, and Young Americans for Freedom are just a few of the many organizations that help to cultivate young conservative minds.

The services and resources these Conservative organizations offer students are without equivalent on the progressive political spectrum. For example, the Young America's Foundation offers a six-day conference called the National Conservative Student Conference, whose speakers include right-wing celebrities like Newt Gingrich, Ann Coulter, Michelle Malkin, Ben Stein, David Brooks, David Horowitz, and Morton Blackwell (President of the youth-oriented Leadership Institute). The Conference's website promises that attendees will meet their conservative heroes, network with like-minded students, learn how to spot liberal biases, and go on the counter-attack.[x]

At this year's Conservative Political Action Conference, sponsored by The American Conservative Union, panels on the agenda included topics like "Battling the Left in Its Privileged Sanctuaries." Similarly, The Leadership Institute offers training programs in a variety of methods of student activism. It also publishes literature and produces videos that guide students through the steps toward effective activism. These organizations show students how they can bring conservative celebrity speakers to their campuses for further training and morale boosting. Students who take the initiative and invite the most conservative celebrities to their campuses are rewarded by becoming members of The Young America's Foundation's "Club 100" that makes them eligible for a trip to the Reagan Ranch, which is yet another center for training conservative student activists.

Here lies the strength of the movement and another appeal: the promise of upward mobility. It's the promise of a successful career after college that gives conservative students the drive to succeed. Who are the models? Karl Rove got his start as executive director of the College Republicans. *The National Review*'s editor, Rich Lowry, is an alumnus of that Heritage internship. Dinesh D'Souza made his mark as a provocative editor at the Dartmouth Review. Distinguish yourself in your student days and there's no telling what heights you can reach.

Opportunities for recognition exist through elite conservative training programs and awards offered by groups like the Leadership Institute or the Clare Booth Luce Policy Institute. There is the scholarship from the Ronald Reagan Future Leaders Scholarship Program[xi] or the fellowship from the Publius Fellows Program, which is awarded to only ten upper-class undergraduate and graduate students. Then there's the hotly coveted Heritage Foundation ten-week summer internship, which is open to a mere sixty-four students.[xii] There are also contests, like the recent "Intellectual Morons" essay contest run by the Young America's Foundation, in which the entrants were asked to bash their favorite liberal "intellectual moron" (the winner wrote on Noam Chomsky, perhaps the right's favorite punching bag).[xiii] Do a web search for the names of any of the winners of the different elite scholarship or fellowship programs and you will find that they represent conservatism's most vibrant student activists and writers for college newspapers.

Central to waging the battle against progressive forces on campus is having a newspaper or magazine. For this the hugely successful political provocateur, and himself a one-time student activist during his tenure as editor of The Dartmouth Review, Dinesh D'Souza, is a prime role model. His *Letters to a Young Conservative* is full of advice on how to use the publication as a means to provoke progressives on campus and promote the conservative cause.[xiv] It's most important lessons: always go out looking for controversy and make as much noise as possible. Whenever the left speaks up on campuses, conservative students are always quick to respond and they make sure that their response gets more media coverage.[xv] By counter-attacking progressive activism on campus and making more noise with their responses, conservative activists have sought to drown out the voices of campus activists who oppose their views. Many winners of conservative scholarships and fellowships got their starts through their work as newspaper editors and writers.

The attack has two fronts. It's not just a matter of battling progressive student groups, but also of trying to silence faculty and force the university to change as an institution. That's where David Horowitz with his Academic Bill of Rights comes in. What is significant is that conservative students are playing a key role in that agenda. Conservative students have acted as agents of organizations like Students for Academic Freedom, by monitoring the discussions that take place in classrooms throughout the country and reporting to people like Horowitz whenever they sniff out a leftist on the faculty.[xvi] For example, Ben Lepak, a Ronald Reagan Scholar, was recently lauded on the Students for Academic Freedom website for creating the Oklahoma University Ideological Society. The Society was created to monitor the voting affiliations and reading lists of professors at Oklahoma University.

It is the cohesion of the conservative political machine that gives cause for alarm. Were Horowitz, conservative student activists, and the writers and pundits who support them doing this alone this could all be countered by vocal liberal student activists and liberal writers and pundits. The fact is, however, that the conservative activists, unlike the liberals, have the political power to back their interests. Conservative politicians on the local, state, and national levels are speaking at these student conferences. Some of these politicians and policy-makers are former activists themselves. As noted above, sixteen state legislatures have already begun

to make the conservative program for transforming the university is already becoming a reality. There is no reason to think it will stop there. Liberal politicians have shown a lack of wherewithal to oppose their conservative counterparts on various more important occasions and it seems doubtful that they would be able to oppose them on this matter as well.

The real problem is a disorganized and unimaginative left. The left is not thinking on the grand scale. It does not cultivate its young intellectuals and activists. In addition, progressive students do not band together in the way that conservative students do. They are fractured among interest groups that focus on specific issues. The older generation has not worked hard enough to fashion an intellectual vision, let alone a program, that can help to create solidarity in the way that the right's elders have. Progressives are letting themselves be pushed into a corner because of their own inability to fight back.[xvii]

The Center for American Progress, a progressive think-tank, has recently tried to come to the aid of progressive students by establishing Campus Progress, an organization that educates campus lefties on how to respond to their right-wing counterparts.[xviii] The organization is primarily oriented toward the Democratic Party, a fact that does not make one optimistic. The problem with these types of organizations (as with the Democrats) is that they are propelled less by real vision than by the frantic realization that something must be done. Without vision, it does not matter how many organizations are created.

These new organizations also miss the major problem on college campuses. For Campus Progress, it's a matter of training progressive students to win the college debate on the Iraq War. Conservatives, however, know that the big issues are fought out in the halls of power and in the media. They do not leave it up to kids to win the important arguments; for that they have the elders. On college campuses, conservatives are targeting the university itself. Progressive students are led to believe that debates on gun control or abortion or affirmative action are what the fight is all about. Meanwhile, the sphere that they rely on for this discourse is slowly being destroyed under their noses. Until organizations like Campus Progress and its kind recognize this and come to the defense of the university, their activities are meaningless.

There is a deeply problematic legacy of the 1960w, which must be addressed. Many progressive activists still view the university as an oppressive institution, as the enemy. Progressive students often look to any authority as bad authority. This stubborn position of complete non-compliance with authority hurts more than it helps. This is not to say that there should not be a healthy tension between students and the university, but only that it should be recognized that the alignment of interests might make an enemy into an ally, for a while at least.

The fact that the conservative movement has been able to extend its influence to university campuses is just more evidence of how weak the left has become. The current strength of their movement, complimented by the weakness of the left, can only yield ominous predictions. If their efforts remain unchallenged by an equally vibrant movement, conservatism may become more and more appealing to undergraduate and graduate students. One can only presume that

this may end with the cosmopolitan university itself transforming into a proselytizing ground, not so much for conservatism as for the blind acceptance of authority. So long as leftists avoid getting their act straight both intellectually and organizationally, all they can do is complain as they watch one of the last bastions of cosmopolitan and progressive thought crumble under the weight of a massive steamroller.

There is hope. Rather than allow the university to be transformed into a mundane and impotent institution, its role as a source of transformation must be recognized and celebrated. This is not to say that anarchy should reign on campuses, but that the university provides a vital space within the public sphere for the giving, sharing, and, most importantly, opposing of ideas. Progressive students must recognize the very real threat posed by the conservative agenda and the nature of that threat. Student groups divided by particular interests can come to recognize that they are bound by a belief in the university's active function in society. Coalitions of student groups along with left intellectuals and politicians must form in opposition against this attempt to destroy an institution that has given us a center from which to engage our world and voice our grievances with it.

Conservative students have the support of the older generation and they are given the material incentives to fight for the transformation of their universities. They know what they want and have a strategy for how to get it. Progressives do not have a clear idea of what they are defending and why. Without a counter-offensive informed by an intellectual vision, the conservative program will succeed. Right now, organization and program are in conservative's favor. They are taking the issue of the university seriously, so should progressives. The university is still a vibrant sphere for progressive democratic discourse, if that is lost then there are few places left to turn. The threat is too real and the consequences of its success are too disastrous to treat lightly.

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[i] See any number of articles on David Horowitz's Front Page or the ABC World New Tonight report by Dan Harris, "Conservatives Censored on College Campuses? Free Speech Movement Finds New Group of Supporters."

[ii] See John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolridge's *The Right Nation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004) pp. 279-282.

[iii] See for example Joshua Holland's "Backlash 101: Why Conservatives are Winning the Campus Wars" in The Gadflyer dated 8/18/04..

[iv] See Festa's "A Reflection on Four Years" in the Loyola Greyhound, issue: 4/20/04.

[v] For two very good, but very different critiques of the Academic Bill of Rights, see Russell Jacoby's "The New PC" in April 4, 2005 issue of The Nation and Stanley Fish's "'Intellectual Diversity': the Trojan Horse of a Dark Design" in the February 13, 2004 issue of The Chronicle Review.

[vi] Check out the transcript for the September 23, 2005 episode of The Journal Editorial Report, which airs on PBS. This transcript is available atwww.pbs.org/wnet/journaleditoiralreport.

[vii] See the excerpt from Norman Podhoretz's *The Bloody Crossroads* entitled "The Adversary Culture and the New Class" in *Twentieth Century Political Theory: A Reader*, ed. Stephen Eric Bronner, (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[viii] See Gertrude Himmelfarb's*One Nation, Two Cultures: A Searching Examination of American Society in the Aftermath of Our Cultural Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

[ix] Look at Pam Chamberlain's study *Deliberate Differences: Progressive and Conservative Campus Activism in the United States* published by Political Research Associates. Austin Bramwell also notes this fact in his "Defining Conservatism Down" in The American Conservative in the August, 29, 2005 issue.

[x] Visit the Conference's website athttp://www.yaf.org/conferences/college/conference.asp

[xi] The scholarship is offered by The Phillips Foundation, there website for the scholarship ishttp://www.thephillipsfoundation.org/futureleaders.htm.

[xii] Read more about the Heritage Foundation's internship in The New York Times article by Jason De Parle, "Next Generation of Conservatives (By the Dormful)," which appeared on June 14, 2005.

[xiii] Read about the contest athttp://www.yaf.org/publications/Books/intellectual_morons.html

[xiv] Check out chapters 4 and 5 of D'Souza's *Letters to a Young Conservative* (New York: Basic Books, 2002)

[xv] See Pam Chamberlain's PRA study, p. 20-22.

[xvi] David Horowitz's Front Page magazine regularly publicizes the stories of young Conservative students who are faced by the abuse of being exposed viewpoints other than their own.

[xvii] It's important to note this conclusion is not that different from Joshua Holland's excellent article cited earlier.

[xviii] See Sam Graham-Felsen's "New Face of the Campus Left" in the Feb. 13, 2006 issue of The Nation. Also, visit the website:www.campusprogress.org.

A Conversation With David Harvey

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

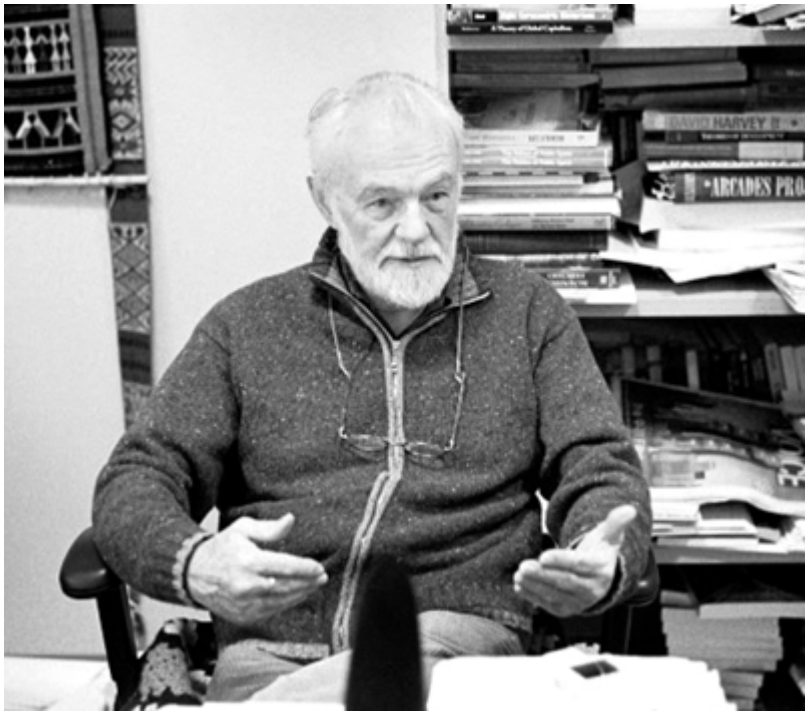
Q: Imperialism is something that you have written on very recently with your book,* The New Imperialism*. This leads me to a pretty important and timely question: why Iraq and why now?

A: Geopolitially, this is a critical region of the global economy and the US has been involved there since 1945, if not before. And the US involvement in that region has escalated very strongly since 1945. I think we should recognize that what Bush has done in the region is not off trajectory of the general pattern of American involvement. Before Bush, we had several thousand, maybe ten thousand troops in the Gulf region. We were already bombing parts of Iraq. There was already a huge sort of engagement in the region, and the only question is why did Bush decide to escalate it into active occupation of the territory? I think it had a lot to do with the particular vision of the neo-conservatives, that somehow the U.S. could get control of this region through a political and military process in Iraq.

Now, why they felt the need for that control has a long history and I think it has a lot to do with the control of oil supplies, but not simply for the U.S. That is the spigot for the global economy. The US has always wanted to have a strong presence so that it can not only control its own oil reserves and oil flows but also the oil flows of the whole global economy.

Q: One of the categories you've developed explicitly in your last two books is the idea of "accumulation by dispossession." What is it, and how does it fit into this whole discussion of Iraq, and even beyond?

A: Accumulation by dispossession is about plundering, robbing other people of their rights. When we start to look at what has happened to the global economy for the past thirty years, a lot of that has been going on all over the place. In some instances, it is taking away peoples rights to dispose of their own resources, so you will find that there is resistance to that in the Middle East. Then for instance, one of the big issues behind the Zapatista movement was the control of resources.



One of the big issues in Bolivia right now is the control of natural resources. Capitalism is very much about taking away the rights people have over their natural resources. But it is not only natural resources when we are talking about dispossession. If you look at what is happening to people's pension funds, it is the taking away of rights. And you take a look at the world andsome people are getting extremely rich right now. How are they getting rich? Are they getting rich because they are contributing to a global economy in productive ways or are they getting rich because they are taking away other people's rights? If you look at the history of things such as Enron and you see that a lot of wealth is being accumulated in the world right now by dispossessing others of their rights and their wealth and it could be natural resources as in Iraq, or in Bolivia or Chiapas, or it could be rights which have been accumulated through pension funds and so on. You could look at something like eminent domain in this country right now, something that is now being used to take away people's property so the developers of Wal-Mart can build a new store or a shopping mall. A whole pattern is emerging, and it seems to me that it is important to look so we can understand the dynamics of the accumulation of capital that are occuring right now.

Q: In what way can accumulation by dispossession be explanatory in American foreign policy? Is this the logic that is driving foreign policy decisions?

A: I don't think it's *the* explanatory variable, it is a key one which you have to look at again and again and again. For instance, the U.S. does have security concerns of some kind. The U.S. is concerned for a good reason, and in some instances it is about political movements which are occurring in various parts of the world, and therefore it will try to engage in pre-emptive politics, which it did in the invasion of Afghanistan. It seems to me that the invasion of Afghanistan was a very different story from the Iraq invasion. It was not simply that there were

no good targets in Afghanistan; there was nothing really there in Afghanistan that we really wanted, except that the U.S. now has a very considerable geo-political presence in the whole region, not only in Afghanistan, but also Uzbekistan. It is trying to sort of spread its military power throughout this entire region because this is the key to ythe political region. Therefore, the US a has a legitimate interest in the stability of the region, but at the same time it is illegitimate because it is also about the taking away of oil assets from the people of the region.

Q: So is this what is new about the "New Imperialism"? The old Imperialism, as you said, was about the relationship of power and dominion. Is this what is new?

A: There are two things-in a funny kind of way, some of this is a reversion of certain events that happened at the end of the 19th century when there was a lot of accumulation by dispossession by the British Empire: taking away resources, destroying Indians' indigenous industries and supplanting them, that sort of thing. So we look at our current situation, and it is sort of a repetition of what happened in the 19th century. The big distinction is that, apart from Iraq, it has generally not involved colonial occupation. It uses the power of the economy, the power of international institutions, such as the World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund. It uses the power of economic leverage, and in some instances will use covert power to put in power someone who is very convivial for the Unites States to live with: a dictator like Pinochet in Chile, or,before that, the Shah of Iran. The United States has worked that way through the colonial kind of problem, rather than going through direct occupation as the British, the French and the other imperial regimes did during the end of the 19th century.

Q: How do you think this whole problem with the New Imperialism is linked with globalization?

A: I think they are intimately related, but I also think that they are interrelated to the neo-liberalization which has been going on, that is neo-liberalization being about institutional reforms that are pro-market and pro-privatization, and against state interventions into welfare and so on. Neo-liberalization has involved in a very distinct kind of imperial project, which is rather different from the imperial project that existed in the 1950's and 1960's where the United States was essentially a super-imperialist power. And now it is involving itself in the spread of market ideology as being crucial to the sustenance of capitalism, of course that is now in dangerof undermining the US positionality in the global economy, because where the market moving to? It is moving to China and it is moving to India. There is a great proliferation, once you unleash market forces, that we are not in the position to totally control, which is what I think the U.S. is finding out.

Q: You know, Jagdish Baghwati recently published a book,* In Defense of Globalization*, where he argues that free market globalization has been a success in freeing people from poverty, political and social forms of domination, and even opening up a new kind of cosmopolitanism. How does your critical view of globalization respond to such claims?

A: I'll respond in two ways, there is a lot of controversy over the kind of data you look at and how you prove that. For instance if you ask the question of how many people were in poverty in 1980 and how many people there are in poverty today, you might say, there are fewer people in poverty now than there was back then. But when you look at the economic performance, of say China and India, and you look at the aggregate data, it looks like the world is better off. If you start to look at social inequality however, you start to see in many instances, that neo-liberalization has increased social inequality, even at the same time that it has lifted some of the people at the bottom out of poverty. If you look at the concentration of wealth, at the very top bracket of society, you will see immense concentrations of wealth at the very top 0.1% of the population.

At this point the question is: who is neo-liberalization really benefiting? And if you look at concentrations of political and economic power, it has largely benefited a very very small elite. And we have to start looking at that. For instance, the *New York Times* had this interesting data a couple of months ago. How rich, on average, are the richest 200 (or 400) families in the United States? I think the data showed that back in 1980, they had something like $680 million. In constant dollars it is something like $2.8 billion. They have quadrupled their wealth in the last twenty years and this is a familiar story not just in the U.S but also globally. In Mexico, after neo-liberalization, you see the same thing. You see the same think happening in China and in India. When Thomas Friedman talks about a flat world, he is saying you do not have to come to America to be a billionaire; you can be a billionaire in Bangalore now. You do not have to migrate to America, but the social inequality in India is increasing dramatically.

Q: And this is what you talk about, in your book* A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, as the "restoration of class power." How is this playing itself out here (in the U.S.)? Is it simply that social inequality is increasing? You have that and you have a certain amount of indifference among the population to this rising social inequality.

A: In this country of course, we have to be careful when we ask questions about, 'Who controls the media? Who controls the general climate of opinion?' And again, if we compare the situation with 30 years ago, and we look at levels of concentration of power in the media, and so on, I think you will see that the ability to express discontent, the kind of ideology of the time, is much more narrowly circumscribed now through these concentrations of economic and political power. If we look at the way the Republican Party has become a vehicle for special interest groups to accumulate more and more capital, and it is sort of scandalous, you see it

day by day. New deals are cut in Congress, which somehow or other, give $20 billion d to the health insurance industry or something of that kind, these sorts of things are going on.

What we have is a political situation where the possibility of expression of political anger tends to get increasingly blocked. This, I think is a very interesting parallel. I jokingly say sometimes that I think China is Karl Rove's dream. He would like it to be exactly like China, where the capacity to express political opposition in class terms China is blocked by the Communist Party, by the language and the discursive sort of structures. I think we are seeing something similar in this country, where the possibility to really express fierce opposition, in class terms to this immense concentration of wealth is essentially more and more blocked by all of these ideological barriers and also by the concentration of power in the media.

Q: Tell me about the ideological dimension of all this, because the ideological thought process is more complicated. You talk about the institutions, the concentration of wealth. But what is neo-liberalism, broadly speaking? And how does that relate not only to the economy but also to ideology and culture?

A: The strength of the neo-liberal ideology, on a popular level, is its emphasis individual liberty, freedom and personal responsibility. Those have all been very important aspects, of what you might call 'American Ideology' since the very inception of what the U.S. has been about. What neo-liberalism did was to take the demand for that which was clearly there in the 1950's and the 1960's and say "We can satisfy this demand, but we are gonna do this a certain way, we are gonna do it through the market, and you can only achieve those goals through the market. We are gonna do it in such a way that you have to forget about the issues of social justice." It seems to me that the movements of the 1960's were about combining individual liberty and social justice. What neo-liberalism did was say "we'll give you the individual liberty, you forget the social justice." For that reason it has been very powerful in the United States as an ideology,because it can appeal to this long tradition of individual liberty and freedom.

You can see this in Bush's rhetoric even before 9/11, although it has escalated since. . How many times did he use the words 'Liberty' and 'Freedom' in his second inaugural address? It is to that ideological tradition which I think everyone in the US subscribes to some degree, including myself. The only interesting question is, how do we conceptualize individual liberty and freedom in relationship to social obligations? In relationship to social justice? In relationship to real possibilities for everybody to participate in this system? That is a question you cannot ask if you say the only vehicle for which you may realize your dreams of individual liberty and freedom is through the market and through privatization of everything, and through a legal apparatus which is heavily reliant on individual personal rights.

Q: And this rhetoric of individualism is also a crucial key in neoliberalism.

A: Yes, absolutely. I am very impressed with someone like Thomas Friedman, who is a great ideologist and neo-liberalist, yet in the wake of the Katrina hurricane disaster complained bitterly that there were no social solidarities around. You cannot help thinking: well, you spent

most of your time destroying all of that, and now you are turning around and saying, here is a situation where we needed this. It is so fascinating to watch the way in which people cannot square these things. Even a conservative columnist like David Brooks says the same sort of thing. He will say we need more social solidarity. Well, you cannot have that and emphasize that everything has to be negotiated through the market.

Q: In terms of what is to be done, the classic question, you have intellectuals, you have activists, you have unions, all different sectors of society that could be mobilized in a critical way against neo-liberal discourse, neo-liberal institutions. How do they all fit together as far as critical opposition movement against neo-liberalism?

A: Here you come back to the geography of it. It depends a lot on where you are, and of course what we are seeing in Latin America is a lot of movement towards the left. It is different in Chile than in Brazil, which is different from Venezuela and different from Argentina or Bolivia, but never the less, there is sort of a movement of some kind or other that is anti neo-liberal. And the interesting question now is can they make their anti-neo-liberalization stick and how are they going to make it stick? I think you are going to get a very different answer in Chile than you are going to get in Bolivia. It seems to me we are moving to a situation of considerable experimentation with how to do this. Locally, inside the U.S. we will find this.

I was part of, or very close to, one of the first living wage movements in Baltimore back in the early 90's. They now have become quite wide spread through many jurisdictions of the United States and I think there is a push going on at the grassroots level that says you cannot have people employed at something that is below a living wage. Therefore we have to pay very close attention to that locally, and I think that local movements are likely to push more and more into the national consciousness. I think what we have to look at are these movements and these possibilities that exist in different places for political action. In something like the living wage movement, you have one set of possibilities, and in Bolivia, you have something else going on. To me, it is a fragmented opposition right now, moving in very different diverse ways. But it is a very exciting movement, because I we do not know, clearly, what the alternative might look like. I do not think we have a blueprint for it, which is probably a good idea, but we are moving towards something through this oppositional kind of structure.

Q: When you mentioned the living wage movement, it reminded me of something that goes back to Marx. That there is probably within these movements a discourse about wages, about inequality, about distribution. Marx's idea was that there has to be a critical discourse about production process, which even the most radical of us tend to stay away from, maybe because there are no alternatives on the table. Lacking that discussion, how far can we get?

A: Well you have to start somewhere. One of my favorite passages from Marx is "The realm of freedom begins where the realm of necessity is left behind," and he gives this rather long rhetoric about freedom. Then at the end of it he says, "Therefore, limiting the length of the working day, is a crucial demand." So you go from a kind of revolutionary rhetoric to an almost

reformist, kind of practical demand right now. And I think the difference between a reformist and a revolutionary is not necessarily that you do radical things all the time, but it is that at a given moment, you may all do the same thing, i.e. demand living wage, but you do it with a different objective, and that is as a long-term transition. A transformation, which is what you may have in mind, and I think that Marx was very well aware that if people are working 18-20 hours a day, 7 days a week, they are not going to be very revolutionary in their consciousness. They are going to be so damn tired, that they are not going to have time for anything, and therefore, creating spaces and possibilities for people to think of other possibilities is a precursor to a more general transformation. That is one of things that I certainly found out in the living wage campaign in Baltimore. People working two jobs, working 80 hours a week, and they do not have time to organize, they hardly have time to have a life, let alone be active in community organizations, and active as political organizers. It is very difficult to do that when you are in that situation.

A Conversation With Sylvia Zwettler-Otte

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

Sylvia Zwettler-Otte was from 2001-2004 President of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. Her most recent book is 'Freud in Der Presse' co-written with Marina Tichy. We met in July 2005 in London where she genially agreed to this wide-ranging interview. Our conversation darted from Freud's reception in Vienna in his early years of struggle, to the latest incarnation of the never-ending "Freud wars," to repressed memory syndrome to modern sexuality to pharmacology and the psychosexual implications of the Harry Potter books. Readers will never look at a quidditch match in quite the same way again.

Q: How did you come to psychoanalysis? Are you Viennese-born?

Yes I was born in Vienna. I first studied Latin and German and became a gymnasium teacher. I liked teaching children very much. Then I started to study psychology because I needed background to approach psychoanalysis. I was already sure from what I had read and from my own experiences that I would like to be a psychoanalyst. I had wanted to study medicine too but it was more realistic to chose psychology because I had to earn money with my profession. Some psychoanalysts also told me that I would never really come close to the essence of psychoanalysis by studying medicine. Psychoanalysis is a topic of its own.

Q: What age range of patients do you treat now?

I work with adolescents but also with parents and grownups. I like to have the mixed experience between young people and grownups. After my psychoanalytic training I established a small practice that grew and grew and left me less time for school teaching. So I slowly gave up teaching. I also became more and more involved in the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society.

Q: So you are a nonmedical analyst – what Freud called a "lay analyst." You know in the US how much, despite Freud's endorsement, they are frowned on by psychiatrists.

Yes. There are now more psychologists than medical doctors as psychoanalysts in Vienna. It's nearly two thirds, which doesn't make our medical colleagues very happy. They are encouraging students in medical schools to be interested in psychoanalysis. But it was already the trend when I began my studies to have more non-medical analysts. As for who makes the better analyst, in my own experience I found it was really a matter, after ascertaining their talent, of how avidly one is engaged in the topic: Has this candidate the makings of an analyst who can make a contribution, or not? Maybe my medical colleagues wouldn't so much agree.

Q: One project that spun out of the Vienna Society was your new book Freud in the Press, which examines how Austrian newspapers treated psychoanalysis from 1895

until the Anschluss.

The project was supposed to take two years. But even with my historian colleague co-writer we still needed ten years to complete it. In the beginning we had wanted to compare analysis then with the present time but we had to give it up as too ambitious. But I was surprised to find that most of the anti-Freud arguments that now circulate were around since 1895 when Freud and Breuer published Studies in Hysteria. I was surprised to see how little these arguments changed.

Q: Are you saying the arguments against analysis then were exactly the same kind as those deployed in today's "Freud Wars"?

I wouldn't say it was quite the same. There was a shift in some arguments. For instance, physicians read with much interest that this Doctor Freud had found a new idea with which to deal with difficult cases. There was a lot of interest among Viennese colleagues, which is documented in the Vienna Medical Journal and Vienna Cllinical Journal (Wiener Klinische Wochenschrift und Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift) from 1895 until psychoanalysis was expelled by the Nazis. They keenly felt their own restrictions, compared to what Freud was doing. Some doctors, for example, said that a gynecologist was allowed to ask any intimate question to find a diagnosis but that an ordinary doctor ' a nonspecialist – is not even allowed to ask about sexuality. An ordinary doctor had to worry about his reputation if he asks about their sexuality.

Q: But sexuality was not the only concern, was it?

It is not the main concern today. Another argument against analysis was that it is not scientific enough. This is the main argument now, and, what's worse, the effort to be 'scientific" it is so even among some analysts the greatest concern. These attacks have always existed. The shift in contemporary criticism is that the reputation of the doctor is no longer at stake but it is more a concern about scientific aspects – whether one can repeat or prove results by statistics, and so on. This objection was always there. What is amusing is that they were saying from the start that psychoanalysis was dead and buried from the beginning, more than a hundred years ago.

Take for a famous example, an assistant at the Vienna University Clinic, Emil Raimann, who for decades followed Freud with an extremely ambivalent interest. When he got to know a bit about psychoanalysis he decided to write a book about it. Another skeptic at his clinic even told him he needn't bother reading The Interpretation of Dreams – it's not worthwhile. So Raimann attended Freud's lectures but already was writing critically about psychoanalysis before getting to know it. So one day he asked Freud if he could accompany him after the lecture and then confessed that he ' this is mentioned in one of Freud's lectures – now would write much differently about psychoanalysis because he had a better idea of it. Nevertheless he continued to write critical reviews, somewhat attacking Freud but even more so even attacking Freud's pupils, his followers.

Q: Who were more vulnerable?

Yes. This is a split which is very interesting. Freud was excused for working so long in relative isolation. One important commentator of the time said a genius is allowed to be alone because he needs solitude to carry on his work. But this dispensation does not apply to pupils. So this tactic of attacking the followers instead was one way of displaying ambivalence toward Freud and his findings. Like Emil Raimann they couldn't stop it. They neither wanted to go into details of analytical work nor did they want to risk being drawn into analysis itself.

Q: That may be the key difference between earlier generations of critics and the current generation of critics. This acute ambivalence – because ambivalence means you really are attracted to the insights and explanatory power of the thing you are attacking. But for most critics, like Frederick Crews, today there is nothing whatever to be gained by examining psychoanalysis. It is a pure negative, a deadweight.

They say it but nonetheless many of them are attracted to some other form of psychotherapy based on psychoanalysis. These therapies must be serious, deal with sexuality, and so on. I am sure there is a secret attraction to psychoanalysis even now. And I think it was true also in earlier times. I think that if some psychoanalytic topic catches an unconscious conflict in the reader, it brings them some short period of relief because it is a lifting of repression which is experienced as pleasure. This, in my view, is the source of the secret attraction. This is an ambivalence where one can rail against analysis and at the same time enjoy it.

Q: Crews had a tremendous early interest in psychoanalysis before he rejected it and began what looks like a vendetta. Partly, the attack on analysis today is aided by the usually realistic view that it is too expensive to be available to the ordinary person.

It is a problem. In Vienna, even from the time of Freud, there was an outpatient clinic established through the very hard work of some colleagues who in the beginning struggled against other analysts who said we don't; need it and we don't care. As long as you don't send patients to us we are not interested in it. But through this outpatient clinic we are even in contact with insurance companies now so that it is possible in Vienna to have the whole analysis even without any money because insurance will pay it.

Q: The American private insurance system is extremely reluctant to fund "talking cures."

Even the insurance companies have found that psychoanalysis is serous. It lasts a long time and it costs a lot of money but in the long term it might be cheaper if a patient — for instance a psychosomatic patient who is always in the hospital, no longer needs hospitalization or drugs. One can prove cases of patients with many stays in hospital who after they started psychoanalysis had none. So even the insurance companies realize that psychoanalysis might be a good thing. There is some appreciation of the therapeutic power of psychoanalysis even among those people who have no idea about it. One eminent colleague, for example, has achieved a certain success in talking seriously to insurance firms and showing them how

psychoanalysis differs from other therapies. It is important to understand the view of people from the insurance firms while at the same time preserving the essential precepts of analysis

Q: The battle is proving to insurance companies that psychoanalysis can be what they call bottom-line 'efficient.'

Yes, that psychoanalysis is cheaper in the long term if it is really indicated. There are studies which prove that psychotherapy can be much more effective, such as that in Germany by Joachim F. Dankwardt and Ekkehard Gattig.

Q: The current "Freud wars" continue. How do you assess them after your study of Freud's reception at the turn of the 20th century?

At a European Psychoanalytic Institute conference in Helsinki recently a colleague I met in a lift turned to me and said, "What would we talk about if we didn't have the [Freud Wars] crisis?" He meant it was not a real problem but a pretend problem. He shared my opinion that there will always be a struggle between repression and insight. I don't think the outside world is more hostile to psychoanalysis than it was in the beginning. I think resistance is a natural reaction that Freud had already foreseen and experienced. When he was confronted with this powerful ambivalence, he explained it as the difference between a flirtation with psychoanalysis and a marriage with it, with all its difficulties and duties. Other psychotherapies have always promised to be able to do the same as analysis, only quicker and less expensively. That is a flirtation, I think. But we should also realize there are situations where other short term therapies are necessary. it must not always be a full-fledged great analysis but also there can be, if indicated, short term therapies

Q: Studies show that analysis works but so do other therapies, under differing circumstances.

It is difficult. I think it is often impossible to foresee what the person will do with his new possibilities after analysis. It can go very well and go awry. It's not so easy to criticize any particular therapy.

Q: What are the most frustrating aspects of dealing with the press and the public today?

I think we analysts are not used to dealing with ordinary everyday questions, We are not prepared for it. We are too specialized in our thinking. We are prepared for sitting behind the couch, not how to speak with a journalist who wants short clear answers.

I think analysts and journalists both have much to learn, I think we analysts are surprised that we often don't recognize what the journalists are writing. It is sometimes nothing to do with what we have said. They write something quite different, and then we have a problem. But there is an international effort among analyst to make themselves aware of what the journalists need. And they need clear answers. We don't give clear answers. (Laughing), They want

answers quickly. We don't act quickly. We are even proud not to do so. We have to learn to make compromises.

Our outreach program analyst Franciska Ylander invited a top journalist who told us what she would need from the analyst. There are, of course, some journalists who have some idea what analysis is like. The first thing I learned was, If you don't have the time to prepare yourself, don't give the interview. If you are asked to do it nevertheless, then say no a second time. A journalist interview is not a place for free association. One really has to think over what one is doing – and what we did until now was a bit arrogant, to feel we can answer everything every time. We cannot. We can with a topic with which we are well acquainted. Maybe we can pick out an important aspect of a certain problem so that the journalists can use it, but it is not so in every case. I think that we should listen "something we should already know from our profession" to journalists. And maybe also listen to their fears, which we might detect when they are speaking. Maybe also take into consideration what pressures they are under. In Italy a group of colleagues took time once a month to speak with journalists about ongoing topics, about whether psychoanalysis have something to say or not about it. So they provide a space where journalists and psychoanalysts can meet and become acquainted with each other.

Q: Does analysis still mirror the standard New Yorker cartoon of the analyist scribbling notes behind a babbling patient on a couch?

I don't think so. Some will take notes and I understand that. I sometime do this myself. [Donald] Winnicott said he could concentrate much better when taking notes. On the other hand, the notebook is something placed between the patient and oneself. We have learned to watch carefully our own counter-transference [personal feelings aroused in the analytical situation]. So some analysts prefer to concentrate on these feelings and not on the writing. I know also of a European colleague who conducts analysis while the patient is sitting on a chairs across from the analyst. So it is not possible to take notes. There are good reasons why the analyst can think it is important for patients to see the analyst and get a picture of him and his reactions.

Q: I know people using psychoanalytic techniques in group therapy.

I know people using psychoanalytic techniques in group therapy. There regrettably is a reluctance among analysts to address group processes and treatments It would be useful if we could all be more open to what group analysts have found. But I am not very hopeful in this regard. There are not usually very good relationships between analysts and group analysts because the latter often have not had such a long and careful individual training as the analysts

Q: So group psychoanalysis is possible.

I am sure that it is possible but there is also a lot of resistance against it, including among analysts. There are fields too where psychoanalysis can be a help, such as in forensics. . I took part in supervision sessions about hardened and disturbed young criminals in prison and I was deeply impressed at how the fate of a young person can be decided, how treatment can help.

But it is a question of how one can persuade the public to spend money to help in research and so on.

Q: Let's talk about your book on Freud and the Press. You found that Freud's self-presentation of his early years of analytical exploration were not really a time of splendid isolation, as he portrayed it.

It is interesting that Freud exaggerated the period of loneliness. But I think everyone can understand why. Here was a new science and he had to protect it from threats outside and from inside. He also wasn't sure about his new science, and he could not be. Then there also were his expectations. If you think about his letters to his fiancé. He was very much taken with the myth of the hero and to a hero it is necessary always to be in danger. And so he felt more in danger than he often was

Q: He needed to feel that way

It was certainly not always in accord with the facts. But even contemporaries recognized that a genius had to separate himself, and feel alone to perform the work. He later wrote in Moses and Monotheism that a new idea takes at least one generation to be established.

Q: Werner Heisenberg and Thomas Kuhn later said much the same thing about the history of Physics.

And Freud said this very clearly too. He used the examples of Darwin and others. On the other hand, he did not correct what he said about psychoanalysis, which took less than a generation to succeed. He published in 1895 Studies in Hysteria and by 1908 the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society was founded and the first International Congress took place. In 1910 the International Psychoanalytic Association was established. So 15 years is certainly less than a generation. I think the reason for the short time was that analysis often touches something important in people – something repressed that is relieved by a psychoanalytic idea at least for a short time. And this relief can be experienced as pleasure. . But there will be resistance because it is necessary for us to repress some things. So we never have an easy context. in analysis. In History of Psychoanalytic Movement Freud does say that analysis has established itself as a research method and as a clinical instrument –so he did see that there was not only rejection.

Q: There is a notion that Freud out of pride failed to make use of important contacts in Austria, and that if he made more efforts he would have gained notice and honors earlier.

I think one cannot overlook the Jewish problem, which still matters. It lasted a long time, but in Austria everything lasts a bit longer.

Q: Too true. What was your overall sense of his treatment in press,? It wasn't all positive.

Press coverage was highly ambivalent – a blend of interest and criticism. The constant criticisms were about the open approach to sexuality, about not being scientific enough, and that the analysts would exclude others and were too arrogant. The newspapers denigrated Freud's arguments about sexuality. The writers expressed concern that children should be troubled about sexual matters. One wrote that every healthy youngster undergoes this development and never made a fuss about it and now Freud comes along and makes a fuss about it. It is a complaint that has not changed

Q: What about Jeffrey Masson's charge that Freud abandoned the seduction theory for fantasy not on the basis of evidence but out of sheer cowardice?

In seduction theory everything is outside, the threat comes outside the person. Seduction from outside is indeed a possibility. The seduction can be fantasy or it can be reality. It has to be decided case to case. We have to have our eyes open, and not be closed to anything. Freud helped to open our eyes in this respect but had to balance it again. Something which impressed me is that Freud took reactions of his colleagues seriously Maybe I expected him to be more arrogant than he was but he really thought about criticisms. He considered if he made a mistake. He thought it was quite astonishing that suddenly he found everywhere there was a seduction at the root of neurosis – until he found part of it was in the head of the patients. It was not always outside.He found too that the so-called seducers conveyed something in their unconscious, a feeling which was interpreted by the patient in a way which was experienced as a seduction But nevertheless there were also real seductions too.

Q: Freud never said otherwise.

When we are attending to reasons and causes outside ourselves which overwhelm us. It is a way of pushing our inner life away again, and, when we do so, we lose a lot of possibilities by doing that.

Q: By doing so we deny our own small but vital part of responsibility in what happens, or reacting to what happens.

Yes, exactly. In crisis intervention and so-called trauma therapy they say okay you are a poor victim and harm was done to you. Come to me and I will help. This is making a promise that an analyst would not make because he would guide the person so as to see what part was one's own contribution to the problem he suffers from.

Q: And thereby establish some control over the problem by establishing control over oneself.

Persons who feel under severe pressure like to hear that they are not guilty of anything. So there is a silence about what is inside them. The analyst will not promise to prove all the bad is outside. He will not be able to sanction this.

Q: The Freud Wars critics first blamed Freud for concealing the level of real abuse

and then when many 'memories of abuse turned out to be false the same critics smartly turned around to say that this too was all the fault of Freud because of his concept of repression, which they said was an active repression much like amnesia.

So one has to keep both possibilities in mind – fantasy and reality – and treat them with great care. Repression is very important but it is not the only thing. Some authors are so rigid in the way they write about repression that they have only one trait they follow. I think this is what is picked up by the public. Such work should be checked by analysts who knows the dangers and who can understand why a person tries to guide the concept in one direction that can do more harm than good.

Q: In great traumas ' life-endangering accidents, battlefields, catastrophes and so – it seems a conscious act to repress memory.

So that only in hypnosis or in therapy can one begin to recover it, however untrustworthy the recalled memory may be. I think there is some awareness that one tries to push away and to repress things that are unbearable. But that also gives one a lot of hope that something can be solved later, if not now. This unfortunately is not my original idea but comes from Winnicott who says repression can be healthy, it can be a useful delay enabling [therapeutic] work later which cannot be done now. But it is interesting that you mention hypnosis because this was also a way to bring memories out, done by somebody from outside So one should question these methods. Hypnosis can in some situations be helpful but it is not the end of the journey. Even if by hypnosis some person were able to see something out which cannot come out in some other way, the person still would have slowly to integrate what has happened.

Q: So repression must be handled with the great care.

A lifting of repression can be really shocking. It is one thing to lift one's own repression and another to go utside the consulting room to damage the repression of a lot of other persons who have not asked for analysis and not asked for a lifting of repression A lot of harm can be done. Maybe that process is in the direction of health but maybe it is a developing catastrophe. Because when people are suddenly confronted with the truth of material they have repressed themselves they would need help. I behind my couch cannot do anything.

Q: The accusation may not be true either

Yes. Given these deep feelings of the person it is sometime not clear whether it true or not.

Q: Critics point out that some analysts too readily regard any criticism as "resistance", sometime it probably is, but certainly sometimes it is not.

I think it would be helpful if we restricted the term resistance mainly to the consulting room, clinical situations and theoretical discussions.

Q: What of politics. Does analysis have any role to play in politics? Psychoanalysis is

fundamentally a very subversive science. It's not there to stabilize, or underpin any society. Since Freud's time analysts have operated at every point in the political spectrum.

Like any science it should try to keep out of partisan politics. If it is used for only one partisan side, it is not good either for analysis nor for the side it takes. Nevertheless there are moments when we might have the ability to make some things clear, such as the role of projections and so on in the policies we see. I think we can provide knowledge but we shouldn't peddle ourselves in politics.

Q: What about the question of testability, testing the effectiveness of analysis? What is going on in that realm?

It is a very, very difficult situation because it would be easy if one could concentrate on typical symptoms which one might manage. Some of them might be managed by different types of therapy, but psychoanalysis often turns upside down the whole personality. So it is also a question of how the whole personality develops, which is not easy for the usual scientific methods to gauge Psychoanalysis is much more than only a treatment.

Q: Say more about that.

I like very much a remark by a colleague Michael Parsons who says that a person who starts psychoanalysis must not yet know why he needs it. In some ways it is easier if the person is very disturbed. But it is difficult when a person is not happy and does not even know if he or she is allowed to be happy. After five years of analysis he might be quite a different person who worked through old feelings and wishes and thoughts. All this may have changed. I am not very much in favor of testability because I think it is like in art: how do you show the development of the artist? It's not easy to do. You have ideas about it but it is nothing you can test. Nonetheless I respect colleagues who try to make links to the positivist science and to test progress. One can test the absence of symptoms. One can even test how great a measure an impression is by projective tests. One can do some things. And, of course, we sometimes need to look up from our methods to have a new view on them, to see more. But it is my view that the possibility to test psychoanalysis is very limited.

Q: The Victorian climate of prudishness is gone. If so, people say the types and sources of neurosis have changed too

I think this view is suspect. In making sexuality seemingly so public the impression is generated that sexual satisfaction is so much easier to get. It is simply not true. We are again confronted maybe not so much with inhibitions from the outside but with the anxieties of the parents and so on. I think there is a return of Puritanism, What concerns me even more is that analysts often share this Puritanism in their selection of theories. These theories are much more concerned with security, and with abuse and trauma and anything which originates from outside. But they are also focused on the union between the mother and child, omitting the sexual life of the mother. The Mother is primarily the fusion with the child but where is the

mother who is a woman with desires?

Q: Madonna-whore again?

Rather Madonna without the whore. I think there has been less change than was advertised. I think we again have split off the mother who is a sexually mature woman with her own desires with regard to the father. There is a lot of denial. We have a relatively uninhibited sexual culture on the surface but inside it a lot of split-offs, which is evident even if one concentrates on baby observation. In this splitting off of the woman of desire from the mother of fusion the issue of destructiveness arises, the antagonist of love. There is the little girl who hates the mother when the mother disturbs her desire for the father. And then her guilt feelings regarding her antagonism to the mother, and so on.

As Freud said ' quoting our Viennese poet Johan Nestroy – progress always is half as big as it appears to be. So I think things seem to have changed more than they really have because repressed material always comes through the back door. We can't avoid it and we shouldn't take the surface as everything.

Q: What are you currently writing?

I am writing a book about separation. 'Melody of Separation' – a psychoanalytic study of separation anxiety'

Q: Did you say m-a-l-a-d-y or m-e-l-o-d-y of separation?

Melody, as in a song. It sounds romantic. But actually I think it is only our defense as analysts against separation which can be experienced as terror. It is tremendous fear of being separated. In analysis separation anxiety plays an important role. It mirrors earlier failures in the environment. In analysis every nonresponse of the parents can turn up, which itself was a kind of separation.

Q: You've also written about Harry Potter, rather famously separated from his parents.

There is a total split-off of the ideal parents ' a magic couple – who died and lost Harry. They cannot do anything wrong to Harry anymore and they are still helpful from heaven or wherever they are. So there are these idealized parents and then there are the split-off silly parents. Terribly silly people. So every young person has a choice in this split-off and can remake his family as he pleases, falling in love again with idealized parents and know the bad ones are those from whom a separation is necessary.

The books, of course, also appeal to magical thinking, which is full of pleasure. a special quality of the books is the mixture of fantasy and reality.

Q: Is Hagrid a father figure or another adolescent?

Hagrid is a very powerful figure but at the same time very uncertain of himself. This is very useful for every youth; their uncertainty is projected onto Hagrid. So young people can take it or leave it to identify with him. The books are a kind of treatment they can chose for themselves, how and whom they identify with.

Q: What about Hermione who is so self-confident and commanding?

And she wins the love of Harry by being a 'chap.' So her role of sexual identity is not fixed yet, which makes their relationship easier. She slowly comes into the role of a girl. There is a lot of sexuality in this book. It can be a pleasure without becoming conscious.

Q: The game of quidditch?

There are a lot of masturbation fantasies in there. Zooming around on those broomsticks. It's a bit out of control, a bit of pleasure, a bit of fighting. But neither the parents nor the teachers recognize it.

Q: What happens when Harry and his friends grow up?

They will find real ways to satisfaction and not rely so much on magic thinking. Not long ago an Italian colleague Andreas Giannakoulas elaqborated that all our pleasure as grownups has to have some connection with infantile pleasures and experiences. We can only hope that Harry Potter as a grownup finds his way back to infantile, but controlled, pleasures, controlled in order to keep them longer

Q: I'm turning from witches brews to pharmacology, to the degree there's any difference. We live in an age of intensively advertised 'better living through chemistry." Magic pills will suppress, if not cure, what ails you, and that's enough. Does drugging people make them more amenable to psychotherapy? Can those who are too violent or too depressive or too passive now have better therapy?

I am not sure about this because one main requirement to do analysis is that people make their own decision to do it. So to stop violence by killing somebody's vitality, how should it make him more accessible for psychoanalysis ? I am not sure about it. Maybe the very first time it will give the person a break from being out of their mind totally, but it is not enough for analysis, I think.

I know that there are serious efforts to combine the two. But the few cases where I had patients who were also with a psychiatrist who thought it necessary to give them medication, it did not last long. They wanted to have a clearer mind and to work unaided. They felt they could be more themselves without drugs. By choice they decided to leave it. On the other hand when I am on vacation sometimes they go back to it.

Q. Any thoughts on measures that will improve the contribution of psychoanalysts?

Freud suggested that working in analysis there are many dangers for analysts and they should return every fifth year for their own analyses. We don’t know how often this happen because the colleagues who take charge of it are confidential, which is very correct. I think the possibility is not used enough. I also think that an analyst cannot acquire his capacity once and forever: he has to brush up now and again.- and in some way our patients help us with this because we have to watch ourselves. But there are also a lot of blind spots where we need the help of colleagues to regain our capacities.

Antonioni’s The Passenger: Dead End Journey

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I’ve always loved the elusively intricate films of the Italian director, Michelangelo Antonioni (e.g., *L’Eclisse, Red Desert*) and seen them countless times. In Antonioni’s words his films “are born in the same way that poetry is born for poets.” His films evolve, in his words, from “everything that we read, hear, think, and see.” And at a particular moment it all turns into concrete images, and then the images are shaped into stories.

Antonioni’s stories are usually set in a landscape or site that he wants to explore (e.g., the island in *L’Avventura,* Milan in *La Notte*). And his characters’ emotional life is evoked through their reaction to the visual world-the image-rather than conveyed through dialogue or exposition. He has such great faith in the suggestiveness and power of the image that he rarely uses music in his films, though ambient sound of, for example, the wind in the desert or in the trees of a green park, and the cacophony of the stock exchange play a significant role in his work. And the images are constructed in such a way that they never project a simple message, but they usually observe and explore “the thoughts and feelings that motivate a man or woman in their march to happiness or death.”

Antonioni’s words about “the march” his characters are embarked on, aptly describes the subject of his brilliant and mysterious *The Passenger.* It’s a film I saw when it opened in 1975, but then disappeared from view for the last 19 years. The reasons for it vanishing make for a complicated story. Antonioni brought the film in just under two-and-a-half hours, but it was still too long for its distributor MGM, which demanded a less than two hours version for the North American market, that excluded two crucial scenes. Consequently, Antonioni felt his film had been mutilated.

Despite Antonioni’s condemnation, the film’s star, Jack Nicholson, negotiated a purchase of *The Passenger’s* negative in 1983, so he could protect a film he loved from potential corporate malfeasance and exercise some control over its proper exhibition. He obtained global rights to all versions in 1986. Subsequently, Nicholson was unhappy with all suitors for both a theatrical and ensuing DVD release until discussions began with Sony Pictures Classics in early 2003, with a deal finalized in May 2004.

It’s now been finally released in the director’s preferred cut for a limited theatrical run. And should be seen by any filmgoer who wants something more than a high concept escape film or a placid, literate middlebrow work that makes few aesthetic or intellectual demands on the viewer. Antonioni is the type of director who makes films whose complexity can subvert the viewer’s expectations and disrupt their equanimity. And *The Passenger* is one film whose

meaning is never underlined, and that cannot be reduced to a simple formula or bromide.

The Passenger has a Hollywood star, Jack Nicholson, playing its protagonist. However, it's not the iconic, manic, bigger-than-life "Jack" (the ultimate American movie star), but an actor who is capable of losing himself in his dry, despairing, affectless character. Nicholson seamlessly turns himself into David Locke, a reporter doing research for a documentary film about a guerrilla war against an authoritarian dictator in the Chad desert, who is totally stymied in his work. In pursuit of the story he follows leads that go nowhere, and his jeep gets stuck in the desert-a metaphor for his being mired in a life without direction or pleasure.

By chance he gains the opportunity to change identities with an acquaintance that he resembles, David Robertson (Chuck Mulvehill), a solitary, poetic gunrunner committed to supplying arms to the rebels who has suddenly died. Locke who has an emotionally dead marriage, and whose life is weighed down by self-hate and a sense of profound aloneness-makes a sudden choice to literally bury his own self and adopt Robertson's life and identity without really knowing what the consequences or dangers that radical act may involve. (The film also seems to suggest that our identities are so undefined that we can drop our old one and assume another with little reflection.)

The Passenger may at first look like a thriller-albeit one with long takes and little suspense. However, it's not the kind of film where we are primarily concerned if the guerrilla group's representatives, Locke's wife, or his producer-all of whom are on his trail- catch up with him. Antonioni has never been a director where plotting, and external action and tension are primary, though there are more of these elements in *The Passenger* than is his norm. His aim in *The Passenger* was to "reduce suspense to a minimum," leaving just a bit of a residue to possibly titillate the viewer. Though Antonioni's films rarely trade on sensation to elicit audience attention.

Central to his films are the emotional states of his characters. And despite the detached Locke's involvement in making a documentary about a guerrilla war and interviewing a murderous dictator who executes the opposition while hiding behind bland, official rhetoric-the political conflict is peripheral to the film's main thrust. In fact, its volatility accentuates how remote and alienated a man Locke is.

Antonioni is interested in politics "in his own way, and tries to highlight certain problems and contradictions." And his films place his characters in very specific social worlds that have an impact on them. But in none of his films (except *Zabriskie Point*) is he trying to make a direct social statement: "I am not a moralist, and my films are neither denunciations or sermons."

The world can be unjust and Antonioni often implies that, but Locke is not a man who can become a politically committed gunrunner. That would be a different film, made by a director like Pontecorvo (*The Battle of Algiers*) or Oliver Stone. And the center of *The Passenger* is Locke's existential journey, not the nature of the social and political world.

Consequently, what's most significant about *The Passenger* is its depiction of Locke's feelings of desolation. As is his wont, Antonioni never tries to define what the particular sources of Locke's despair are. We do know that his torment can't be reduced to some childhood trauma or as merely the result of a bad marriage. Locke's anguish is like most of Antonioni's protagonists existential in nature-a man or woman live in a changing world that makes human connection very difficult and whose inner self can't cope with the nature of the world. His characters are trapped in an emptiness that they feel is too powerful to escape. The feeling of insignificance just seems to palpably stick to their skin.

To illuminate what Locke is feeling it's sufficient for Locke to drift from one striking setting to another-from the luminous and forbidding African desert to London's Bloomsbury and a graceful Georgian Square, to Barcelona's Ramblas and Palaccio Guell, and then on to the orange groves of Southern Spain. Antonioni has always been interested in using stunningly composed landscapes, urbanscapes, and domestic interiors to express his characters' emotional and spiritual condition and the personal journeys they undertake. Here, Locke is seen in long shot wandering alone in the vast barrenness of the desert, the impoverished bleakness of the African town, and amidst the architectural, sculpted singularity of Gaudi's Barcelona Cathedral. None of these sites grant any solace or even elicit a genuine reaction from Locke-heightening Locke's sense of isolation and meaninglessness.

On the road Locke picks up a young, itinerant architecture student-a sweet, understated, somewhat difficult to decipher woman without a name (played in an uninflected monotone by Maria Schneider) who he gets pleasure having sex and spending time with. But she only offers a brief respite from a life that no new identity or woman can transform. Locke plaintively asking her to leave, "what are you doing with me?" For Locke reality is either repellent or he's become blind to it, and death the only possible solution. By the film's conclusion his journey has ended where it began, in an austere hotel room at a dead end.

Antonioni's unique style works beautifully in *The Passenger*. The dream-like long takes, especially the final seven minute one where the dusty town square is seen through the barred window of Locke's hotel room-evokes a world that he is barred from. There is nothing romantic or sentimental about the space that we see, but it conveys a sense of an ongoing life that Locke has chosen to retreat from. There is also Antonioni's eye for aesthetic detail-for whitewashed walls of buildings, and vividly colored backgrounds like yellow doors and red car seats. He is a director of great formal rigor and beauty, whose style effortlessly suits his vision. The slow rhythm of the film may put off some viewers, but it forces them to be more observant, and understand there is nothing accidental in the images that Antonioni constructs.

I have provided one way of seeing *The Passenger*, but I know it is a film that repeated screenings would reveal other dimensions and possible ways of seeing. It's far too rich and resonant a film to be understood too quickly.

Poetry by Baron Wormser & Francis Combes

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

Baron Wormser
“Carthage Gets Mail”
“Carthage’s Diary”

Francis Combes
“Spain of Blood and Jasmine”
(translated from French by Jack Hirschman)

Carthage Gets Mail

Citizens write letters to Carthage.
Mostly they want a smiling, signed photograph.
A husband or wife may leave,
The IRS may be auditing them,
The car may be broke
But the President is there smiling.

Now and then Carthage likes to stroll
Among the eager interns filling envelopes.
He’s not a Catholic but he feels like the Pope,
The way they want him to put a hand on their shoulders
And say a word to them.

He stops at one desk where a young woman
Is reading a letter someone has written by hand.
It’s blue ballpoint and looks hasty.
It’s not really a letter, just one line–
“What do you do with the dead children?”
Someone has written asking him that–
“What do you do with the dead children?”

Carthage shakes his head–
There are going to be people who don’t understand what war is,
People who are weak and confused,
People who think the world should be perfect.

The young woman looks up tentatively at Carthage.

“Here,” he says, “let me personally sign
That photograph.” She nods thankfully.
Carthage writes his name over the signature
That already is embossed on his picture.
He has to admit he looks pretty good in that picture.

The interns are all watching him.
The young woman’s lips are pursed as if she is going
To start crying from gratitude.
Carthage smiles easily
And waves a hand for the camera that never grieves.

Carthage’s Diary

Time is looking over his shoulder
And talking trash about tomorrow.
Like steam, Carthage feels he is evaporating.

He keeps a diary to hold his importance in place.
He is building a little monument.
The problem is he doesn’t know what to say.

He could write about what he had for breakfast.
He had an extra waffle with that good, artificial syrup on it.
He has to confess that seems trivial.

Everyone eats waffles.
He’s given orders to invade a few countries.
That’s not something everyone has done.

It doesn’t feel like much, though.
You’re excited for a few days
And then you’re back to thinking about waffles.

He can’t walk in and start talking waffles
To the generals and admirals.
They want to talk about battlefields.

Death is taking super-sized bites out of time.
Tall monuments have been blown up.
Carthage sighs. He can erase everything.

Baron Wormser is the author of six books of poetry and the coauthor of two books on teaching poetry. His poems in this issue of *Logos* originally appeared in *Carthage* (The Illuminated Sea Press, 2005), which can be found online at www.janestreet.com/press. He

teaches in the Stonecoast MFA program and at the Frost Place in Franconia, New Hampshire, where he co-directs the Frost Place Conference on Poetry and Teaching.

* * *

Spain of Blood and Jasmine (translated from French by Jack Hirschman)

Spain, of beaten leather
men carry as scarves neck-wise
with heavy guns in their hands
They stamp their feet blow on their fingers
to ward off the cold coming back up from the south
with Franco's columns
Hitler and Mussolini's airplanes
the cold of the black order
of the defenders of big landowners
and the church and the tradition
which wages war against life under the motto
Viva la muerte.

The silvery
olive-tree tops hold bodies of the tortured
put to the rack
but there are woods of justice
in the sorrow of the people.

On the plain, orange-trees
can no longer carry their crucified suns
in their arms.
O Spain of sweetness
Spain of the duende of violets
Spain of jasmine
of forged iron and wild mint
Spain of Federico, Miguel, Rafael
Spain of poets and goat-herders…
Still you've known hope
lorries rustling with red flags
traversing dry riverbeds
and crossing hills and valleys
with scarlet songs
and roars of laughter.
You've known youth's living water drunk without
putting your lips to the glass
the big sensitive drum of brotherhood

the warm friendship of the peoples
Teachers, workers or students
who've left their homes
to fly to the aid of your republic.

Spain, you became the home of the peoples
the motherland of the workers of the whole world.
You were defeated by the weapons of Franco, Hitler,
Mussolini
by the lack of help of the supercilious democracies
and by your own divisions.

You bled along the way
they abandoned you in a ditch
like mule-carrion.

Spain of wire-guarded years
Spain of the sick dove in the confessional
Spain of pride tossed into the air
in the midst of tourists
like a cowboy hat
during the corrida.
Spain, you've left us the memory of a people
and the action of the Brigades
an epic of volunteer
soldiers without precedent
an action of international solidarity
humanity suddenly conscious of itself.

You'll always look after your wounded flags
the sun of dignity
the blood of revolt
and your deep mauve sorrow.

But the people aren't a bull in a ring;
men can plant banderillos in its back
make the red poppies of its blood
explode over the inky night of its spine
force it to its knees on the ground
thrust at it and drive
a sword between its two eyes
but they can never kill it
because though beaten down, vanquished, tortured
the people will always get up again

and sometimes will even arrive dressed in light
to gore their torturers
and dance on *their* disaster.

–Francis Combes
(Translated from French by Jack Hirschman)

Francis Combes lives with his wife and children in the "red belt," a working class suburb of Paris. He has published 15 books of his own poems, most recently *Le carnet bleu de Chine*, a poetic diary from a recent trip to China. A founder of the publishing cooperative, "Le temps des cerises," which publishes both poetry and politics titles, he has also translated several poets–including the Russian poet, Vladimir Mayakovsky–into French. The poem appearing in English translation in this issue of *Logos* was originally published in his collection, *Cause commune*, a book of poems about the history of utopia, revolution, and hope.

Jack Hirschman has published more than 100 books and chapbooks of poetry and essays, half of which are translations of poets from nine different languages. He is an associate editor of *Left Curve* magazine and editor of the volume, *Art on the Line: Essays by Artists about the Point Where Their Art and Activism Intersect* (Curbstone Press, 2002, www.curbstone.org). His book of selected poems, *Front Lines*, was published by City Lights (www.citylights.com) in 2002, and he has recently been named Poet Laureate of the city of San Francisco.

Letter To Matthew Abraham On beyond Chutzpah Review

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

To the Editor:

It is difficult to write a rebuttal against a writer whose own article so readily discredits itself. Matthew Abraham, an English professor, uses such outlandish and intemperate language, makes such wild historical fabrications, and parrots so many verifiably false accusations, that I cannot help but suspect that he has written his review of Norman Finkelstein's *Beyond Chutzpah* as an example for his students on how not to write well. His article reads like a cheap agitprop parody. Before I begin, then, I will let Abraham, the Rachel Corrie Courage in Teaching Award winner, speak for himself.

Abraham concurs with Finkelstein that "American Jewish Zionists" are involved in "a lucrative extortion racket" designed to enrich and shield ourselves "from much-deserved scrutiny in [our] toadying for special dispensations as oppressed 'chosen people.'" Abraham says that the Anti-Defamation League is a "U.S. Front operations for the Israeli government" engaged in "a form of ruthless grave robbery for the glorification of that massive land-based U.S. aircraft carrier, Israel." Abraham places full blame on "America and Israel" for "block[ing] resolution" of the Middle East conflict. He calls Israel a "crazy state," concludes that it is not a democracy, and places the full blame on "America and Israel" for "block[ing] resolution" of the Middle East conflict." The "historical record," writes Abraham, "confirms that the PLO and the Arab states have overwhelmingly been in favor of peace." He repeats Arafat's Bantustan accusation – that Palestine was offered cantons of land, rather than the contiguous state on over 95% of the occupied territories that the Camp David maps show – and twice insists that Israel has ethnically cleansed Palestinians from Israel, as if simply repeating the accusation were enough to make it true. My favorite Abraham claim is his wild assertion that "American Jewish Zionists" (there's that phrase again) "blocked" Holocaust survivors from coming to America! I've heard of many "Jewish conspiracies," but this is the first time I've heard of a Jewish conspiracy to keep Jews out of America.

Then there is Abraham's breathless praise of Finkelstein "a well-respected, Princeton trained political scientist with several internationally recognized books to his credit." Hardly. While Finkelstein's books have found a welcoming audience in the neo-Nazi demographic, mainstream media sources have uniformly dismissed Finkelstein as a Jew-hating crank, and he has been fired from several universities for shoddy scholarship and abusive treatment of students. In 2000, Finkelstein published a scandalous screed, called The Holocaust Industry, in which he railed against American Jewish leaders who were seeking justice for Holocaust survivors. In his book and in public lectures, Finkelstein accused Jewish leaders of being part

of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, whose members included Elie Wiesel, Leon Uris, Steven Spielberg, Stuart Eizenstat, Abba Eban, Abraham Foxman, Edgar Bronfman, and Burt Neuborne. The problem was that Finkelstein simply made up his alleged facts, his quotations, and his citations. Moreover, since he cannot read German, and since many of the most important sources relating to the Holocaust are in German, he faked his research. This is what University of Chicago Professor Peter Novick, whose work *The Holocaust in American Life* Finkelstein characterized as "the initial stimulus for [his] book," said about Finkelstein:

> As concerns particular assertions made by Finkelstein . . . the appropriate response is not (exhilarating) "debate" but (tedious) examination of his footnotes. Such an examination reveals that many of those assertions are pure invention. . . . No facts alleged by Finkelstein should be assumed to be really facts, no quotation in his book should be assumed to be accurate, without taking the time to carefully compare his claims with the sources he cites.

Novick called *The Holocaust Industry* "trash" and a "twenty-first century updating of the 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion.'" Omer Bartov, who reviewed *The Holocaust Industry* for *The New York Times*, called it an "irrational and insidious" "conspiracy theory," "verg[ing] on paranoia," full of "dubious rhetoric and faulty logic," "indifference to historical facts," and "sensational 'revelations' and outrageous accusations." In sum, Bartov called the book "a novel variation on the anti-Semitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*." Marc Fisher, a columnist for the Washington Post, observed that "Norman Finkelstein [is] a writer celebrated by neo-Nazi groups for his Holocaust revisionism and comparisons of Israel to Nazi Germany."

In his many pages of vague invective against "American Zionist Jews," Abraham manages to level two substantive charges against me, both of which are easily disproved. First, Abraham's claims that I "wag[ed] an astounding campaign to kill off Finkelstein's retort [*Beyond Chutzpah*]." But as I wrote to the University of California Press: I have no interest in censoring any publication. But I do insist that a book, 'a large part of which is devoted to Alan Dershowitz' has been checked for accuracy and that all appropriate measures have been taken to assure that its biased and defamatory author does not include within it maliciously false information. Among Finkelstein's defamations are his allegations that I "almost certainly didn't write" *The Case for Israel*, "and perhaps [he] didn't even read it prior to publication." Finkelstein even suggests that all of my books are written for me by the Israeli Mossad: "[I]t's sort of like a Hallmark line for Nazis….[T]hey churn them out so fast that he has now reached a point where he doesn't even read them."

Finkelstein has attempted to frame *Beyond Chutzpah*'s publication as a triumph for academic freedom. This dispute, though, has never been about academic freedom. Nobody ever tried to prevent Finkelstein from publishing his bigoted falsehoods. The dispute has always been about academic standards. In order to deflect attention away from their lack of academic standards and hard-left anti-Israel bias, Finkelstein and his publisher have lied about the issue of academic freedom. Nobody has ever tried to censor Finkelstein's drivel. He can always publish

it with presses that acknowledge their anti-Israel bias. The issue is, and has always been, one of academic standards: how could the University of California Press publish a work so lacking in standards, so filled with misquotations, falsifications, and faked data by a failed academic with a well deserved reputation for the "pure invention" of his sources? No objective university press would have published this sequel to a book the *New York Times* called a "variation on the anti-Semitic forgery, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*."

Second, Abraham writes, "Rarely has anyone committed to upholding a party line exceeded Dershowitz' loyalty to one revered state, and that state is Israel." Relatedly, he claims that "pro-Zionist Jews" lie about anti-Semitism because we are afraid of being "no longer perceived as the world's greatest victims." These charges come straight from Finkelstein, who alleges that Jews will cry "anti-Semite" at anyone who criticizes Israel. Finkelstein subtitles his book "On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History," explaining his thesis as follows: "Like the Holocaust, 'anti-Semitism' is an ideological weapon to deflect justified criticism of Israel and, concomitantly, powerful Jewish interests. In its current usage, 'anti-Semitism,' alongside the "war against terrorism," serves as a cloak for a massive assault on international law and human rights.

This allegation, though, is belied by a simple scan of the themes and theses of my own books. Only eight years ago, I wrote an entire book discussing challenges facing American Jews now that institutional anti-Semitism is all but nonexistent and personal anti-Semitism has been relegated to the marginalized extremes of the political spectrum. As I put it in *The Vanishing American Jew*, "The thesis of this book is that the long epoch of Jewish persecution is finally coming to an end. . . ." And in both *The Case for Israel* and *The Case for Peace,* I was clear that criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism are not the same thing. Considering my extensive and well-documented history of criticizing particular Israeli policies and politicians, Finkelstein's obsessive focus on me and my book ensures that Beyond Chutzpah amounts to nothing more than an attempt to blow over a straw man of Finkelstein's – and Abraham's – own construction.

Abraham praises as "intrepid" Finkelstein's underlying question, "Do American Zionist Jews, *qua* Jews, use their ethnic privilege to advance Israel's morally-bankrupt agenda toward increasing militarization in its ethnic cleansing and annexation of the West Bank?" He answers with a resounding yes. It's a shame that a professor of rhetoric, who repeatedly accuses others of "toeing the party line," would rely on so many tired and false clichés in the service of his extremist anti-Jewish (or as Abraham would have it, his anti-"American Zionist Jew") agenda.

Responding to Complaints about Beyond Chutzpah Review

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

My review essay of Norman G. Finkelstein's book, *Beyond Chutzpah: The Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*, stirred Alan Dershowitz, Berel Dov Lerner, Maoz Azaryahu, and Jason Jungreis to write complaints to the *Logos* editors, alleging that my review: 1) was biased and vastly overstated its case; 2) contained historical inaccuracies; 3) had an ideological affinity with Finkelstein's views, and that therefore, since I also am not a historian, I should not have been allowed to write the review; 4) that I have made common cause with Islamicists and fascists who seek to destroy Israel; 5) and contrived an accusation against Israel of "ethnic cleansing." According to this line of thinking, it is only Israeli Jews who have been "ethnically cleansed" as evidenced by the Israeli government's recent disengagement from Gaza.

I shall answer each complaint in turn. If nothing else, these letters reveal that the old reliable alibis, justifying Israel's subhuman treatment of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, are facing a severe legitimation crisis. First, permit me to apologize to clear-eyed and rational members of the Logos audience for my having to clarify what is wholly transparent to those familiar with the hoary tactics of apologists for state violence.

1) The charge of bias is always an interesting one. Appearing "evenhanded" and "objective are transparent attempts to hide the imbalance of power between Israel and Palestinians. I stated in my review that Israel's apologists systematically have had to distort the diplomatic and historical record with respect to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and, until recently Gaza, because the facts plainly do not correspond with the requisite propaganda image. Israel and the United States have blocked a diplomatic settlement for nearly thirty-eight years. If to express this truism makes one "an anti-Israel activist," then so be it. Those interested in fully rounded scholarship on the diplomatic and historical record, however, would do well to consult and consider Ilan Pappe's *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, Naseer Aruri's *Dishonest Broker: The Role of the United States in Palestine and Israel*, Steven Spiegel's *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy from Truman to Reagan*, Charles Enderlin's *Shattered Dreams: The Failure of the Peace Process in the Middle East*, and Noam Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*.

2) I'd be more than happy to correspond with any *Logos* reader who would kindly point out where my review was historically inaccurate. I wrote to Mr. Lerner and Mr. Jungreis seeking clarification on this score but never received a response. I did have brief exchanges with Mr. Azaryahu and with Mr. Dershowitz's research assistant, Mitch Webber. Other than further knee jerk polemics and ad hominem attacks, these exchanges unfortunately went nowhere. In his recent book, *In The Shadow of the Holocaust: The Struggle Between Jews in Zionists in the*

Aftermath of World War II, Yossef Grodzinsky carefully documents the outright coercive efforts to which the Zionist movement resorted to bring Jewish 'displaced persons' to Palestine at the end of WW II. Although Leonard Dinnerstein's *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* leaves open for interpretation the exact role American Zionist Jews played in blocking immigration of Jewish DPs to the US after World War II, I probably focused too much on their efforts. The efforts, to block immigration to anywhere but Palestine, mainly came from Zionists in Palestine. I would like to thank Professor Grodzinsky for correcting me on this point.

3) As to my qualifications, I would argue that since the topic of the U.S.-Israel-Palestine conflict is of interest to me, and Norman Finkelstein's book addresses particularly important issues pertaining to that topic, I wrote a review of the book based on what I read there, as well as facts pertaining to the controversy surrounding publication of the book. Where is Dershowitz's Ph.D. in History? Who cares? The veracity and quality of work is what counts.

4) As to whether or not I-as a progressive-have made common cause with Islamicists and fascists, I can only observe how fascinating it is that dissenting intellectuals are always pegged as inhabiting the same camp as the supposed enemies of the Holy State under consideration.

5) Israel's thirty-eight year occupation of the Gaza Strip was illegal according to international law. What is ambiguous or erroneous about that? According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, it is illegal for an occupying power to transport its population into occupied territory. The removal of Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip brought Israel into some compliance with international law, although human rights organizations such as B'tselem have since labeled Gaza as the world's largest "open-air prison."
See: http://www.btselem.org/English/Press_Releases/20050329.asp

Dershowitz expressed astonishment that I would label Israel "a crazy state," and "not a democracy." As noted in my review essay, the term "crazy state" is a term of art within the international affairs literature. It was developed by an Israeli scholar, Yeheskel Dror, in a book entitled *Crazy States: A Counterconventional Strategic Problem* (Lexington: Heath Lexington Books, 1971). Those interested in the topic should also read Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle* (Chapter 7, Section 4.2.2) about the grave threat Israel poses to the world if it chooses to exercise its Samson Option. "Crazy," in this instance, does not refer to insanity in the psychiatric sense, but to something more specific: pressuring other countries for diplomatic, material, and military support by threatening cataclysmic violence if such support is denied. Israel has done so repeatedly.

Israel is only a "democracy" to the extent that it is "a democracy for Jews," with its 1.5 million Palestinians considered a demographic time bomb that threatens Israel's "Jewish character." According to Zionist thinking, as Yosef Gorny powerfully demonstrates in his Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948: A Study of Ideology, the Palestinian-Arab population has long posed the main obstacle to the creation and maintenance of an exclusively Jewish state. As Yehoshua Porath points out in his two-volume work on Palestinian nationalism and as Benny Morris has confirmed in his inexhaustible The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited,

Palestinian resistance to Zionist conquest arose out of a fear of territorial displacement and not, as is frequently assumed and rhetorically insisted, because of Arab anti-Semitism. By the main tenets of Zionist thinking Israel's Arabs are a cancer on the larger body politic that must be removed either by transfer or by the creation of an apartheid state; these Arabs within Israel are second-class citizens in an "Israeli democracy." See Fouzi El-Asmar's *To Be an Arab in Israel* for a powerful and moving testimony of the effects of "Israeli democracy" on the Palestinian Arab.

I will now respond to Professor Dershowitz's specific points of contention about the circumstances preceding the University of California Press's publication of Finkelstein's Beyond Chutzpah. Dershowitz writes in his letter to the *Logos* editors:

In order to deflect attention away from their lack of academic standards and hard-left anti-Israel bias, Finkelstein and his publisher have lied about the issue of academic freedom. Nobody has ever tried to censor Finkelstein's drivel. He can always publish it with presses that acknowledge their anti-Israel bias. The issue is, and has always been, one of academic standards: how could the University of California Press publish a work so lacking in standards, so filled with misquotations, falsifications, and faked data by a failed academic with a well deserved reputation for the "pure invention" of his sources? No objective university press would have published this sequel to a book the *New York Times* called a "variation on the anti-Semitic forgery, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*."

Most interestingly, Dershowitz claimed that he never tried to block publication of Finkelstein's *Beyond Chutzpah*, seeking only to ensure that the book met the requisite standards for publication. The controversy, according to Dershowitz, is not one about academic freedom but instead about academic standards. Dershowitz's statements are clearly red herrings. First, why then did Dershowitz hire the New York law firm, Cravath, Swaine, & Moore, to write intimidating letters about the anticipated content of *Beyond Chutzpah* to employees at the University of California Press if he was not seeking ultimately to block publication? Dershowitz claims he did so to ensure that demonstrable falsehoods, such as that he did not write or even possibly read *The Case for Israel,* would be removed. Such charges do not appear in *Beyond Chutzpah* because Finkelstein focused on something much more important: documenting how Dershowitz's avoidance of the findings of human rights organizations about Israel's treatment of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and mainstream scholarship about the conflict betrays something startling about an intellectual culture, which not only tolerates but celebrates books such *The Case for Israel.* The University of California Press, and not outside parties, decides which manuscripts meet its high standards for publication and has a rather good track record in that regard. In other words, the Press did not need Dershowitz's help. Six experts on the U.S.-Israel-Palestine conflict, experts in Israel and the United States, twenty faculty members on the editorial board of UC Press at the University of California at Berkeley, and several libel attorneys determined that *Beyond Chutzpah* was suitable for publication. When Dershowitz could not prevail upon the editorial board, he then turned to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger for assistance. Dershowitz's continued repetition of inane charges, such as that the University of California Press published Finkelstein's *Beyond Chutzpah*

because of the Press's well-known anti-Zionist and anti-Israel bias, betoken little more than lapses into pure demagoguery. It is indeed an interesting enterprise for someone like Dershowitz, whose book *The Case for Israel* is the target of Finkelstein's critique, to set himself up as the determiner of appropriate standards for publication. Of course, it is no less worth questioning how Wiley & Sons could publish The Case for Israel, an extremely tendentious book, and then publish, less than two years later, Dershowitz's *The Case for Peace*, which is at least equally problematic. An answer is offered in Beyond Chutzpah: "The point, of course, is not that Dershowitz is a charlatan. Rather, it is the systematic institutional bias that allows books like *The Case for Israel* to become national best sellers" (17; emphasis in original). Lucky Dershowitz.

Neve Gordon, in his November 2000 Nation review of Finkelstein's *The Holocaust Industry*, aptly writes: "Informing Finkelstein's analysis is a universal ethics, which echoes Arendt's important claim that Eichmann should have been sentenced for his crimes against humanity rather than his crimes against the Jews. His book is controversial not entirely because of his mistakes or his piercing rhetoric but because he speaks truth to power. He, and not the Jewish organizations he criticizes, is following the example set by the great Jewish prophets" (http://www.thenation.com/doc/20001113/gordon). Much the same can be said about the motives and means of *Beyond Chutzpah*. Exposing the unmitigated chutzpah of Dershowitz should prod us to ask serious questions about U.S. intellectual culture and, more importantly, about ourselves. That Finkelstein's case against Dershowitz is so well documented proves that something has gone seriously awry in the quality-control mechanisms governing our culture's understanding of the U.S.-Israel-Palestine conflict. That Dershowitz has gone to such great lengths to vilify anyone who writes even a faintly positive review of Beyond Chutzpah attests to his underlying desperation. Dershowitz's recent attacks against *Beyond Chutzpah* reviewers such Neve Gordon and Michael Desch, for example, demonstrate that the eminent Felix Frankfurter Professor has not only gone beyond chutzpah but has blasted off to Planet Dershowitz-a frightening and lonely place.

That the U.S. intellectual community has been nothing short of timid in reigning in Alan Dershowitz and criticizing popular books such as *The Case for Israel* and *The Case for Peace*, while simultaneously not defending and praising the courage of Norman Finkelstein and critical books such as *Beyond Chutzpah*, reveals the extent to which power politics can corrupt our perception and moral sense.

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Ending World Poverty: Jeffrey Sachs' Millenarian Vision

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

Material Reviewed:

Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, (New York: Penguin, 2005)

Jeffrey Sachs, et.al., "Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals," (New York: UN Millennium Project, 2005), www.unmillenniumproject.org

Jeffrey Sachs, et.al., "Ending Africa's Poverty Trap," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 1 (2004), 117-240, www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/about/director/publicat.html

Is Jeffrey Sachs clear-eyed, compassionate, and practical? Or dewy-eyed, self-obsessed, and naïve?. These competing characterizations are evoked by the United Nations Millennium Project and Sachs' popular exposition of it in *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. No one, of course, is against ending poverty but elite enthusiasm does seem muted. Daniel Drezner in the *New York Times Book Review* notes Sachs' "technocratic enthusiasm," and while finding his "missionary zeal is infectious," worries that Sachs offers unrealistic remedies. He also finds disheartening parallels between Sachs' prescriptions and those of developmentalists like Walt Rostow a half century ago. If the remedies didn't work then, Drezner asks, why should they work now? Moreover, he sees no reason to believe that corrupt poor country governments given another chance would do the right thing with new resources.[i]

Even more disdainful is development economist William Easterly who labels *The End of Poverty* as Sachs' "Great Leap Forward," hardly an endearing sobriquet. Sachs commands "the utopian camp," armed with a "Big Plan that covers just about everything." Big plans, says Easterly, are inevitably bureaucratic and out of touch with local knowledge. For Sachs, "poverty is mostly a scientific and technological issue … in which aid dollars can buy cheap interventions to fix development problems." Yet ending poverty entails solving intractable problems such as political, ethnic, and regional conflicts, corruption, sparse or inefficient public services, and odd local laws. Life-saving drugs end up in black markets; greedy bureaucrats sell off grain stores in the midst of famine. Easterly instead advocates little steps, intense supervision, and incentives up and down the line to improve compliance. Where Sachs' proposals for health care, sanitation, and education can be converted into measurable local projects with prudent constraints in place, Easterly is all for them.[ii]

Sachs' hubris — he has seen the future and knows how to make it work ' annoys reviewers who

wonder how he can be so cocksure after helping Yeltsin et.al. make huge mistakes in the Russian "transition" to a market economy.[iii] The breathless eyewitness prose of *The End of Poverty* describing Sachs jetting in and out of meetings with rulers of many nations – where he discovers poverty among villagers in Africa or squatters in Bombay – creates a narrative more like a personal journey to enlightenment than a dispassionate set of policy prescriptions. *The End of Poverty* amounts to another in a recent spate of economist confessional tales that includes Sachs critic Easterly[iv] and his Columbia colleague Joseph Stiglitz[v]– a narrative that mixes personal testimony with the old-time religion of mainstream economics.

Like brother-in-arms Bono, Sachs will entice anyone to join his mission, and his support consequently cuts across the usual left-right divide. He managed to join anti-IMF and World Bank conservatives (such as Alan Meltzer) in a report condemning Bretton Woods institutions for overstepping their original mandates. The IMF should stop providing poor country bailouts and cease managing their economies. Its real job is providing emergency loans to countries caught in short-term liquidity crises. The World Bank should focus on the very poor countries, and provide grants instead of loans to the truly needy.[vi]

More important, it seems, is the moral chord Sachs seeks to touch among commentators, even some leaning well to the right. Martin Wolf, chief economic correspondent for the *Financial Times*, notes that he "cannot but help be moved to advocate doing more for the world's poor."[vii] The Millennium plan calls for eliminating dollar-a-day poverty by the year 2025, thereby improving the lives of a billion people, and Sachs wants to enlist us in the quest, a good thing in a world afflicted by "development fatigue." Sachs and his colleagues at the beginning of the year issued an interim report urging immediate action by nations adjudged able to handle increased foreign aid. This report as well as another devoted to sub-Sahara Africa under the auspices of the Brooklings Institution provide the empirical underpinnings for *The End of* Poverty. Their efforts to push the issue of poverty onto the world's front page provide an opportunity for looking more closely at what a serious plan will do, and what it won't do.

Let us assume here that the Millennium plan Sachs advocates is implemented. That is, rich countries fund it, and states, international organizations, non-governmental agencies execute it. Will it end world poverty? Further, will their program create greater global justice? Before answering these questions, let us examine Sachs' diagnosis and cures.

Sachs' Program In Brief

Sachs' diagnosis is straightforward: poor countries are caught in poverty traps. The key problem is lack of economic and human capital, which snares them in cycles of economic despair. Poor countries sell their few assets, usually natural resources (primary commodities), thus depleting their capital stock, and then are unable to stem a dire blend of high birth rates and high and early death rates. Ill-nourished, medically underserved, and poorly educated, their populace is a burden rather than advantageous human capital. Foreign investors pass them by because a lack of infrastructure proves a deterrent to profit-making. No production, no savings; no savings, no capital investment. No capital investment, no productivity increase. No

wealth. This is what has happened to most of the world south of the equator.

Sachs is especially concerned, and rightly, with the plight of sub-Saharan African, the poorest region in the world. The poverty it suffers, according to Sachs, is not the fault of its governance or of social pathologies one might ascribe to poor people. These states, he argues, are no worse at governing than others in Asia and Latin America, or the old Eastern bloc. The key problems are structural: bad geography and colonialism have led to small, inaccessible economies in small states – markets whose boundaries are "unnatural," in that they owe more to the machinations of colonialism than anything else. Especially costly has been the technological neglect of African agriculture, which did not benefit from Green Revolutions as have other parts of the world.

Sachs and his diligent collaborators have mapped the sorry geography of poverty and its disadvantages globally. They charted the drift and severity of malarial outbreaks and other pandemics. They can even put dollar figures to the costs of human disasters, and to the cost of their remedies. One can no longer say that the problem of global poverty is unfathomable. Instead, we might ask how we can do nothing knowing as much as we know. Thanks to Sachs, we can now measure both the costs and benefits of inaction and hypocrisy.

Sachs' Solutions

As the problems are knowable, Sachs believes so too are solutions. Raise incomes by improved productivity that derives from greater investment in economic and human capital. It takes national planning, significant increases in foreign assistance, and an effective downwardly driven globalization in which "the village" is integrated with the world market. Sachs expresses confidence that we have the technical know-how, built on decades of development experience, to do the job. The key now is to take the prescriptions and "scale up," that is, universalize them.

Good as far as it goes, and better than merely good. For several solutions, almost by virtue of the investigators' serious pragmatism, offer opportunities for not only eliminating poverty but for creating greater equality in poor societies. The first of these is their recommendation for universal access to basic health services, ungoverned, or best said, unrationed by user fees. The emphasis is on village level services delivered by paraprofessionals, barefoot doctors in all but ideology, focussing on common treatable conditions for women and children, and on epidemic diseases. Their proposals hold great promise for saving lives and increasing life expectancy. Health centers rather than hospitals, rural as well as urban areas, training and deploying mass professionals rather than disease experts ' these can help redirect a world health system decidedly skewed toward the rich.

The call for universal primary education (with a bow to Amartya Sen's work) is both an egalitarian necessity and an economic resource. They also argue for increased access to secondary and postsecondary education. In each of these contexts, though, they recognize the need to provide incentives for ensuring gender equality in the use of educational resources. In

these two important arenas, then, Sachs and his team advocate solutions that would generate greater equality. Although the solutions are not novel. one might respond with Sachs that *really* doing them universally would be new, and profoundly improve the human condition.

In addition, Sachs calls for building viable infrastructures in energy, transportation, and communications so that private investors will be lured into providing capital necessary for industrial development. International trading rules too can also be revised to help poor countries sell what they now have as well as expand their range of products for the world market.

The price tag for the fully implemented Millennium Project is a mere $135 billion a year, less than 1% of the combined gross product of the rich countries. The sum is about double what they allocate for poor countries now in non-military aid. Oddly, although Sachs was advisor to the international Jubilee campaign to cancel poor country debt, debt reduction does not figure in his scheme. This is a crucial omission. The so-called "G8" summit of rich countries in Scotland during July offered $1 billion a year in debt relief, a sum to be parceled out to countries that meet criteria set by lending countries and the IMF. Considering that sub-Saharan Africa pays out $8.6 billion a year in interest payments, this is paltry. Considering the poor world pays out an estimated $250 billion in public and private debt payments a year, it is obscene.[viii] Sachs limits his comments to some success in 2000 in getting the U.S. Congress to move affirmatively on debt reduction.[ix]

Will It End Poverty?

The short answer is no: it will only end "dollar-a-day" poverty. Another one and a half billion poor persons living on between one and two dollars a day will remain. Still, moving a billion people out of extreme desperation would be a remarkable accomplishment.

The long-term answer, unfortunately, is no as well, for several reasons. First, for all the emphasis Sachs places on structural solutions to the economic problems of poor countries, there is a discomfiting omission of analysis of the structures of disadvantage in which poor people are historically embedded. The ravages of colonialism are duly lamented, but no assessment is undertaken of the damage rich countries have done to poor countries over the postcolonial era, or how they might be continuing to do harm. While Sachs is a trenchant critic of Western moral indifference, he and his cohort are unwilling to analyze the degree to which the economic interests of the rich countries are connected to why the world's poor are poor. Continued Euro-American exploitation of their spheres of economic interest in Central and Latin America, Africa, and Asia goes unmentioned. The punitive efforts of international organizations like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to apply one-size-fits-all remedies to poor country problems are deplored, but are chalked up to technocratic blundering and conservatives' magical thinking. The organizations' role as economic and political instruments of Euro-American imperialism is ignored. Nor does Sachs train attention on the historic actions of Euro-American firms to armor themselves in First World protectionism while extracting energy, metals, and other commodities from poor countries at

predatory prices. Nor is much made of how the rich countries used the World Trade Organization to procure advantages for their multinationals in new industries such as services, finance, and patent-driven technologies such as information, biotech, and pharmaceuticals. As much as Sachs wants to relieve poor countries of the inhumane accusations of blame for their plight, as in "their cultures make them do it…," he is unwilling to attribute any responsibility to the rich for how the poor get and stay poor. And, Sachs' otherwise compassionate account quickly reaches its limits in a shopworn gospel of self-help:

"…the goal is to end *extreme* poverty, not end all poverty, and still less to equalize world incomes or to close the gap between the rich and the poor. This may eventually happen, but if so, the poor will have to get rich on their own effort." *(End of Poverty*, 289)

The cost of not digging deeper into the reasons for world poverty, it seems, is a reversion to poor-house logic.

Second, inside poor countries, there is a similar disconnect with likely causes. It is as if poverty were some sort of natural, pre-takeoff state of being. There is no discussion of how poverty is an effect, the result, not the cause, of enormous economic and social inequalities. Overlooked is how upper and middle classes in poor countries, to the extent that they exist, have constructed an economy and a system of rule that directs what surplus is available to them, and thus makes and keeps people poor. While one obvious definition of poverty is the absence of money, the absence becomes causal only after people have been deprived of adequate livelihoods in the first place.

This in no way suggests that poverty in poor societies would vanish if resources were distributed equally. As Sachs rightly notes, there are too few assets to go around. But it does imply that simply raising the level of resources, read here as money and human capital, in poor societies will not create universal well being for all citizens unless the social structures that create inequalities within societies are changed as well.

An example. Three quarters of the world's poor still lives in the countryside, and as Sachs reports, half of the chronically hungry in poor countries are agricultural smallholders.[x] The goal of the Millennium Project is to make them more efficient farmers, an initiative that would also free surplus labor to produce profits in factories and cities (assuming the surplus is welcome and absorbable). The recommended strategy is largely technical: a new Green Revolution for neglected staples, irrigation, and fertilizer. Absent is any consideration of land reform. Why there is too little land and too many landless or nearly landless hands working it, is indeed a complicated question, for which there is no single cause or solution. The growth of large estates for export crop production, population pressure, inheritance practices that divide land into smaller and smaller parcels, and soil exhaustion led to widespread dispossession of the world's peasantry, and reduction of the remainder to the barest of subsistence livelihoods. Suffice it to say that land reform was an indispensable instrument in the Asian economic success stories of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China, so that there would seems every good reason to include it in the Millennium agenda. Without it, even the robust technical fix

envisioned by Sachs and his colleagues won't dent rural poverty.

A second Green Revolution, too, may deliver less than did the first. Spectacular yield increases marked the first 20 years since the introduction of hybrid staple seeds, fertilizer, and irrigation (starting in 1965), but have given way to slowing growth over the past 15 years. Even in Green Revolution success stories, yield growth slowed even as intensive irrigation and chemical fertilizer use caused significant environmental degradation. Moreover, while the Green Revolution reduced rural poverty, it did not produce greater economic equality in the countryside.[xi]

Third, despite the Millennium Project's acknowledgment of the need for state planning, and notwithstanding their admission that key Asian tigers long protected their industries from competition, there is a disappointing paucity of industrial ideas that Sachs leave poor states to ponder. Justifiably leery of letting "the market" decide ' if markets functioned efficiently, poor countries would be awash in capital as investors chase higher margins associated with cheap labor and cheap start-up costs ' Sachs urges poor countries to pursue export-oriented, labor-intensive, "light" manufacturing, typically focussed on shoes, textiles and apparels, which are the traditional first steps. The success stories of Bangladesh and Taiwan are cited. The problem with this solution is that everyone is doing it, and onrushing giants like India and China have just begun to exploit these niches. Due to the phasing out of the international textile agreement, these two producers threaten to wipe out manufacturers in Africa, Central America, Latin America, *and* Bangladesh. The United States and Europe are mindful of the damage to their own producers and seek protection for them. So the question for poor countries is what kinds of new export markets at the lowest end of the manufacturing process can support their development. If Bangladesh, among 15 other poor countries, must appeal to the U.S. Congress to protect their garment production from being annihilated by China and India, what room at the bottom of the industrial ladder is left for a Togo, Chad, or Mali?[xii]

To be sure, Sachs' inadequacies on this score are our own. But it does raise the question of why those who care about the fate of poor people in poor countries don't opt for the path of stimulating investment and production in basic goods for local markets. Let the countries protect their markets, as the Asian tigers did, and see where it leads. Not a sure-shot option, but then, there are none, in a global economy constantly teetering on the brink of massive over-production.

Poverty Ending and Global Justice

Ending extreme poverty is a necessary but not sufficient step toward global justice. Moving up to two-dollar-a-day poverty is a great but finally mean achievement. From an ethical standpoint, how can one be at ease when many people's lives are so disadvantaged? There is also a practical matter of power: How can poor people inside poor countries defend their gains, however slight, against their own predatory classes, let alone ours? The abyss between rich and poor countries will persist under Sachs' scheme, as will the power differential.

And the differential matters. The case of US economic policy since the nineties is instructive. Even as the domestic distribution of wealth and income has become more unequal and the poor both absolutely and relatively poorer, our government drained resources from the poor through "welfare reform" and gave away resources to the rich through tax cuts. On the foreign side, when financial crisis hit the Pacific Rim in 1997, Washington encouraged the IMF and World Bank to impose draconian reforms that only made the poor worse off.[xiii] As poor-house arrangements offer no rights, the poor lack structures or resources with which to defend themselves. Greater economic equality ' both between rich and poor countries and between rich and poor in poor countries ' is the only way to assure that people can hang to and improve upon their gains.

That said, though the Millennium Project is the most robust and progressive aid-related development program around, and laden with suggested practices that would alleviate the direst poverty. Yet its focus on poverty reduction, not equality, enables economic and political systems to judge themselves by means of a counter-factual of not-poorness. Semantic ambiguities and measurement problems are compounded by rule of thumb judgments that states and their bureaucracies deploy. On a practical basis, greater economic equality provides a clearer goal and standard than does 'not-poorness,' and also is more in line with the growing trend to link development aid to clear-cut outcomes.

Finally, more equal societies are more just societies. The structures of disadvantage are dealt with head-on in achieving equality and better economic outcomes. People can define their lives, free up their creative energies, and defend their own rights ' all values that most developmentalists assume are necessary for societal economic successes. Eliminating poverty will not achieve economic equality. The opposite – measures undertaken to foster economic equality – is more likely to work. Taking structures of disadvantage into account, I believe it highly unlikely that poverty can be eliminated in most societies or the gains of poor people be protected otherwise. Poverty reduction programs lacking clear equality goals will not succeed. Sachs shows us some of what must be done, and he shows us how it can be done. It is surely a compliment to him and his collaborators that we ask him to do more, not less.

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[i] Daniel Drezner, "'The End of Poverty:' Brother, Can You spare $195 Billion?" *New York Times*, April 24, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/24/books/review/24DREZNER.html.

[ii] William Easterly, "A Modest Proposal: The *End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*," *Washington Post*, March 13, 2005, page BW03, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A25562-2005Mar10.html. Sachs for his part responded angrily to Easterly's review, calling it a "crude caricature of my ideas," and calling its author "the cheerleader for 'can't do' economics." See Sachs' response, "Up from Poverty," *Washington Post*, March 27, 2005, page BW12, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A64541-2005March24.html.

[iii] Easterly, ibid. See too John Cassidy, “Always with Us? Jeffrey Sachs’s Plan to Eradicate World Poverty,” *New Yorker*, April 11, 2005, 72-77.

[iv] William Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists’ Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

[v] Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003) and *The Roaring Nineties: A New History of the World’s Most Prosperous Decade*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).

[vi] Alan Meltzer and Jeffrey Sachs, “Reforming the IMF and the World Bank,” *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, March 8, 2000, http://www.aei.org/include/pub_print.asp?pubID=11425. Accessed July 7, 2005.

[vii] Martin Wolf, “Aid Will Not Make Poverty History ‘ But It Is Worth Trying,” *Financial Times*, July 6, 2005, 13.

[viii] Eric Toussaint, “Guarantee the Fulfillment of Basic Human Needs for All and Get Out of the Vicious Cycle of Debt,” *World Social Forum*, (January 31, 2002), http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/bib/toussainteng.asp. Accessed January 24, 2002; Jubilee Debt Campaign, “Jubilee Debt Campaign Reacts to G8: Still No Giant Leap,” www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk. Accessed July 21, 2005.

[ix] Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, (New York: Penguin, 2005), 342-3.

[x] Millennium Project, 2005: 65.

[xi] International Fund for Agricultural Development, *Rural Poverty Report 2001: The Challenge of Ending Rural Poverty*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 127-135.

[xii] Edward Alden, “Fifteen Poorest Countries Lobby US to Give Garment Preferences,” *Financial Times*, May 4, 2005, 8.

[xiii]See Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents*.

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Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought For An Anti-utopian Age, By Russell Jacoby

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These Are The Times That Try Men's Souls"
(Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*, December 23, 1776)

In dark times hard-pressed people frequently fall into cynicism and, ultimately, nihilism. An infectious despair can persuade many citizens to accede to authoritarianisms of various stripes. But some exceptionally hardy spirits nevertheless manage to generate hope – moreover, hope of a progressive kind. Given recent events, from 9/11 to Iraq to Katrina, idealism seems long gone and hope nearly extinct but, fortunately, Russell Jacoby comes along to reclaim some hope by mounting a rousing defense of Utopian moments throughout history. Starting with the Greek notion of a "Golden Age," visionaries always have promised to end our social ills if only their transformative religion, economic or cultural agendas were enacted. Plato, for example, sketched a society based on supposedly perfect justice via imposition of a system of social ranking to insure each person received what s/he was due. The catch is that this supremely ordered Republic was run by philosopher kings, without a trace of popular input. This particular platonic idea always has a lot of traction, justifying top-down rule ranging from extinct dynasties to Leo Strauss and the neo-cons' version of elitism.

From the affluent, peaceful and tolerant 'ideal society,' first dubbed Utopia by Thomas More, to the erotic and culinary pleasures of Fourier to the industrial era schema of Bellamy, Utopians are typically seen as foolish dreamers at best, or, at worst, as totalitarian murderers. How should we sensibly imagine Utopia now? For Jacoby, a Utopia must envision a society that promotes "peace, ease, plenty, equality, leisure and pleasure . . . linked brotherhood and communal work." If so, what is to be done to realize it? Jacoby takes us on an exciting intellectual journey through Western thought, and some Muslim thinkers like Qutb too (whose fundamentalist visions are hardly Utopian). Jacoby's Herculean task is to defend an "iconoclastic" tradition that usually is disinclined to give detailed blueprints, but prefers to critique what is wrong with actually existing society.

Jacoby begins with a robust critique of "anti-utopians" who have conflated utopianism with 20th Century totalitarianisms in which torture and mass murder are justified to achieve vile ends. A central aim of his analysis is to refute prominent "anti-utopians" Karl Popper, Jacob Talman, Hannah Arendt and Isaiah Berlin. In their youth Popper and Arendt had been sympathetic to socialism, but following the rise of Stalin and Hitler, they erroneously equated Fascism and Communism with utopianism, and utopianism with totalitarianism. Much like More, the anti-Utopians repudiated an optimistic vision they once embraced. But, while they had a total revulsion against Nazism, they equated Fascism and Communism as massive

deformations of modernity and, for Arendt, of “radical evil”. (At Eichmann’s trial, evil was demoted, in one controversial form, to “banality”.) Ironically, after the second world war, they concentrated their critical energies on Marxism and Communism rather than on recently defeated Fascism. (This focus may be due the fact that scholars enjoy the history of ideas and as Arendt argued, Fascism had few serious intellectual antecedents and little legitimation.) Utopians of any kind were implicitly Marxists and, as such, rendered as fools, totalitarians or both – and easily dismissed.

Jacoby rejects this conflation of Fascism and Communism into a single totalitarian form, and denies that it represents a utopian vision. He argues that the mass violence of the conflicts of the 20th century stemmed instead from racist/ethnic, nationalist imperialist, and/or religious sectarian agenda, not from Utopian dreams of peace and plenty gone awry. In no way could a Utopian vision embrace domination, genocide and war, racial purity, xenophobia or the supremacy of a particular religion. Jacoby finds precious little that is remotely Utopian in Stalin’s Soviet Union, Hitler’s Nazism, Pol Pot’s Kampuchea or Milosevic’s greater Serbia.

Nevertheless, the equation of utopianism with Nazi or Russian totalitarianism has become the “received wisdom” of scholars and politicians. This of course suits elites who can claim there is nothing better than their current policies ‘ and any redistribution of wealth and/or power was demonized and rejected. TINA universalized portrays any alternatives as discredited Utopian schemes reeking of totalitarianism. Stalin’s perversions of Marxism are used to discredit Marx’s genuine Utopian vision. Instead we should “think small” and celebrate democratic piecemeal reforms. Yet Utopias are not reformist enterprises; the human project can aim for more than better garbage pick up, universal education or health care delivery. Utopian vision can inspire actual reforms, but the result is not a Utopia. A Scandinavian Social Democracy, replete with tolerance of social and sexual diversity might be vastly preferable to the current (imploding) vision of Bush’s Evangelical Christianity, corporate control and imperialism, but the Nordic societies are not Utopias.

Jacoby argues that the classical texts of Huxley and Orwell were not simple anti-Utopian treatises as taught in most American high schools and colleges. Rather, these authors attempted to point out certain inherent dangers in modern societies. For Huxley, the consumerism of Fordist America enabled privatized hedonism to become a means of social control. Shopping malls, real and virtual, dispense new forms of Soma. (Marcuse would later argue that “repressive de-sublimation” displaced critical thought and sustained domination.) Post Fordist America has not only witnessed a consumerism on steroids, but steroids as consumer goods. Orwell feared the potentials of total domination by the State, but Orwell was a life-long socialist who was concerned that his work was used to discredit socialism. We might well note that the Bush administration, more than any other, has embraced “double speak”, blatant lies and permanent war [on terror] as a justification for policy.

Jacoby is equally critical of “blueprint” Utopians who spell out architectural designs, spatial allocations, dress styles and diet requirements as well as daily schedules for work, play, dining, sleep and even sex. He argues that the prescribing of elaborate details and regulations of what

people must do in their everyday life to achieve “freedom” and personal fulfillment is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. To rigidly organize a society through dictatorial schemes cannot a Utopia make-no matter how affluent its people or how often they copulate. But even that tradition became exhausted insofar as it has become more difficult to imagine the future. In response to the growing regulation of the “disenchanted” modern world, romanticism not only flourished but, in subtle ways, influenced a number of thinkers.

For Jacoby, the essence of Utopianism is “iconoclasm,” rooted in the biblical commandment against uttering the name of God or making graven images of God. “Ye shall make no idols nor graven image” (Lev.26:1). This injunction against representation of the unknown, articulated by Maimonides, was a way of resisting the modern tendency toward visualization. This legacy had a strong influence on the work ofKarl Marx, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, and especially Martin Buber and Gerson Scholem whose work resurrected the Kabala, the mystical tradition in Judaism, and Gustav Landauer, a messianic Utopian who refused to spell out the details of what that Utopia might look like. Rather, he rejected a “cold, spiritless” Marxism as product of steam technology and instead chose a “poetic vision” of creativity, enthusiasm, harmony and solidarity. The iconoclast “vision”, unlike the sterile blueprint version, might easily lend itself to ephemeral dreams, but instead, it attempt to do no more than imagine the conditions in which a Utopia might take shape.

It was not accidental that the anti-utopians were largely Jewish and in some ways responding to the anti-Semitism of Hitler and Stalin. So too were the “iconoclastic Utopians” influenced by their cultural roots of Messianic Judaism and its hopes for the return of the Messiah – no matter what secular directions their work had taken them. For Bloch, Jews were motivated by a Utopian quest. Just as Buber saw mystical Judaism as a “pathway to Utopia”, his friend Gershom Scholem claimed that messianism was like an “anarchic breeze” of uncertainty, Jacoby hopes his message acts as the utopian “anarchic breeze” that animated Adorno, Benjamin, Block or Marcuse whose secular messianism is a more recent expression of the modern, acculturated Jew. In this way, Jacoby sees the “iconoclastic” tradition rooted in the legacies of Jewish thought, including the warning of the prophets, as articulated by secular Jews.

The protestors and breakers of images would have us “hear” the future but not see it–lest any concrete depiction stifle what might more imaginatively be. Jacoby argues that “iconoclastic” utopians” foster a political imagination that offers genuine hope and possibility rather than the puritanical order of “blueprint” Utopians–even when it is sexually free. The iconoclastic tradition is critical of existing social arrangements, especially those that sustain domination, fragment the social and thwart human development and freedom. This theme is clear throughout the Frankfurt School’s tradition of critiques of capital, Instrumental Reason (technocratic logic), authoritarianism, the culture industries, consumerism and “one dimensional thought”. Instead they promise freedom, “real fellowship” and creative fulfillment, though they are not sure of the forms that will take. Thus they are more likely to spell out what is wrong with the current world than offer any kind of picture of what a future world might look like. They reject icons.

Besides Jewish mysticism, certain strains of German romanticism influenced the iconoclast's notions of Utopia–bordering on the mystical and spiritual. In Bloch's work for example, while hope is rooted in the Freudian theory of dreams as wish fulfillments, his analyses of folk tales, music and stories hint at basic themes of freedom and equality.[1] Utopian thought yearns for the future, but will not chart the shape the future society will take. Yet at the same time, that vision must be shaped by legacies of the past and realities of the present; containing pain, frustrations and hope. In Bloch's Freudian view the hope for the future is rooted in early childhood experiences. Early frustrations endure as desires for gratifications denied yet found in dreams and imaginaries that represent wish fulfillments. Jacoby suggest that Utopian dreams are rooted in childhood imaginations, though as Horkheimer warn, modernity conspires to snuff Utopian dreams. Moreover, unlike dreams, Utopias are shared and offer promises of actual realization. But such Utopias are not likely to be perfect, rather they are times and places that wisely accommodate the imperfections of people and their societies.

Picture Imperfect is a joy to read and an inspiration. His is a first rate mind, highly conversant with the religious, philosophical, intellectual and political traditions that inform the varieties of Utopian visions, including the anti-Utopian views. (It made me want to read Popper, Arendt, Buber etc. again.) A short review can hardly address many of the questions he raises about religion, culture, politics, language and representation. Yes there are certain warranted criticisms. Jacoby clearly noted that Marx was a Utopian, and an "iconoclastic" one at that. But there is a uncomfortable truth here and that "truth" must be considered. How did it happen that the move from the realm of necessity to freedom took a detour to Stalin's gulags, purges and murders? Much the same question might be asked of Mao and his "cultural revolution" and "great leap backward." While Jacoby justifiably critiques Arendt, Berlin and Popper, he needed to examine what led to implosion and deformation of the Utopian moment of Marx. Even Arendt moved from her earlier position on "radical evil" to a meditation on its banality, no less horrible for that. While leftists might be sympathetic with Jacoby's analysis, we would like to see more of his take on why things went amiss.

Jacoby argued that anti-utopian thought, as well as the "iconoclastic" Utopians, were distinctively Jewish, and the distinctly messianic themes of the "iconoclasts". But the line from Plato to More was hardly Jewish, nor were the French *philosophes* or German idealists and Romantics whose hopes and fears of the Enlightenment also shaped Utopian thought. Jacoby practically suggests that the critiques of anti Utopian thought, as well as the iconoclasts were reserved for the chosen people. For a scholar critical of the Nazis, such sectarianism, even if benign, can be disconcerting. One can argue that there are Utopian discourses in other religious traditions. Indeed many Christian sects oppose war, poverty and human degradation. For many of the secular left, the plurality of religious traditions is often lumped together and reduced to nothing but Evangelical Christianity. It might be further noted that many fundamentalists share the same critique of modernity as does the secular left. As Thomas Frank cogently argued, the folks in Kansas, and other places that supported W, are facing real pain, but secular politics does not speak a language they can understand so as to explain the causes of their suffering. They seek a "better world" but expect it either to follow the Rapture or blossom in the next life. To be sure their "better world" seems more like a "blueprint"

Utopia, overburdened with rules, regulations and prohibitions that deny the freedom and fulfillment Utopias promise–and perhaps what's worse, would end sex as we know it.

The present age of cynicism and withdrawal from the society is not conducive to Utopian thought. What is left of the left is highly fragmented. The narcissism of "petty political differences" often precludes a united stance so as to weaken all. Similarly, the demoralized academic left has had to weather a number of storms beginning with the marginalization of leftists from the disciplinary mainstreams. The fall of the USSR was alleged to discredit Marx and Utopianism. This has led many academics to question the legitimacy of the academic left. Moreover, the late and not very great postmodern fad rejected any kind of grand narratives as totalizing, which in turn left little space for Utopian imaginaries of a just world and good life. Finally, while progressive academics may support social movements, most such movements seek limited reforms rather than the "better world [that] is possible" as proclaimed by the WSF. Still, such movements proclaim goals of freedom, equality, democracy, justice and plenty that do remind us of the realities of the present and the possibilities of that better future.

While we might well despair, and disdain Utopian visions, I would argue that there are countertrends. The Social Forum movement, while hardly the motor of world transformation, nevertheless represents a growing social force and a growing space where Utopian aspirations can be expressed. We can see how in the face of neo-liberal imperialism, aka American domination, a variety of left movements have sprung up and indeed, now color Latin American politics. Chavez and his Bolivarian revolution many not be Utopian, but turning oil profits into schools, hospitals and clinics does provide a better life for ordinary people in Venezuela. I would note that the excesses of Bush's religious zeal, matched only by his incompetence and ineptness from 9/11 to Katrina, prompted a mobilization of progressive forces. When three to four hundred thousand people protested the Iraq war in Washington, it was invisible in the American MSM, but widely covered on the various alternative news sources available on the Internet. Might this be the dawning of an age of idealism? It is too early to judge, but if it should happen, then surely a future historian will see that one reason this happened was the work of Russell Jacoby. As he warns us, "without a utopian impulse, politics turns pallid, mechanical, and often Sisyphean; it plugs leaks one by one, while the bulkheads give way and the ship founders. To be sure, the leaks must be stanched. Yet, we may need a new vessel, an idea easily forgotten as the waters rise and the crew and passengers panic." But Jacoby gives us what Benjamin promised, "Only for the cause of those who have no hope is hope given us."

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[1] Beethoven's 9th, the *Ode to Joy* may do it for some, the Beatles *Imagine* for others. For some folks, science fiction offers hints at societies far more advanced than ours.

America’s Palestine: Popular And Official Perceptions From Balfour To Israeli Statehood, By Lawrence Davidson

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

An American president on a mission to fulfill Biblical prophecy. His diplomats at odds with him and viewed as out of touch with the electorate by Congress. A press corps less concerned with investigative journalism than feeding ‘ and appeasing ‘ popular biases. A body politic, fed by Sunday School images and millenarian forecasts, accepting of American political-economic-cultural manifest destiny.

Reading Lawrence Davidson’s narrative of the historical positionality of Palestine in the realms of American foreign policy and popular imagination from Britain’s declaration of support for Zionist aspirations in 1918 through Israel’s declaration of statehood in 1948 one might feel that time has stood still. One might argue the same with regard to other American policies and imaginings in other times and places. Still, the persistent symbolic power of Palestine clearly makes it unique. Such that half a century after the realization of the dreams of political Zionists, the state they created, whatever its unfinished projects and unrealized ambitions, retains a centrality in the vision of Americans that reinforces and perpetuates its special diplomatic relationship with the United States.

Davidson traces this relationship to the early years of the American republic, when American exceptionalism began to fashion a particular proprietary vision of the Holy Lands. The religious underpinnings of imperialism ‘ not an American monopoly, but marked in special ways by the American self-view ‘ found in Palestine fertile ground to act upon the belief that, in the words of a Congregationalist minister, “America is God’s last dispensation towards the world” (3). Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, Protestant missionaries took the lead in formalizing a “theocratized vision” (9)of Palestine in which facts on the ground vanished before picturesque tableaus that would be realized ‘ and reified ‘ in popular adventure novels and, ultimately, Hollywood theologicals. Davidson’s work thus meshes nicely with broader studies of “American Orientalism,” especially those that treat the prevalence of such cultural tropes as backdrop to diplomacy.[1]

America’s Palestine is a synthesis of diplomatic history, with a focus on domestic politics, and cultural history. His story is rooted in diplomatic records, the Congressional record, and newspaper editorials and opinion pieces. In some respects he covers familiar ground, but his effort to move from the opinions of the State Department’s “striped pants boys” (Harry Truman’s famous denigration) to those of partisan editors and guest columnists is ambitious, and should lead others ‘ whether to amplify or challenge his arguments ‘ to undertake further

work in such areas. Especially since the primary period that he studies, between Wilson and Truman, is one in which American leaders grappled with the nation's role in a part of the world which the remained in the hands of European imperialist powers.

This is a book with a message. Davidson argues persuasively that as a consequence of the gospel-based attachment to Palestine, the proprietary tendency to view the Holy Land as an extension of the West, and the cultural bias against Muslim peoples in the region ' whether Arabs or Turks ' policy makers and shapers of public opinion gravitated easily toward outright support for the Zionist venture. Davidson's tone is at times deliberately provocative. He writes of the disregard for the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine as "a form of ethnic cleansing on the conceptual level" (9). He concludes his book by ruminating on the "colonizing" of the American mind" (213-22), emphasizing the extent to which American biases and fantasies became compounded in the year's following Israeli statehood. He challenges Americans to rethink their "bipolar" view of Palestine, one in which the Israelis are viewed simultaneously as Old Testament heroes and American warriors taming the frontier.

Growing support for the Balfour Declaration followed upon the self-satisfaction of Woodrow Wilson who, flattered to think that "a son of the manse should be able to help restore the Holy Land to its people" (16), seemingly approved the British commitment without "serious consultation with the State Department" (17). In the popular press ' Davidson canvasses a cross section of leading American papers from the New York Times and Washington Post to the Chicago Tribune and Los Angeles Times ' mandatory Palestine, still a picture from an illustrated Bible, had been liberated by the modern day British Crusaders starring General Edmund Allenby as the latter day Richard Lionheart (22-5).

For "American perceptions of the Holy Land and Zionist visions of Palestine" to become "uniquely meshed" (39), however, purer national myths had to be fused. Writing in the New York Times, an American Zionist leader thus described Jewish outposts in Palestine as "the Jamestown and Plymouth of the new House of Israel," the settlers akin to "followers of Daniel Boone" and "Jewish Pilgrim fathers," Tel Aviv and other urban Zionist enterprises as "Boom Town[s] in Palestine" (46-7). The general press would quickly follow suit. Outbreaks of violence in 1929 produced allusions to the Wild West. The savage rarely proved noble in media accounts, which recall the worst of Kipling. The Los Angeles Times bemoaned that "sweet reasonableness does not seem to be the strongest point of the Bedouin sheikh. What he does thoroughly understand and appreciate, however, is the song of the bullet and the crash of the high explosive shell" (95).

Little would change as the Palestine Mandate came to an end in the tragic conflict that Israelis call their "War of Independence" and Palestinians the "Catastrophe." The domestic and international considerations that prompted Harry Truman to press the British government to open Palestine to massive immigration in the aftermath of VE Day, then the decision to support both the UN partition plan and Israel's declaration of statehood are by now old stories. Davidson's contribution is greater for the earlier part of his study. He outlines the lack of enthusiasm in traditional policy circles for Britain's Balfour commitment. Wary of interfering

in what they perceived to be a British sphere of influence, State Department specialists proposed a neutral posture towards the Mandate. At the same time they suspected that Britain might treat Palestine like a crown colony and monopolize commerce. A 1926 Carnegie Endowment report, headlined in the New York Times (during a period of economic downturn in which more Jews left Palestine than entered) predicted the failure of the Zionist colonial enterprise. A public relations onslaught precipitated a formal recantation. From the late 1920s onward, Davidson argues, there was little room for anything other than the official Zionist narrative of events. Consequently, the State Department became increasingly isolated, especially from Congressional leaders who, like many who had elected them, had come to see the Zionist venture as "an extension of U.S. Interests in the Middle East" (137). Truman's animosity to the "striped pants boys" and his assertion that "no one in any department can sabotage the President's policy" (197) marked a nadir of influence for the professional diplomats and area studies experts as one chapter in the Palestine story closed and another commenced.

Davidson's story is, ultimately, one of the triumph of a dominant political narrative rooted in the symbolic cultural power it could marshal. His evidence is compelling, even if his broad sweep at times may prompt further investigation. In studies based ' here only in part ' on a reading of the press, one might ask for a broader sweep that took into account papers more off the beaten track. This was a period, after all, when smaller city papers could afford and felt obliged to employ their own foreign correspondents. But the inclusion of another paper or three would probably not change the story line. Davidson refers to "inaccurate and incomplete headlines" and stories that "failed to contextualize" communal violence (92-3). A closer reading of news coverage that ran parallel to the editorials and op-ed pieces in the daily papers that Americans still read for news of the world would be instructive. There is an effort to balance the dominant Zionist narrative with an alternative Jewish perspective. Here Davidson focuses on the American Council for Judaism, a religious-based organization that decried efforts to define Jewishness in national terms, and the outspoken anti-Zionist rabbi, Elmer Berger. This plays well within the parameters established by Christian evangelical Zionist supporters, but it confines Jewish anti-Zionism to the religious sphere, while secular voices remain silent.

Most intriguing ' and disheartening ' are the sections in which Davidson elucidates the frustrating efforts of Arab-Americans to simply enter the debate over American policy toward Palestine and, eventually, Israel. Given popular perceptions of the Holy Land and most of its indigenous inhabitants, then the communal violence that European Jewish immigration produced, it is hardly surprising that Arab-American arguments were brushed aside and that many Americans took for granted that the "Zionization of Palestine" could not occur without bloodshed (106). Shouting into the winds of war, Arab-American representatives testified before Congress; some sought to open lines of communication with Zionist leaders. At one Congressional hearing in 1944 Princeton professor Philip Hitti, the man who almost single-handedly founded Middle East studies in the United States, tried to turn the Wild West motif on its head, suggesting that his government promote open Jewish immigration "on the plains of Arizona and Texas" (161). The way in which Hitti and other distinguished Arab-Americans

were dismissed as peripheral will strike many as further reminder of how static certain aspects of American public opinion and public policy remain.

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[1]Douglas Little, American Orientalism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); see my review, “Mummy Diplomacy,” in Diplomatic History 28 (5): 455-58. For American millenarianism and Palestine, see Thomas Idinopulos, Weathered by Miracles (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998).

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Power And The Idealists, Or, The Passion Of Joschka Fischer And Its Aftermath, by Paul Berman

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Revolutions are not child's play, nor are they academic debates in which only vanities are hurt in furious clashes, nor literary jousts wherein only ink is spilled profusely. Revolution means war, and that implies the destruction of men and things.

-Mikhail Bakunin, quoted in Paul Berman,*Quotations from the Anarchists* (1972)

There are two reasons to read Paul Berman's latest book. The first is that Berman is a fine storyteller, an expert at weaving events into narrative, at picking up and putting down threads in patterns that might perplex the myopic vision of specialists but that will please those he calls "readers of literature, who judge by smell and feel."This is a good way to write history, although not the only good way, and Berman does it as well as anyone today. The second reason to read Berman is that people on the left who oppose President Bush's foreign policy need to understand the thinking of our estranged cousins, the liberal hawks.

Power and the Idealists begins in 2001 with the scandal that erupted when the German magazine *Stern* published old photos of Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer as a street-fighting New Left militant. Berman leads us from that event back to 1968 and then forward again to what he sees as the Bush administration's tragic fumbling of the Iraq War. He invites us to read this book as a sequel to his 1996 work *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968,* in which he cast the anti-Communist revolutions of 1989 as the unexpected fulfillment of the revolutions of 1968. *Power and the Idealists* presents the Iraq War as the latest act in the long unfolding drama of '68er radicalism.

The key to the appeal of Berman's writing is that he writes history without time: everything feels contemporaneous and thus immediate. People and events unfold outward from any given point in webs of relationships, within and across calendar-lines, in a degrees-of-separation whirl where no element of the past century's political history is more than a few steps apart from any other. For instance, consider this sequence: Iran is an Islamist theocracy that bears resemblance to the fascisms of the 1930s; Azar Nafisi writes about Iran; Azar Nafisi is a '68er; Joschka Fischer is also a '68er; Fischer's politics in the 1960s were a kind of rebellion against Germany's fascist past. And so we're back to 1938, a 1938 that contains echoes, as it were, of Germany in 1968 and Iran in 1979. It is no surprise, then, that *Power and the Idealists* shines when Berman is tracing connections but that Berman's argument crumples when distinctions need to be drawn.

Power and the Idealists starts and ends with Joschka Fischer, and Fischer makes appearances in the middle of the story as well, but he is not the main character of this book so much as a figure whose recurrence helps Berman's story remain a fabric and not a tangle. Starting with Fischer's own role in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Berman guides us quickly through the would-be-revolutionary denouement of the New Left. As Berman portrays them, the New Left militants were "a young people's movement motivated by fear." They feared Europe's fascist past and the West's imperial and one-dimensional present, but they feared something else as well, something more personal, more interior. Two-thirds of the way through *Power and the Idealists*, we get our clearest sense of what this something else was as we listen in on a conversation between Daniel ("Danny the Red") Cohn-Bendit and Bernard Kouchner, two former 1968 militants, one now a Green Member of the European Parliament and one a prominent administrator of NGO and UN humanitarian efforts. Cohn-Bendit and Kouchner, Berman relates, both grew up in the shadow of the Second World War and the legacy of the Resistance, obsessed with the same questions:

> To wit, what would you have done, in France under the German occupation? In 1943, say-before it was obvious that D-Day was coming to the rescue. Would you have risked your neck and joined the Resistance? Or would you have kept your head down-perhaps even collaborated with the occupation? Would you have been a *résistant?* Or a*collabo?*

The fear behind the politics of 1968, as Berman tells the story, was at bottom a moral self-doubt. The '68ers were, Berman writes, "*résistants* who had nothing to resist," beset by what he called in *A Tale of Two Utopias* an "illegitimacy complex," forever bound to the moral standard set by the Resistance, but never able to know what they would have done during the occupation.

Fear-not so much of fascism as of being insufficiently committed to resisting fascism-inspired the '68er fascination with violence, then, since extreme moral tests demand extreme commitment, and violence signifies an extreme commitment. At first, New Left violence was violence by proxy: '68ers found their heroes in Third World dictators and would-be dictators like Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, and Che Guevara. Later, groups like West Germany's Red Army Fraction (not "Faction," as Berman takes pains to explain) or the Black Panthers and the Weather Underground in the US turned to violent acts of their own.

Only a few New Leftists engaged in terrorist violence, but quite a few more vaguely sympathized with them, and some members of these wider circles thought that it made sense at least to hit back when the police started roughing you up. These distinctions were not always clear, especially to outsiders. So, when *Stern* published old photos of Fischer striking a policeman three decades earlier, the story was picked up throughout the European mass media, and the result was what one French journalist called "the trial of the generation of 1968." Given Berman's subtitle, though, he seems to see these events as a story of crucifixion and resurrection. This "trial", he writes, revealed that the New Left's decline had been followed by a quiet transformation. Since 1968, "large numbers of veterans of the New Left"

found that they had to, and could, “put aside matters of mere philosophy or attitude and adopt actual positions and accept the political consequences.” This shift toward political responsibility began slowly in the 1970s but really flowered in the 1990s, especially in response to ethnic violence in the Balkans. If the NATO air strikes on Serbia were “the ’68ers’ war,” then a deep change would seem to have taken place: the New Left, after all, held opposition to the US war in Vietnam as one of its central articles. However, if the heart of the New Left was the desire to be a *résistant* rather than a*collabo,* this evolution makes sense: the New Left, Berman argues, had matured into a “liberal anti-totalitarianism.” For Berman, who notes his own roots in the *anarchisant* wing of the New Left, this evolution is a vindication: the best of the ’68er Maoists and Frankfurt School neo-Marxists, he tells us, have since come around to a politics that takes liberty as its definitive norm, as they should have done all along.

The story of this evolution, this slow move toward a new way of expressing a consistent anti-fascist impulse, this unfolding of the New Left’s mislaid potential, carries Berman from Germany to France, from Western Europe to Eastern, from Europe to the Americas, and back across the Atlantic to the Middle East as well. Berman traces the political and intellectual careers of several ’68ers, but the central figure of his story is Bernard Kouchner. A French red diaper baby who was turned down when he volunteered his services to revolutionary Cuba in the early 1960s, Kouchner followed Che another way: by becoming a doctor. After serving with the Red Cross in Biafra, he founded Doctors Without Borders, an organization whose bold direct-action humanitarianism represented, Berman suggests, a “Guevarism of the rights of man.”

The pivotal incident in *Power and the Idealists* comes when Kouchner turns his attention to the Vietnamese boat people, desperate refugees from Communism precariously afloat in the South China Sea in 1979. By “trolling in the sea for the purpose of rescuing the enemies of the People’s Republic,” Kouchner’s rescue mission raised fundamental questions about sovereignty and anti-Communism. Humanitarian principles, Kouchner proposed, trumped left fears that opposition to Communist regimes might prove objectively pro-imperialist, and legal claims of sovereignty were no match for the “higher right” of humanitarianism. If this new form of *résistant* politics was persuasive, though, it raised new questions:

> For if Kouchner was doing a good thing by sailing the seas of East Asia in a rented ship with six doctors (followed by a few other ships, after a while), why stop there? Why not launch rescue missions on a much larger scale, with more than a rented boat?…If a rented ship from France was a good idea, the Sixth Fleet was a better idea. This logic was undeniable. At least, Kouchner seemed to think so.

Berman seems to think so too, and he plays out Kouchner’s logic: if Kouchner’s Boat for Vietnam was a good idea, and if the Sixth Fleet is like the Boat for Vietnam, only better, and if Baathism is one of the contemporary guises of fascism, then the *résistant* commitment stretches in a clear if not straight line from the French Resistance itself to New Left militance to support for the Iraq War. For Berman, the Iraq War is the form that the politics of 1968 take when they grow up and become a foreign policy.

This is where Berman's argument falls apart. Berman seems to be playing a shell game with himself in which the distinction between *similar* and *same* disappears in the shuffle. Fighting fascism is like fighting hunger and disease; European fascism is like Baathism and Baathism is like Islamism; Kouchner's Boat for Vietnam is like the US Navy: somehow, the differences between these terms come to seem irrelevant, and the Iraq War ends up as a moral synthesis of the Resistance, the movement against the Vietnam War, New Left alternative kindergartens, and Doctors Without Borders. Once Berman reaches this conclusion, he trips over himself in his eagerness to defend the war. His deftness fails him as he strains to shore up the claims that promoting democracy was central to the Bush administration's Iraq policy all along, that anyway the other reasons for the war were not as disingenuous as they appeared (or appear), that the only problem with the war was bumbling incompetence, that the invasion could easily have had vastly different results. When the Iraq War the Bush administration fights turns out not to be the same as the Iraq War Berman wants, he seems surprised. Many readers will recognize their own responses to Berman's case for the war in Joschka Fischer's reply to Donald Rumsfeld's: "Excuse me, I'm not convinced.

To enumerate the slips in Berman's logic would be boring; the slips are there, and are easy enough to identify. Berman has invited us to judge *Power and the Idealists* by the standards of literature, though, to judge it "by smell and feel." It is hard to ignore the rotten odor: something is wrong here, and the problem is not just with Berman's logical slipperiness but, more importantly, with his moral hastiness, his stumbling hurry to enlist-figuratively, at least-in The Cause. Why the rush?

Berman does not tell us the answer to this question. He tells us, though, what Bernard Kouchner thought of Joschka Fischer's refusal to support the Iraq War. Kouchner noted to Cohn-Bendit that Fischer had long ago traded in the blue jeans he first wore to Parliament for more formal clothes. Perhaps, Kouchner speculated, Fischer "began to lose his way with his three-piece suit." Ensconced in a world of diplomats and bureaucrats, Fischer had become too wedded to consensus, dialog, caution. Fischer's failing, Berman invites us to conclude, was not that he remained faithful to the politics of 1968, but that he broke that faith: we could say that he set his street-fighting days behind him just when Berman thinks street-fighting of another sort is called for.

The most interesting way to read Berman might be to take him at his word. What if the liberal hawks' case for the Iraq War really is the contemporary guise of the politics of 1968? A politics of fear, a fascination with violence (or at least violence by proxy), an urgent need to prove oneself a *résistant*: what if these are themes that did not disappear from our politics when the dust settled after the Chicago convention? Kouchner's complaint about Fischer's three-piece suit sounds like what we might have expected Weather Underground sympathizers to say about the "clean for Gene" kids. Do the resemblances end there? Berman tells us about how the violent focos at the New Left's fringe received

> the active and even enthusiastic support of a not-so-small number of people, plus the passive support of far larger numbers, the leftists who would never have

> endorsed a program of violence and who wanted nothing to do with murders, but who would have said that, even so, the Red Army Fraction did have reason to despise bourgeois society.

It is easy to think of terms we could substitute for “Red Army Fraction” and “bourgeois” to give the passage a contemporary punch.

Berman asks us to be *résistants* rather than *collabos*, and he is surely right. He does not help us much, though, in figuring out when the *résistant* question is the right one to ask. Berman tells us that Fischer, in rejecting the Iraq War, wanted instead to pursue “a subtle and complicated fight against the new totalitarianism.” Berman finds this insufficiently *résistant*, but in rejecting Fischer’s formulation, he seems to forget his own best arguments. Just before the Iraq War began, Berman argued in *Terror and Liberalism* for a response to Islamist neo-fascism that would draw inspiration from the left-wing anti-communism of the late 1940s. Berman cited Léon Blum’s call for a democratic socialist “Third Force,” a “free-lance, left-wing internationalism, without government support” that would “out-compete Communism on the left” in Western Europe. Today’s anti-terrorist Third Force, Berman wrote, should be “neither realist nor pacifist-a Third Force devoted to a politics of human rights and especially women’s rights…a politics of ethnic and religious tolerance …a politics of secular education, of pluralism and law…a politics to fight against poverty and oppression; a politics of authentic solidarity for the Muslim world.” A “war on terror,” thus, would need to be “partly military but ultimately intellectual, a war of ideas.” In *Power and the Idealists*, Berman sweeps those ideas aside in favor of blunt militarism, but somewhere in that set of concepts lies the core of a liberal (and social democratic) anti-totalitarianism that is not so indebted to the moral panic of 1968. That calmer and more patient anti-totalitarianism might not help us convince ourselves that we would have been fearless *résistants* if we had been part of the generation of 1938. That is all right, though: we are not the generation of 1938, despite the ugly similarities between that time and ours. Berman reminds us that idealists need to be concerned with power; we need to think a bit harder, now, about what kinds of power can serve our ideals.

The Plot Against America, by Philip Roth

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 1

At the height of the Vietnam War a sly Harvard law student addressed an assembly of parents and alumni. “The streets of our country are in turmoil,’ he said.

“The universities are filled with students rebelling and rioting. Communists are seeking to destroy our country. Russia is threatening us with her might. And the republic is in danger. Yes! danger from within and without. We need law and order! Without law and order our nation cannot survive.” As audience applause died down, the speaker revealed that the words were first spoken by none other than Adolf Hitler in 1932.[1] It’s the sort of trick many a leftist has longed to pull off. Sure, you could lull the audience to smiling sleep with platitudes about the tough obstacles ahead. But, instead, you point out to them how, given the right circumstances and an enthralling leader, they might salute the tilted swastika and send “undesirables” *en masse* to gas chambers. Would the graduates still toss their caps in the air ?

Fascism’s place in the American ideological spectrum is not very well explored by historians: “it can’t happen here,” goes the usual, self-deluding phrase (though it was the title of Sinclair Lewis’ admonitory 1930s novel). Consider *The Authoritarian Personality*, which is still notable for its “F-scale,” whose sentences test a subject’s receptivity to authoritarianism and fascism: “Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn”; “What this country needs is fewer laws and agencies, and more courageous, devoted, tireless leaders, whom the people can put their faith in”; “The sexual orgies of the Greeks and Romans are nursery school stuff compared to some of the goings-on in this country today, even in circles where one would least expect it.”

Certainly we’ve heard these sentiments expressed, if in different phrasings. Ronald Reagan’s victories surely derived from his apparent “courageous, devoted, tireless” strength, and from his apparent (and ironic) opposition to “big government.” A modern authoritarian fervor surely was reflected in the elections of Silvio Berlusconi, George W. Bush, and Angela Merkel. In a world dominated by neoconservative shibboleths, the potential of fascism is no joke. “That this potential [for American Fascism] simmers in American society is significant enough,” Irving Howe, reflecting on the Republican nomination of Barry Goldwater, wrote in 1964.[2]

In Philip Roth’s *American Pastoral* (1997), one of the characters, watching Nixon’s circle on TV during the Watergate hearings, reflects that “these so-called patriots” would “take this country and make Nazi Germany out of it…these people have taken us to the edge of something terrible.” In light of the second Bush victory in 2004, it is certainly difficult not to exaggerate reactionary possibilities today. No amount of paranoia seems enough – what with revelations of secret CIA prisons, profilerating reports of torture, and unauthorized wiretapping. So it is impossible not to see Roth’s novel, published just before the election, as an allegory of our

present historical moment.

The novel imagines what if, in 1940, the anti-Semitic Charles Lindbergh ran for president against Franklin D. Roosevelt, and won? One of the novel's strengths is Roth's sketch of Lindbergh. He's always bright-eyed, tremendously affable. His infamous Des Moines speech in 1941, criticizing the undue influence of "Jewish groups" in the United States' march towards war, takes place earlier in the novel's time; Lindbergh never gives a speech like it as President. "To gauge the value of this man…wasn't difficult," the narrator reflects. "A virile hero. A courageous adventurer. A natural person of gigantic strength and rectitude combined with a powerful blandness." (Think Dubya crossing the carrier deck in his flight suit.) Lindbergh is the darling of the nation: "Lucky Lindy," with his daring transatlantic flight on *The Spirit of St. Louis*, "fearless Lindy, at once youthful and gravely mature, the rugged individualist, the legendary American man's man who gets the impossible done by relying solely on himself." When Lindbergh wishes to rouse the voting public, he jumps in his old airplane, and flies solo across the country, greeting cheering crowds at every airstrip.

There is not just a little of our non-soloing current president in Lindbergh—but I believe this isn't Roth's point. The mimicry extends to a myriad of political leaders, whose banality conceals, or is dependent upon, darker fantasies. The novel would have been less successful had Roth attempted a political thriller that exposed everything as President Lindbergh and his associates collaborate with and appease the Nazis. After all, while he sympathizes with fascists, he never exercises dictatorial power. But his collaboration with right-wing dictators is a feature of postwar American politics up to, and including, Saddam Hussein. We hear of the president's "unshakable conviction…that the best protection against the spread of Communism across Europe, into Asia, and the Middle East, and as far as to our own hemisphere was the total destruction of Stalin's Soviet Union by the military might of the Third Reich." This is the sort of sentiment that drove Cold War foreign policy afterward. Roth's portrait of a Lindbergh's administration is both frightening and comic by virtue of its being so ordinary.

Roth cultivates the novel's air of what his narrator calls "perpetual fear" by managing a claustrophobia of a different kind, by re-imagining not just political history, but his very own childhood within that history. *The Plot Against America*, far from being a "political novel," is largely a tale of two terrible years in the life of a family, and of a child, Philip Roth, forced to experience this period with no recourse. The narrator, reconstructing these years, uses an older, subdued voice but maintains an attenuated view of his younger self. Hence, his parents appear as outsized, uncomplicated figures. His father Herman Roth is a hard-working insurance salesman; his mother Bess is devoted, loving. Both are deeply opposed to Lindbergh. Meanwhile, Philip's older brother Sandy evinces teenage diffidence, which leads him in the wrong direction. Drawing skillful portraits of Lindbergh and others, Sandy soon gets caught up in Lindbergh adoration, and participates willingly in the anti-Semitic "Just Folks" program, designed to cart Jewish children to middle America for long summers to participate in the Christian farming life of the "heartland." Alvin, Herman Roth's nephew, who has moved in with the Roths after the death of his father, becomes fervently anti-Lindbergh, to the point that he heads to Canada to fight the Nazis on side of the British Commonwealth. He comes home an

amputee, still enraged but helpless.

Roth portrays a family completely at home in the United States. The Roths are nonplussed by the occasional Zionist visitor, asking for "a contribution toward the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine." "My parents would give me or Sandy a couple of coins to drop into his collection box," Philip writes, "largess, I always thought, dispensed out of kindness so as not to hurt the feelings of a poor old man who from one year to the next, seemed unable to get it through his head that we'd already had a homeland for three generations." Their Jewish-ness is ontologically inextricable from their American-ness, and equally unworthy of comment—until, of course, that former part of them becomes a target of the new administration.

The very fact of Lindbergh's election deposits them in a vastly different country. Non-Jewish neighbors are beyond comprehension. Young Philip begins following random Christians on his bus home from school, to try to understand their sudden otherness. Innocuously named but sinister programs like 'Just Folks' increase their paranoia that something far worse, like the violence conducted against the European Jews, threatens them. A relocation program begins to carry neighbors away, one by one—while Herman Roth quits his job so that he can remain in Newark. Soon, the Roths are pitted against each other. As a Lindbergh supporter, Sandy begins to accuse the Roths of suffering a "persecution complex" as "ghetto Jews." Bess slaps him twice. "She doesn't know what she's doing,' I thought, 'She's somebody else—everybody is.'"

Papers of "record" like *The New York Times* provide consistent, echo-chamber support for Lindbergh's stated goals. Walter Winchell, a classic type of muckraking columnist (who, as Roth notes in an historical postscript, actually moved to the extreme right after World War II), attempts to expose the murderous underside of Lindbergh's sunny demeanor, but the real exposure only takes place when he attempts to run for President. His candidacy sparks a series of anti-Semitic riots, finally resulting in his assassination.

At this point that the novel reaches its most terrifying pitch, partly accomplished by Roth's recourse to newsreel narration. Lindbergh disappears on one of his pep rally flights; his hawkish Vice President, Burton K. Wheeler, takes over, and presides over a reign of terror, tacitly encouraging pogroms which engulf many mid-Western cities. The Roths' neighbors, the Wishnows, having been moved to Kentucky, get targeted by a mob. Seldon Wishnow loses his mother—his father having been taken by tuberculosis earlier in the novel. The long-distance call between Bess Roth and Seldon is one of the emotional high-points of the novel. Significantly, Sandy Roth's Kentucky "homestay" family keeps Seldon at their home till the Roths are able to get him: not all the citizens are anti-Semites.

The terror is finally put to an end when unlikely heroine Lindbergh's wife demands special elections. Franklin Roosevelt wins, Pearl Harbor is bombed, and history as we know it proceeds —with the Allied powers defeating Germany and Japan. The "resumption of history" detail is the novel's most glaring false note. Is it really plausible that the disappearance of the United States from world events would occasion no further disturbance? Could things really go on as if

nothing had happened?

In a sense, nothing "happens" in Lindbergh's America, at least not as drastically as things "happened" in Europe. There is no fascist takeover. But that wider disasters suddenly become plausible and personal, is enough. Characters in the novel spend an inordinate amount of time discussing what Lindbergh might accomplish. *What is all this in aid of? What lies behind the rhetoric?* Few things they predict occur. Yet such paranoia is far from madness. The novel is only partially about the strong currents of anti-Semitism that existed in the pre-war United States. Roth allegorizes past political repressions, and perhaps also future ones whose horror we cannot envision. The festering silent oppression within the novel's world is that of America's blacks. Ostensibly casual references to subservient blacks —bellhops at a hotel lobby in Washington; alcoholics on Sandy's Kentucky farm—are the secret nerves of Roth's novel. The plausibility of the book's pogroms depends, partly, on the fact that they actually were inflicted on other American minorities.

So our freedoms are frighteningly contingent. When the novel came out in October 2004, its success surely drew upon fears of another impending Bush victory, and all the global nightmares such a consolidation of power might bring. Those nightmares have come to pass and more, but yet in ways that we could not have claimed to see entirely in advance. Watching his father break down in tears over Lindbergh's election, Philip reflects that we are "powerless to stop the unforeseen." Roth's counter-history exposes the specter of fascism that has kept out of sight in American political life, even though it remains a seemingly irrepressible threat. Different outcomes haunt the history we read and live, the possibilities of which we must imagine in order to conduct our present lives in order to have any effect The frightening thing is to feel in imagining it that there is so little one is able to see, and later, in retrospect, only so much one was able to do.

Notes

[1] Nancy Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? American Protest Against the War in Vietnam, 1963-75* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984) 241.

[2] Howe, "The Goldwater Movement," *Steady Work: Essays in the Politics of Democratic Radicalism 1953-1966* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1966) 229.

Review Of Into The Buzzsaw: Leading Journalists Expose The Myth Of A Free Press

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Into the Buzzsaw: Leading Journalists Expose the Myth of a Free Press,by Kristina Borjesson, Revised and Expanded Edition, Prometheus Books, 2004

This collection of essays and articles is intriguing and irritating in almost equal measure. The inside stories of life in the news media are revealing: they show how many sectors of the American media are constrained and intimidated by political and commercial pressures. But these stories are also strongly self-serving; they show reporters and investigators as always right, without doubt, and apparently incapable of critical self-reflection.

As an editor, I would hope never to have behaved as many of the editors and other news executives described here did. As an editor, I would hope not to have had to deal with too many of these reporters in the complaining mode they adopt here.

They tell stories of heroes (themselves) and of villains (their bosses). They draw their readers into their own righteous feeling of being victims. They assume readers' unquestioning acceptance of their versions of the news story they were chasing. They make blanket condemnations of the "mainstream media" that are contradicted directly by the evidence that many of them continue to be gainfully employed in those media. They castigate professional colleagues as sloppy, lazy, or cowardly.

All of this is a great shame, a demonstration of editorial misjudgement, as it distracts attention from the important effort to expose how America's media have increasingly become captives of government, state agency and corporate forces and of the ideology that underpins their operations. The revision and expansion of this collection seeks to take account of the intensification of this long-term process by reference to 9/11 and the "war on terror". It does this rather unsatisfactorily, through several rather light-weight contributions.

To "expose the myth of a free press" requires a more grounded sense of how the press operates in market economies generally. It also requires a more careful presentation of the strength and characteristics of that myth. The notion that freedom is either on or off is just plain silly. Yet, Greg Palast finds it in himself to announce, with emphasis: there is no freedom of the press in Britain. That claim is based on the absence of a First Amendment-type constitutional provision. Logically, that means, because the United States does have the First Amendment, there is freedom of the press in the USA. But that would rather spoil the point of this book.

Palast undoubtedly had a tough time getting his stories about the 2000 presidential election into print and on to air in Britain, but, from his own account, he appears to have fared much better there than in America. His allegation against The Guardian newspaper, and Europeans in general, that they somehow blamed 9/11 on Israel is outrageous and unsupported.

Much of the material in this collection relates to investigations that were undertaken, and thwarted, in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. They concern compromising relations between government and oil industry interests, chemical manufacturers, drugs gangs, right-wing guerrillas and cover-ups of major scandals, including a massacre during the Korean War, the abandonment of US prisoners of war held in Vietnam and the possible downing of TWA800 by a missile. Several contributions overlap, and many are overstretched beyond the point where readers who do not have an obsessive interest in the minutiae of media politics, will want to go.

The investigations focus on what one contributor calls “really dirty stuff”, the kind of stuff, when journalists try to dig it up, quickly brings them up against the (always present) limits of press freedom. Yet the journalists’ accounts and the biographical notes indicate that much of the material they sought to get out into the public domain did eventually get there, even if not in the form, or through the medium, that they originally intended.

The disappointments the journalists experienced are not without consequence, however. Since this book was published, one contributor, Gary Webb, who investigated corrupt relations between drugs-dealing gangs in California and law enforcement agencies, committed suicide. Webb’s legacy has been honoured by the publication on the web of material that was previously suppressed. The contribution of web publishing to changing the media environment in ways that counter the trend this book emphasises receives only passing reference.

Several contributors, while expressing their own individual powerlessness, underline the actual and potential power that journalism represents. Philip Weiss suggests that some of his former classmates are “now more powerful than many senators”, but he also indicates some sympathy for the “burden” that they carry in setting the agenda of public debate. David Hendrix considers journalism “one step below being a minister for God”, and offers sound advice to journalists that I will be happy to pass on to my students.

The capacity for critical reflection that these later contributions demonstrate contrasts with the self-congratulation of others. It is a striking characteristic of this book that almost all the contributors are identified as “award-winning”, “prize-winning”, or similar. The star system in journalism has been developed to a far greater extent in America than elsewhere. It makes journalists into competitive individuals more than professional colleagues. It matches perfectly the corporate media practices and principles which are the critical target of this book. The enthusiastic adoption of the star system in Into the Buzzsaw is just one of the unresolved paradoxes at its heart.