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The Sudan And The Crisis In Darfur

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 3-4

The Middle East is not merely a geographical designation, but a cauldron of ideological and material conflicts. Like all territories once subject to colonialism, its borders are arbitrary. Neither religious intolerance nor ancient tribal and ethnic hatreds respect them. Conflicts of this sort were rife in the Sudan. It is a huge country roughly the size of Western Europe, the largest in Africa, which borders nine other states.The Islamic-Arab world intersects with Africa in the Sudan. Its oil and resource rich provinces in the South, whose citizens mostly embrace Christianity or animism,[1] have for decades been resisting the authoritarian government of the North with its strong Muslim mass base. Overlapping traditional religious tensions are the roving groups of armed bandits, blood feuds, tribal hatreds, conflicts between cattle herders and farmers, availability of weapons, and an ongoing competition over shrinking natural resources, livestock, and water. Such is the landscape for the civil conflict, taking place off and on since the early 1950s, which has decimated the Sudan as surely as the Hundred Years War once destroyed Europe.

As for Darfur, which constitutes the western part of the Sudan, it is administratively divided into three parts running from North to South. Darfur is nearly the size of France, and marked by 153 squalid camps for what amounts to millions of “internally displaced persons.” These refugees fled their villages to escape the Sudanese military and the armed bandits on horseback known as the Janjaweed. Such roving marauders were, organized by the government of President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir in Khartoum to quell the ongoing rebellion in the region. Hunger, thirst, disease, filth, threats of rape and violence, and a stultifying idleness abound in these IDP camps with their sea of thatched huts, flimsy tents, and mud streets. The refugees wish only to return to their villages. But repatriating them, rebuilding their homes, and compensating the victims for what they have undergone is an expensive undertaking. Issues of this sort, coupled with the unwillingness of the government to disarm the Janjaweed, are at the root of the controversy concerning implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of January 2006 and, brokered by the African Union, the Darfur Peace Agreement of May 2006 (**http://sudan.net/news/posted/13216.html**).

A new bombing campaign by Khartoum against Darfur in August and September of 2006 drove tens of thousands more villagers into the camps and the 10,000 troops amassed by the regime in Khartoum might attempt to drive the IDPs over the border or disband the camps entirely thereby leading to death on a mass scale. About 7000 troops from the African Union had been stationed in Darfur to protect them. But they have been harshly criticized for their

incompetence and inexperience. Even before the 30th of September 2006, when the mandate for the African Union troops was set to expire, the requisite funds for maintaining them had almost run out. On 31 August, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for "re-hatting" some of them, adding a few thousand civilian police, and mixing them with roughly 17,000 troops sent by the UN. Under the auspices of the United Nations, this force would be used to protect the refugees from the Janjaweed and the Sudanese military in the future. Nevertheless, President Al-Bashir was adamant in his refusal either to extend the mandate of troops from the African Union or allow the UN the right to intervene in Sudanese affairs.

Many refugees living in IDP camps would undoubtedly welcome the UN. That is also true of certain rebel groups like the Justice and Equality Movement led by Khalil Ibrahim, and the Sudanese Liberation Movement/ Army faction led by Abdelwahid Mohamed al-Nur, which have refused to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement of May 2006 thereby initiating conflicts with other oppositional groups that have signed and further heightening instability in the region (www.washingtonpost.com. 5 September 2006). Some have even insisted that it would be best for all concerned if the Southern region of the Sudan and Darfur were to secede. Given the wealth of oil and resources in the South and its natural concern with national sovereignty, however, the Khartoum government will do everything possible to prevent the secession of various provinces that might be sparked by the entry of foreign troops by the United Nations. In Khartoum no less than in Iran, Libya, and elsewhere anti-western radicals argued that the UN was nothing more than a front for "imperialist powers" intent upon "re-colonizing" the Sudan. Anti-western rhetoric increased and the bad press suffered by the Sudan was ever more routinely attributed to Jewish control over the media. Such charges were mostly self-serving propaganda. But the toppling of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the American occupation of Iraq, and the generally bellicose policy of the Bush Administration lent credence to such charges in some quarters.[2]

Censorship and the assault on civil liberties had become less stringent in the six months that followed the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. With what was presented as the rising threat from abroad, however, domestic repression by the regime of President Al-Bashir intensified. Governmental surveillance tightened, newspapers were shut down, and street demonstrations disbanded by the police. As far as "regime change" is concerned, however, its beneficiaries would most likely not be the "democratic parties," which are run by families and grounded in tribal loyalties, but Islamic fundamentalists who-in spite of the splits between moderate and extremist elements[3] –constitute the only genuinely mass movement in the Sudan.

What impact the entry of UN troops might have on a singularly multi-cultural nation the size of

the Sudan is impossible to predict. But it is possible to imagine that a national resistance will take shape and that IDPs living in the camps might well find themselves caught in the middle of a maelstrom far worse than what has gripped Iraq. Eighty tribes in the Sudan have their own militias, previous peace agreements are in doubt, Islamic fundamentalists are training in the Jebel Marra Mountains, and the country seems set to implode.

* * *

Such were the thoughts that went through my mind as I and thirteen other mostly American academics, representing Conscience International, deplaned in Khartoum on 3 September 2006. We were there to participate in a two-day conference that would be attended by a host of leading Sudanese politicians and academics. The humanitarian activist and leader of our delegation, Dr. Jim Jennings, had performed a Herculean task in securing our visas and, in cooperation with our hosts, organizing what would become a remarkably candid exchange of views. Aside from an excursion to the pyramids of the long vanished Kush civilization, the pharmaceutical factory mistakenly bombed under the orders of President Bill Clinton, and then an extraordinary Sufi religious ritual, a visit to the Darfurian IDP camp of Abu Shouck near El Fasher was also organized at the last minute. Our group was treated with great respect and hospitality by the Council for International People's Friendship and its influential Secretary General, Ahmed Abd Al-Rahman Mohammed, and Hasim El-Tinay of the Institute for Internal Peace & Dialogue.

An atmosphere of crisis hung over Khartoum. We learned quickly about the Sudanese dislike for the condescension and provincialism exhibited by American diplomats — something I had heard everywhere in my travels through the Middle East, and we noted how chilly the interaction was that took place between these politicians and diplomats from two very different worlds. It was clearly because we were not professional politicians or diplomatic representatives of the United States, but cosmopolitan academics engaged in citizen diplomacy that we were able to engage the Sudanese in so frank a manner. As for the conference, which was videotaped, various panels dealt with possible ways for restructuring the Sudanese educational system and the opportunities for investment. My panel, however, dealt explicitly with the crisis in Darfur. The chairperson was the former Sudanese Ambassador to the United States, Charles Manyang. On my left in a smart business suit was the governmental minister, Dr. El-Tijani Mustafa, who defended official policies and denied the organized employment of the Janjaweed in Darfur while on my right, dressed in beautiful white robes and a white turban was Dr. Abdelrahman Dosa who subjected official policy to a sober critique. He explained how the Janjaweed were being used by Khartoum both for murderous purposes and to pursue a civil war on the cheap against citizens and rebels in Darfur as well as in Southern Sudan.

My presentation of 6 September 2006 sought to explore some ways of defusing the international crisis and overcoming the apparent hardening of positions in the Sudan no less than in the West. I was struck by how seriously the audience took what I said and I soon learned the reason why. For all the public rhetoric, I was later told again and again, Khartoum was looking for an exit, "with honor" — from the crisis its leaders had so unconscionably

created. I made a number of suggestions in my talk. The most important concerned the need to rethink the question of military deployment and Dr. Nasir Elseed of the Islamic Socialist Party as well as Aldondoni Deng, of the National Congress Party, greeted it with enthusiasm. Sheik Ahmed Abd AL-Rahman told me on the 7th of September that he would deliver my working paper along with his own comments to the two Sudanese Vice-Presidents and that it would then be "discussed further."

Indications that Khartoum was becoming more flexible on extending the mandate of African troops were first made in public on 11 September 2006 and adding 4,000 more troops was deemed acceptable. The mandate of these troops was then extended to December 30th 2006 with the possibility for a further extension to 1 April 2007. On the 14th of September, the Sudanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Al-Samani Al-Wasila, in Addis Ababa called for a "partnership" among the African Union, the Sudan, and the International community rather than enforced resolutions (**http://sudan.net/news/posted/13227.html**).*The New York Times* subsequently reported on the 21th September 2006 that the Sudanese government would allow for "logistical" support from the United Nations to help the African Union. As funding was acquired from the Arab League, and the European Union, willingness to accept "logistical support" turned into the willingness to accept "military advisors" from the United Nations.[4] On 6th October 2006, finally, a spokesman for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan stated that he had received a letter from President al-Bashir in which he formally accepted the proposal to provide UN military support to the African Union Mission in the Sudan. Finally, as reported on the 25th October by the *South Africa News,* President Bashir stated that "We have no objection to the African Union increasing its troops, strengthening its mandate, or even receiving logistical support from the European Union, the United Nations, or the Arab League for that matter, but this must, of course, be done in consultation with the government of national unity."

With revisions, and naturally without attribution, this position taken by the president reflected the most important recommendation made in my presentation. Maybe it was a coincidence since there are often many voices urging the same policy. As the proverb says: "Success has many fathers; failure is an orphan." Conscience International was, however, clearly in the right place at the right time and it seems that citizen diplomacy driven by good will always offers the prospect of a better outcome than imperial hubris. The new position regarding a "partnership," in any event was a prudent move by a Sudanese regime known for its stubbornness. But the new course is not set in stone. Making further progress will depend upon whether the United Nations, the United States, and western opinion-makers make the commitment to engage not to act hastily and cooperate with the Sudan, peacefully, in an attempt to resolve one of the most terrible crises of our time.

* * *

Positions had seemingly grown intractable when our conference began. It was as if, on a number of crucial issues — international organizations intent upon preventing mass murder were facing off against an intractable authoritarian government concerned with preserving the

sovereignty of the Sudan. If supporters of UN intervention seemed blind to constraints, the political issue with respect to dealing with the Sudanese was not whether their suspicions regarding the imperialist ambitions of the UN were legitimate, but whether they believed them to be legitimate. Because it has often been a tool of western "great power" interests, and also because vetoes on so many resolutions have been made by the United States on behalf of Israel, the political intentions of the United Nations are still generally greeted with suspicion in much of the previously colonized world.

Suspicions of this sort made it important to emphasize that the United Nations is not identifiable merely with its Security Council, which is undemocratically constituted and weighted in favor of the more powerful western states, or its General Assembly that is powerless other than with respect to articulating world opinion on any given matter. The United Nations also oversees the World Health Organization and UNESCO along with various disaster relief agencies that have provided enormous help to the most unfortunate peoples including the Palestinians. The United Nations Charter, I noted, also recognizes the sovereignty of its member states and it explicitly endorses the notion of national self-determination. Especially over the last few years, given its opposition to the American invasion of Iraq and the Israeli war on Lebanon, it is difficult to argue that the UN is simply a stand-in for the United States or that it is driven principally by imperialist designs on the Sudan.

But, for all that, more sensitivity is necessary in dealing with the lingering memories of imperialism with regard to Africa in general and the Sudan in particular. That the Sudanese political leaders should have preoccupied themselves with defending the sovereignty of their country is only natural. Having said that, however, something else follows. Insofar as national self-determination is a universal right, I noted those who lay claim to it must recognize that they are part of the international community. Thus, I insisted that it would prove both impractical for the Sudan simply to turn inward.

An alternative was required to the choice between deploying either UN or Sudanese troops in Dafur. This called for, using philosophical terminology, mediating between abstract universal and provincial national concerns. Or, to put it another way, not two, but three interests needed to be acknowledged. There was the interest in the human rights of Southern dissidents and especially the IDPs in Darfur, which was the express concern of the UN and various disaster relief agencies, the interest of the Sudanese government in Khartoum, and, just as importantly, the regional interest represented by the African Union. Each of these interests, in my view, needed to be taken into account in sketching new ways of dealing with four issues pertinent to preventing further bloodshed in the Sudan and increasing bloodshed in Darfur. My aim, therefore, was not to "resolve the conflict," or provide definitive solutions to the problems facing the Sudan, Darfur, and the region. It was instead to offer a set of talking points that might provoke the formulation of more flexible policies beyond mere troop deployment that might bring the opposing parties closer together. My arguments and proposals concerning the controversy over the deployment of troops, the discovery of information, the activities of relief agencies, and stopping the sale of military hardware can be summarized as follows:

1) The United Nations was seeking to integrate, or better "re-hat" 7,700 African Union forces into a UN force of 22,000 that would guarantee the safety of those living in the 153 IDP camps that dot the landscape of Dafur. The Sudanese government adamantly rejected that idea and, instead, wished to employ 10,000 of its own troops to provide security. My suggestions for moving beyond the impasse called for extending the mandate and increasing the authority of the African Union. It proposed a change of focus that would rest upon integrating Sudanese police or militia with military personnel from the United Nations, and "re-hatting" them, under the command structure of the African Union. A check would thereby be provided on any "imperialist" designs by the United Nations, no less than the more ominous ambitions of the regime in Khartoum, while privileging the potentially wide-ranging regional impact of the crisis. Such a plan would balance the concerns of the Sudanese with national sovereignty, the needs of "internally displaced persons," and the broader interests of the region. It was never meant to offer any guarantee of "success" or the certainty that the ongoing humanitarian disaster would be brought to an end. It merely provided what, in my opinion, amounted to the best bet, and, what should not be underestimated, an African solution to an African problem.

2). Not only the United Nations, but also various relief agencies fear that mass murder is taking place in Darfur, though only the United States has officially used the term in the present context. These organizations believe that 400-500, 000 people have perished in the recent conflicts while official Sudanese studies estimate somewhere between 60,000-160,000. There is something profoundly disgusting about using numbers in this manner. But whose are correct is a matter of some importance. There is only one way of arriving at an answer. Continue to allow independent investigators, who are guaranteed security by the Sudanese government, into Darfur. In fact, I suggested expanding the number of researchers, and perhaps creating a set of international teams — independent of any organization or state with a direct stake in the crisis. The more studies that emerge the more the likelihood of finding some consensual answers to pressing questions concerning the magnitude of events in Darfur as well as their impact on nations like Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and the Central African Republic that harbor more than 350,000 Sudanese refugeeshttp://sudan.net/news/posted/13226.html). Information on the terrible problems plaguing Darfur will, quite obviously — have a profound impact in determining the solutions to them and rendering a judgment on the question of "genocide."[5]

3) Khartoum is being blamed for the mass murder looming over Darfur not merely due to the murderous activities of the Janjaweed, but also because humanitarian relief agencies insist that their efforts are being obstructed. They point to the use of red tape in delaying visas, the lack of security cooperation provided by law enforcement agencies, and general forms of bureaucratic harassment. The Sudanese have pleaded concerns over "security" to justify the obstacles placed in the path of representatives from international organizations, humanitarian relief agencies, and even foreign politicians seeking to enter the country. My proposal was that the African Union in cooperation with Sudanese representatives should be empowered to determine which humanitarian agencies should be allowed entry.

4) But that suggestion elided an issue that could not be raised publicly, namely, fear by Sudanese military leaders and politicians that they would be arrested on charges of having

committed war crimes. That fear was only strengthened by a joint statement of European Union foreign ministers that officials of the Sudanese government and military would be "held accountable" for war crimes (**http://sudan.net/news/posted/13247.html**) Various possibilities for dealing with them can be discussed after peace is achieved. But for the time being, in my view, improving conditions for the IDPS in Darfur is more important than capturing and trying war criminals. Thus, my proposal , and I recognize its distasteful character, was that neither UN personnel nor humanitarian relief workers associated with any international agency should pursue arrest warrants on Sudanese nationals even should the appropriate indictments have been provided by the International Criminal Court. [6]

5) More nations and peoples than the Sudanese and the IDPS have a stake in the crisis that has been generated in Darfur. It also has implications for the stability of nine governments whose innumerable tribes cut across national boundaries. Fighting is already taking place between different tribes, cattle growers and farmers, and private militias along the various borders separating the Sudan from other countries. The United Nations has placed an arms embargo of unspecified length on the Sudan. The Sudanese leadership has, meanwhile, stated its objection to such a ban. As things now stand the supply of arms continues to grow and, along with it, arms demand. It is imperative to highlight this situation and throw the glare of public opinion upon it.

Here, again, the African Union should take the lead. It might start by sponsoring regional conferences between political representatives as well as civic leaders and respected intellectuals from different nations in the region. Other conferences and public events, organized by international peace organizations, could publicize the problems caused by the largest sellers of military goods like China, France, Russia, and the United States. Even officially the United States could actually play a positive role, and improve its moral standing in the international community, by implementing its own law against arms brokering rather than waiting until other nations do likewise. Articulating policies whereby the states of the region might, following Max Weber, gain a monopoly over the legitimate means of coercion would be a first step toward disarming the various tribal militias and creating the forms of basic "security" that serve as the precondition for economic development. The more immediate possibility, however, is to build the climate against violence through the use of mass media, demonstrations, concerts, conferences, and the like.

This suggestion, admittedly, has a certain utopian ring to it. Participation by the most culpable states would be difficult to secure if only because taking part would be tantamount to admitting their culpability in supplying or demanding arms. There is also the vexing question regarding whom to invite and whether to include representatives from rebel groups. Then, too, conferences, concerts, and even the use of mass media mostly have only an indirect effect on policy. Nevertheless, there is something profoundly shortsighted about refusing to think at all about the possibilities for a lasting peace in the region because horrible forms of conflict have continued for so long.

* * *

“Global Darfur Day” took place on 17 September 2006. Tens of thousands worldwide marched against the prospect of further loss of life in the Sudan. It is easy to be cynical. Little concern had previously been expended by the West over the roughly 4 million who had died over the last few years in the Congo, the 1.6 million dead and displaced in Uganda, or the 1 in 3 Malawians living below subsistence. These events overshadow what has transpired in Darfur. Having allowed the perpetration of certain humanitarian injustices in prior instances, of course, does not invalidate the attempt to prevent yet another disaster. World opinion did ultimately help pressure Khartoum into seeking a compromise. But this does not justify what so many of the protesters proposed as a policy. There is, indeed, something disheartening about the way in which Darfur was turned into a designer crisis, a media event, sentimentally over-simplified by celebrities and decent people trying to do the right thing like George Clooney, Mia Farrow and Elie Wiesel.

Mr. Clooney warned that Darfur is the new millennium’s first genocide; Ms. Farrow claimed that she saw “the need for help in the refugees’ eyes;” and Elie Wiesel made the Sudan yet another object of his insufferably self-righteous and selective moralizing. None of them had anything concrete to suggest other than that sanctions should be introduced or, alternatively, that UN troops should be deployed against the Sudan. Nothing much was said about finding a compromise or forging a new approach to the crisis. Already the influential neo-conservative foreign policy analyst, Robert Kagan, has demanded an invasion of Sudan by the United States while American State Department officials have suggested the need for an oil embargo and that France might be prevailed upon to attack Sudanese military air transports. Our celebrities and mainstream liberal activists could thus be left in a terribly difficult situation. Should the UN have proved unable to impose sanctions or intervene, because of a veto introduced by China or Russia in the Security Council, the choice for Mr. Clooney and his friends would be between “doing nothing”, and perhaps watching the existing peace agreements collapse (**http://sudan.net/news/posted/13228.html**) or supporting the United States in undertaking yet another high-handed gesture if not, more ominously, another ill-advised military adventure with imperialist overtones.[7]

The United States has already placed economic sanctions on nearly fifty nations, roughly a third of the states in the world community, and other powerful nations, especially China, have stepped into the breech. China is now creating a news media devoted solely to economic issues, which will broadcast in Arabic 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, and I was told in Khartoum that a meeting is being planned between twenty-two Arab and African nations and China to discuss new venues for trade. Little thought has been given to the humanitarian impact sanctions would have on the Sudan, which ranks among the top 20 least trade dependent states and 139th on the United Nations’ Human Misery Index, let alone the logistics and the realizable aims of 22,000 UN troops, alien to the terrain and the culture of Darfur, patrolling an area of 290,00 square kilometers. It is also a western conceit to believe that UN troops will somehow prove more competent than those of the African Union.

Because the United Nations has been brought into play does not give intervention some kind of holy imprimatur. Such a substitution would surely insult African sensibilities. National

resistance might well take place and, it is worth noting that, upon visiting Darfur various representatives frompreviously warring tribes, including those from the politically powerful Zagawa and Rizgat tribes, candidly told our group that their people would engage in guerilla actions against any “invading” force. Tens of thousands of new refugees might flee their villages bloating further the old and creating scores of new camps. Even were that not to occur, however, the fighting in Sudan could touch off a regional crisis of potentially horrifying proportions.

A very different course of action remains possible. In concert with highlighting the role of the African Union, and pressuring remaining recalcitrant rebel groups to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement, an intelligent diplomatic policy, that might counter the regional advances of China–would reject the use of economic sanctions and immediately lift those that exist. Such a policy would emphasize the need for micro-investment to increase the number of those with a stake in Sudanese society and would link macro-investment to the building of an infrastructure in the country.[8] It would call for new funding for the nearly broke increasing the funding of the nearly broke United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which has repatriated over 12,000 IDPs, expand educational and cultural exchanges with the Sudan, and foster greater cooperation with the African Union.

Such a policy is, of course, not quite as dramatic as what yet another coalition of neo-conservative and liberal hawks has proposed for the Sudan. No less than in Afghanistan and Iraq, though this time in a nation 30 times the size of Sierra Leone and 100 times the size of Rwanda, they have called for foreign intervention in order to produce “regime change” under conditions that remain unexamined and in the face of constraints that are not taken into account. It doesn’t matter whether their intentions are good. Should their more intemperate proposals be embraced by the United Nations, or the United States, the wretched of the earth will wind up, again — bearing the consequences of military action by powerful “allies” who will surely forget about them once the costs rise or, perhaps even worse, the next crisis comes along.

Notes

[1] See the “Sudan: International Religious Freedom Report” that was released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor on 15 September 2006.

[2] More credence was given to anti-western voices when it became public that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been pressing over many months for the creation of an American military command focused solely on Africa (Reuters 23 September 2006).

[3] Note the interesting discussion by George Packer, “Letter from Sudan” in *The New Yorker* (11 September 2006).

[4] Khartoum’s most important representative on Darfur, Majzou al-Khalifa, is quoted as saying: There is a third way. . . Why not let the UN place its men, command expertise and

material at the service of the African Union mission?" (Associated Press 26 September 2006).

[5] "Genocide" is not merely a general term, but an official designation that, according to the UN Charter, requires actionto halt it. Controversy therefore surrounds the definition of what is occurring in Darfur. Jonathan Steele addressed the matter in a particularly blunt fashion in *The South Africa Press* (19 September 2006): "In spite of efforts to describe the killing in Darfur as genocide, neither the UN nor the EU went along with this description [due to] the difference between a brutal civil war and a deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing. Darfur is not Rwanda. Only the U.S. accepted the genocide description, though this seemed a concession to domestic lobbies rather than a matter of conviction. Washington never followed through with the forcible intervention in Darfur that international law requires once a finding of genocide is made."http://r02.webmail.aol.com/19939/aol/en-us/mail/display-message.aspx

[6] In 2005, " the UN Security Council passed a historic resolution calling for the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate war crimes in Darfur. The II will help establish a public record, deter future crimes, promote victim reparation, help catalyze reform in Sudan's courts, and assign individual –not group-responsibility for the crimes. These are critical components to reconciliation."*Amnesty International* (Fall 2006), pg. 15.

[7] In speaking about UN Resolution 1706, which concerned itself with the deployment of troops to the Sudan, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Kristen Silverbeg said on 15 September 2006 that "its absolutely the case" that a military force could be dispatched without the consent of the Sudanese government and that the United States had insisted "there be no language in the resolution that required explicit endorsement of the Sudanese government" (http://sudan.net/news/posted/13255.html)

[8] Note some of the interesting suggestions made by Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York: Penguin, 2005), pgs. 5-74, 226-266.

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Animals And The Limits Of Justice

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I

In the third century AD the Neo-Platonic philosopher Porphyry offered with his *De abstinentia* an impressive case for a radical change in the ethical treatment of nonhumans. In summarizing past debates and rebutting rationalizations for animal exploitation, Porphyry dealt with many traditional philosophical objections. Among them, one is particularly ambitious. Attributed by Porphyry to the Stoics, it is usually referred to as the Stoic objection concerning justice. The objection maintains that justice is destroyed – "confounded" – by any endeavour to extend it to nonhumans, since, for those who make such an attempt, no road of justice is left, "either broad or narrow". I shall first consider the use of the notion of justice in this context. Then, I shall challenge the allegation in its own merits, connecting its elements with somewhat parallel contemporary arguments. Finally, I shall reverse its claim. In other words, what I shall argue is that justice is destroyed by its being confined to human beings.

The Text

Porphyry's summary of the Stoic objection is very dense:

Our opponents therefore say, in the first place, that justice will be confounded, and things immoveable be moved, if we extend what is just, not only to the rational, but also to the irrational nature; conceiving that not only Gods and men pertain to us, but that there is likewise an alliance between us and brutes, who [in reality] have no conjunction with us….

For he who uses these as if they were men, sparing and not injuring them, thus endeavoring to adapt to justice that which it cannot bear, both destroys its power, and corrupts that which is appropriate, by the introduction of what is foreign. For it necessarily follows, either that we act unjustly by [not] sparing them, or if we spare, and do not employ them, that it will be impossible for us to live. We shall also, after a manner, live the life of brutes, if we reject the use of which they are capable of affording…. For it would be impossible to assign any work, any medicine, or any remedy for the want which is destructive of life, or that we can act justly, unless we preserve the ancient law illustrated by Hesiod, a law by which, distinguishing the natural kinds and giving each class its special domain,

"To fishes, savage beasts, and birds, devoid
Of justice, Jove to devour each other
Granted; but justice to mankind he gave."

i.e., toward each other.

But it is not possible for us to act unjustly towards those who cannot be just towards us. Hence, for those who reject this reasoning, no other road of justice is left, either broad or narrow, into which they can enter. For, as we have already observed, our nature, not being sufficient to itself, but indigent of many things, would be entirely destroyed, and enclosed in a life involved in difficulties, inorganic, and deprived of necessaries, if excluded from the assistance derived from animals.1

Justice

What exactly is one referring to when one discusses justice and animals? In a recent discussion of the question, 2 Martha Nussbaum states that, under the capabilities approach she favors – an approach stressing that individuals have the basic right to be "all that they can be" with the support of internal and external conditions – nonhumans, as conscious and purposive agents, do have entitlements based upon justice. However, speaking of animals who are under human control, she does not advocate their enfranchisement, but merely laws banning cruel treatment. She also suggests that research that inflicts pain and premature death on nonhumans, thus violating their basic entitlements, should continue if it is really necessary for a major human capability. Thus, what Nussbaum refers to seems to be a quite limited form of protection – nothing more than some restraint to be imposed on our exploitive behavior. It seems that what we face here is a typically post-Cartesian perspective, characterized by a focus on animal suffering and a disregard for animal lives.3 Can this really be called justice?

In Greek mythology, justice, or Dike, is a powerful character.4 At the dawn of Western philosophical reflection, the goddess is still present as a metaphor for the abstract notion of justice, and a proof of her power is offered by the way Parmenides defines her – Dike the Equalizer.5 Though much of this halo goes lost in subsequent philosophers, justice remains one of the most eminent among our ethical notions. Indeed, Aristotle states in the *Nichomachean Ethics* that justice, insofar as it is displayed towards others, is often thought to be the "chief of the virtues". 6 And it is to Aristotle that we owe the most pervasive philosophical framing of the question of justice and its place in ethical and political discourse. In the *Politics*, Aristotle on the one hand suggests that justice is defined to be equality in relation to individuals, and on the other raises the question, In what does such equality consist? Thus, he first offers us a formal principle, which tells us that relevantly similar cases are to be treated alike. Such formal principle is first and foremost a principle of rationality – since reasons are general, when two situations are relevantly alike, the reasons that apply are the same – and becomes an ethical principle when it is applied to the treatment of individuals. Second, in relation to such principle, he points to a problem that is not formal but substantive: what are the relevant similarities and dissimilarities, and why are they relevant? 7 In spite of impressive changes in

the substantive interpretation of the underlying idea of equality, Aristotle's formal principle can be seen as an enduring aspect of philosophical discussions about justice.8 The formal aspect of justice will in fact remain quite uncontroversial in ethical and political reflection. It will reach Thomas Aquinas, 9 and will be later embodied by authors as distant as Hume and Kant,as well as in the different strands of thought they generated. 10

If, in the light of this brief survey, we go back to Nussbaum's views, it is plausible to ask: how does she specify, and justify, both the relevant conception of equality and the attendant relevant differences between humans and nonhumans which authorize her to reduce justice to such a small thing when applied to the latter group? The answer is disappointing. Apparently, Nussbaum does not even deal with the question – she merely assumes that there are relevant differences, and that they are so weighty as to sanction a weighty difference in treatment. In obvious contrast with this, what the Stoics consider as the extension of justice to nonhumans is captured by the idea of treating them as if they were human beings – "For he who uses these as if they were men…" – something that directly points to the formal approach to justice as equality in treatment. Moreover, such extension revolves around the possibility of "sparing and not injuring them" – that is, not exploiting them for food or work – something that specifies the normative requirement of banning their institutional use as mere means. In other words, what is at stake is the inclusion of nonhumans in the human community and covenants.

It is thus to this use of the notion of justice in its full force that I shall refer when I shall challenge the Stoic objection in its own merits. Formally, by extension of justice to nonhumans I shall mean just the extension of a like treatment with human beings. And, normatively, since what is in question is basic treatment – institutional protection from exploitation – I shall set aside specific philosophical interpretations in order to focus on fundamental moral equality as specified by the universally accepted doctrine of human rights.

According to the best justification of such doctrine, the requisite that entitles to equal human rights is that of being an agent – an intentional being having goals and wanting to pursue them. It is common belief that (many) members of species other than our own are agents – as we have seen, Nussbaum herself concedes this. Thus, I shall number (many) nonhumans among the candidates for admission into the sphere of equal justice, and I shall then consider if the Stoics' alleged grounds for their exclusion meet the standards of relevance embodied in the contemporary egalitarian paradigm. If such grounds turn out to be irrelevant, then (many) nonhumans will be shown to be like cases with humans, deserving like basic treatment.

II

Having so clarified our general framework, we can directly turn to the Stoics' allegation. It is apparent that the objection, which, as presented, is somewhat confused, is dominated by the scheme of the *reductio ad absurdum* – that is, by that type of logical argument where one assumes a claim, arrives at an absurd result, and then concludes that the original assumption was wrong, since it gave an absurd result. Accordingly, it is to specific versions of such argument that our classification will make reference. We shall lump all the arguments around

three headings: metaphysical absurdity, practical absurdity, and ethical absurdity.

Metaphysical Absurdity

Perhaps the most striking among the Stoic statements is the claim that, if we extend justice not only to rational, but also to irrational beings, "things immoveable be moved". To what exactly are the Stoics referring? Our mistake in extending justice to the other animals would lie, it is claimed, in "conceiving that not only Gods and men pertain to us, but that there is likewise an alliance between us and brutes, who… have no conjunction with us". The notion of "connection", or affinity – *oikeiosis* – which is central to Stoic ethics, refers to an innate care for one's own self which, though present in all animals, in humans is allegedly programmed by the natural order to reach beyond themselves to their family and group, and then, more dilutedly, to the entire human race – but to no nonhuman beings.11 The Latin author Cicero thus summarizes the Stoics' view: "Just as [they] think that the bonds of justice unite men with each other, so too they deny that there is any bond of justice between man and beast. [They] expressed it well, saying that everything else was born for the sake of men and gods, but they were born for the sake of their own community and society".12 Accordingly, the absurdity involved would consist in contradicting a twofold belief about the way the world is arranged – the belief that a) there is a natural connection between humans and Gods, while b) there is no similar connection between humans and nonhumans.

It is not necessary to point to the mention of "Gods" to stress that the reference framework of the allegation is a specific interpretation of the universe. It is not uncommon – indeed, it is the rule – for pre-modern, non-autonomous ethics to directly borrow normative stances from descriptive premises. In fact, the contemporary philosophical descriptive/prescriptive contrast is out of place here. For, first, such worldviews integrate empirical description with particular metaphysical construals. And, second, they assume the perspective that Being, or the ultimate reality, already embodies values which the "good" human life should assume. Returning to our point, one among the Stoics' main ethical tenets is that the good human life resides in "following nature," and that, as we have seen, implies the withholding of affinity from nonhuman beings.13

What, then, should we make of the Stoic interpretation of nature's intentions regarding Gods, humans and nonhumans, and of the connected idea that such intentions carry for us normative implications? As for the former aspect, an obvious problem arises. While we know how to justify or correct our beliefs on physical objects, we have no idea regarding how to justify or correct our metaphysical beliefs on the ultimate nature of things. Due to its metaphysical component, thus, the Stoic denial of a connection between "us and brutes" turns out to be the fruit of an unverifiable stance which cannot aspire to universal acceptance, and should therefore be excluded just as we exclude any idiosyncratic metaphysical views from human rights theory. Incidentally, moreover, it should be noted that what contemporary science tells us is just the contrary. For today's scientific paradigm informs us that, if there is a clear and demostrable connection, this is the one between humans and animals – indeed, between human and nonhuman animals.

If, on the other hand, we turn to the latter element – that is, to the injunction to respect such an alleged order of nature by not intermingling with animals – the obvious rejoinder is that such injunction violates Hume's law, insofar as it directly derives an *ought* from an *is*.14 In other words, even in case the interpretation of the nature of things to which the Stoics point had the support of scientific enquiries rather than of metaphysical speculations, we could not directly derive from it either the specific Stoic injunction or any other injunctions whatsoever. To better understand this point, consider an analogous derivation of a matter of value from a matter of fact. In the scientific field of sociobiology, some authors have argued for the "naturalness" of male dominance within the human species. Following the lines of the Stoic argument, in case we reached the conclusion that this disturbing aspect of our social life is indeed for us a natural biological inclination, we should not only desist from morally blaming it, but should also stop endeavouring to minimize it.15

In the light of this, it seems we can reject the metaphysical *reductio*. Before concluding, however, a further point is worth emphasizing. One key element of the contemporary discussion of the ethical treatment of nonhumans is the challenge to the discrimination against animals on the grounds of their biological membership. For it often happens that, both at the lay and at the philosophical level, it is claimed that we are entitled to withhold justice from animals simply because they "are not human" – something that, in today's discussion, amounts to saying that they don't posses a genotype characteristic of the species *Homo sapiens*. The challenge to this form of discrimination is quite straightforward: if we maintain, as we do, that biological characteristics such as race or sex membership cannot in themselves carry any direct ethical weight – that *racism* and *sexism* are unacceptable – then we cannot grant direct ethical weight to another biological characteristic such as species membership – *speciesism* too is unacceptable.16 In the face of such a challenge, it is difficult to understand how speciesism can be defended at all. If, however, rather than confining our attention to the contemporary biologic outlook on species differences, we broaden our attention to the traditional metaphysical approaches of which the Stoic doctrine is an example, and which include essentialist views of human and animal "nature" implying differences in kind often charged with sacral significance, we can shed some light on the persistence of such an implausible way of drawing the moral line between human and nonhuman beings.

Practical Absurdity

But even if, by extending justice to nonhuman animals, we do not "corrupt that which is appropriate, by the introduction of what is foreign", are we perhaps indeed entering a blind-alley? The second Stoic allegation claims that from the acceptance of such extension it necessarily follows, either that we act unjustly by not sparing animals, or that, if we spare them, it will be impossible for us to live. All the more so: "We shall, after a manner, live the life of brutes, if we reject the use of which they are capable of affording…. Our nature, not being sufficient to itself, but indigent of many things, would be entirely destroyed…"

Clearly, at the core of the allegation lies a practical *reductio* connected with the idea that "ought implies can" – the idea, that is, that we are only obligated to perform those actions

which we can perform. The notion of what we “can perform” has been understood in several ways in ethical discussions, but it seems sensible to argue that, for a morality which aims at being generally implemented, self-annihilation must undoubtedly count as an obstacle to performability. As a consequence, were it true that human beings, by extending justice to the other animals, “would be entirely destroyed”, it would be difficult indeed to ask them to do so. But of course the question is: is it true that human beings could not survive without subjugating and killing nonhumans? And the answer is obviously, No. So, if the Stoic claim is that we simply cannot live without exploiting animals, we need purse this no further. The claim is simply false.

Perhaps, however, the heart of the attack is not this. For, while the claim about our impossibility to live is only cursory mentioned, more space is devoted to the idea that humans, if they extended justice to animals, would “live the life of brutes”. Is this a better argument? Arguably not. For the revulsion raised by this idea, depending as it does on a further element of the Stoic naturalist worldview – specifically, on the injunction to follow a “human nature” which is seen as essentially governed by rationality, and a priori opposed to animal nature – cannot, as we know, be universally defended.17 And, once stripped of its specific metaphysical background, the view that the sphere of justice should be limited by the interests of those to whom justice already applies reveals its true nature as an implicit appeal to privilege. What about the idea that, since we would (allegedly) live the life of slaves if we rejected their exploitation, we are entitled to maintain the institution of slavery?

Despite the obvious flaws of this argument, a version of it is still advanced in contemporary debates.18 The basic idea is that only the creation of clear boundaries in the granting of justice can preserve the full strength of the moral protection afforded to human beings, and that, accordingly, any blurring of such boundaries is morally wrong. Often, the argument is presented in the form of a special concern for the safeguard, in particular in medical research settings, of the weakest among us – the non-paradigmatic individuals lacking most human capacities, such as the brain-damaged or the severely intellectually disabled – whose plight would allegedly be imperilled by the inclusion into the protected sphere of some nonhuman beings. Clearly, this gives the argument an air of ethical respectability: what is more ethical than paying special attention to the most vulnerable? When, however, one realizes that the suggestion that some weak beings belonging to one’s group might lose the group’s privileges is instrumentally used to deny any like protection to even weaker beings from another group, it is easy to identify in this argument, as in its Stoic antecedent, a mere appeal to human egoism and self-complacency.

Ethical Absurdity

There remains, it seems, only a final argument which could support the Stoics’ opposition to the extension of justice to nonhumans. Here is the gist of the argument: “it is not possible for us to act unjustly towards those who cannot be just towards us”. Porphyry’s test adds that, according to the Stoics, the only escape route to the dilemma between giving up justice or giving up (the order of) our lives lies in following the ancient law by which Jove gave

nonhumans licence to eat each other, and confined instead justice to humankind.

The reference to the fact that (some) nonhumans eat other nonhumans seems to prefigure a recent objection to animal enfranchisement which has been termed as the “argument from predation”. Though this objection can also be interpreted as an appeal to the “naturalness” of a sort of generalized predation – of nonhumans over other nonhumans, and of humans over nonhumans – we can here ignore this construal because we have already criticized the appeal to “following nature”. What we are left with is thus something like the following. Irrational animals, by eating each other, clearly show that they do not know of justice; human beings know of justice; no one owes justice to those who cannot give justice in return; thus, human beings should (can?) confine justice to their internal dealings. The reductio is thus clearly ethical: it would be absurd to extend justice to irrational animals because this would run counter the ethical precept of reciprocity – that old and long-lasting precept which runs though the entire contractarian tradition, and that John Rawls has recently approvingly summarized as: “giving justice to those who can give justice in return”.19

That the precept of reciprocity is old and long-lasting, however, does not mean that it is sound. And in fact, it isn’t. For though the requirement of reciprocity does contain the germ of the plausible idea that, if an individual can act justly towards you, and refuses to do so, then you may be released from any similar obligation, when it comes to individuals who, by hypothesis, cannot act justly, the situation changes radically. In this latter case, the requirement of understanding justice plays the same role as the more openly sinister contractarian requirement of equal strenght, or equal bargaining power – it sanctions the exclusion from the sphere of justice of those who are too weak or too disadvantaged to allow for mutually advantageous conventions. In such conditions of serious imbalances in power, reciprocity clearly shows that connection with egoism that some critics have stressed.20 It is thus not surprising that, though repeatedly appealed to when it comes to nonhumans, contractarian ideas have been eliminated from human rights theory. For else, what would become of equal justice for those juvenile or disabled human beings who cannot understand what justice is?

With the collapse of the ethical reductio, we can conclude that all the components of the Stoic argument against extending justice to animal, together with their contemporary avatars, are invalid. If so, we can indeed include nonhumans within that sphere of basic justice that the current egalitarian paradigm has till now confined to ourselves – turning them from objects to subjects of rights, granting them the same institutional protection of life, freedom and welfare we grant ourselves, and banning all the exploitive practices that we deem immoral in the case of human beings.

We can, but have we also an obligation? For the Stoics’ claim was stronger than the claim that we cannot extend justice to animals. What was alleged was that the extension of what is just to animals corrupts justice. Thus, after having shown the flaws of the objection, we shall turn to the last and more challenging part of our critique.

III

The conclusion that justice must be extended to nonhumans is supported by the force of an *ad hominem* argument,in the Lockean sense of an argument from commitment emphasizing consequences drawn from the opponents' own principles.21 More precisely, its rationale lies in intra-human egalitarianism's rejection, as grounds for different treatment, of appeals to metaphysical backgrounds, to what is "natural", to biological make-ups, to privilege and to the requirement of reciprocity.

Using this conclusion as a stepping stone, we can now defend the view that, if justice can be rightly extended to nonhumans, it ought to be so extended, lest it no longer be considered as justice. On this view, far from being destroyed by such extension, justice turns out to be destroyed – or, to borrow from the Stoic jargon, "confounded" – by the opposite course, that is, by the endeavour to limit it to human beings.

Mill's Argument

Can a society be considered just when justice is granted to all human beings even in case nonhumans are still excluded from it? Let's imagine a society where all the citizens have adequate food, shelter, medical care, education, work and free time; where no one is discriminated against and all have equal institutional protection and adequate self-esteem; and where all can keep to their idea of a good life, while conflicts are settled peacefully. Such a society, however, exploits nonhuman animals. Can such a society be described as just? Can we say that, at least within the boundaries of the intra-human community, justice is truly present? An indication in the sense of a preliminary negative answer can be detected in John Stuart Mill.

In the essay *The Enfranchisement of Women*, probably written four-handedly with Harriet Taylor, Mill advances an important claim. Directly addressing "those Radicals and Chartists.… who claim what is called universal suffrage as an inherent right, unjustly and oppressively withheld from them", he states that the women's request for civil and political equality is – indeed, must be – their direct business. For with what rationality, he retorts, can the suffrage be termed universal, while half the human species is excluded from it? Isn't to declare that a voice in the government is the right of all, and demand it only for a part – the part to which the claimants themselves belong – to renounce even the appearance of *principle*? Mill's conclusion is that "the Chartist who denies the suffrage to women is a Chartist only because he is not a lord; he is one of those levelers who would level only down to themselves". 22

This allegation clearly applies to the problem of justice and nonhumans as well. True, while Mill and Taylor could somehow take for granted the view that women are part of those "all" to whom a voice in the government pertains, the same does not hold in the case of animals. However, our argument has shown that, though not yet included in the current egalitarian paradigm, the view that (many) animals are part of those "all" to whom justice pertains is already implicit in it, and needs only to be recognized, or, to use a legal term, "articulated". In this light, justice as applied only within the intra-human realm is not universal, and cannot therefore be appealed to as a matter of principle. But a justice which cannot be appealed to as a matter of principle is not justice. It seems that, as the Chartists in Mill and Taylor's case,

those human beings who demand justice only for the members of their species, while withholding it from nonhumans, are not demanding *justice* – they simply aim at a better treatment for a favored group.

The Expanding Circle

We can put to test this preliminary answer by confronting it with a widely held perspective about moral extensionism which, since the late Nineteenth century, has come to be known as the "expanding circle" approach. 23 It is probably to the historian W. E. H. Lecky that we owe its clearest formulation: "At one time the benevolent affections embrace merely the family, soon the circle expanding includes first a class, then nation, then a coalition of nations, then all humanity and finally, its influence is felt in the dealings of man with the animal world".24 A couple of years later, Lecky's words were echoed in a famous passage by Charles Darwin: "As man advances in civilization… the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all the members of the same nation… This point being once reached, there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to the men of all nations and races. … Sympathy beyond the confines of man, that is, humanity to the lower animals, seems to be one of the latest acquisitions".25

Of course, both Lecky's and Darwin's claims are descriptive in character – they purportedly refer to matters of fact. They are, however, manifestly accompanied by an approving smile, which paves the way to a more evaluative reading. And in fact, within a framework favorable to the claims of animals, appeal is often made to such a notion. If it does not advocate that there is also a normative ranking in the attribution of moral consideration, so that it is *right* to focus primarily on the protection of those who are closer, and then, in a diluted measure, of those in the outer layers26 – a position clearly embodying the premises of racism – the idea of an expanding circle appears to be an enlightened approach, fostering the view that our visions might be limited, and in need of correction. There is a problem, though. For the very idea of graduality seems naturally to embody a hierarchical bent. Why should those who are the latest in chronological order accept this arrangement – especially in case their turn has yet to come?

We can clarify this with an example. There still are, unfortunately, human societies that discriminate against specific ethnic groups. Let's thus imagine one of these societies, where justice reigns among citizens, but where the "benevolent affections" of the citizens have not yet reached a particular minority group. In such a case, would we content us with saying that the circle should gradually expand, or would we feel outraged? Would we think that, while justice is still bound to be furthered according to a progressive, or step by step, pattern, it is nonetheless actually realized in the privileged part of the society, or would we claim instead, with Mill, that *that justice* cannot be seen as universal principle at all? If, as I tend to think, all those who believe in the principle of equality would without hesitation opt for the latter stance, we can conclude that the gradualist perspective has a sort of originary vice connected with hierarchical bias, and that, accordingly, the expanding circle approach cannot offer an alternative to Mill's view. It is therefore worth trying to explore such view more closely.

Why, then, should we deem that true justice cannot exist till it has reached its proper limits? Can we offer, beyond the appeal to our intuitive reactions, a more foundational explanation?

Let's return to the case which concerns us. What is usually emphasized in the current construal of the doctrine of human rights is that the equal protection they afford is owed to all the members of our species. Equally clearly, however, it is stated that such protection is confined to humans. For example, American philosopher Richard Wasserstrom writes: "If any right is a human right… it must be possessed by all human beings, as well as only by human beings"**.**27 This is a phenomenon of evaluative line-drawing, and, as such, it is normatively bivalent: it has a positive side and a negative side. More precisely, it has an inclusive and an exclusive side. These two sides are logically connected – one cannot exist without the other. In other words, by its very nature, the confinement of some moral advantages to one group is ipso facto the denial of the same moral advantages to some other groups, or to a general constituency.

Of course, if the confinement of the involved advantages can be justified – as when a line is drawn, e. g., between non-sentient rocks and sentient beings – the normative bivalence of line-drawing is morally neutral. What, however, if no justification can be offered? What if it can be shown, as I have argued it is the case with the line drawn between humans and (many) nonhumans, that the members of the included group are unfairly favored? In this instance, the situation reigning outside the line is undoubtedly morally objectionable. What, then, about the situation reigning inside the line, that is, among the members of the favored group?

At first sight, it might be claimed that it is the line which is questionable, and not what happens inside it. This claim can have some plausibility, but only in situations where the moral advantages at stake are not institutional ones and the exclusive side is not officially upheld – think, for example, of groups whose members customarily treat each other decently, while taking little care of the interests of outsiders. Consider, however, what is involved when the moral advantage in question is the access to equal basic justice. When one speaks of justice in a society, one does not refer to contingent, inter-individual relationships, but to stable laws, institutions and practices. One refers, in other words, to the structure, organization and regulated life of the community.28 Accordingly, what here count as just and unjust are the basic institutional choices, and all the acts which embody them in any definite situation. Against such a background, each and all institutional gestures of justice among the members of the favored group will involve not only the inclusive, or "just", side, but also the exclusive, or unjust, side. As a consequence, any single gesture of selective justice, by decreeing the inclusion of those admitted to equal justice *and at the same time* decreeing the exclusion of those who are not admitted, will confirm and reiterate the injustice. In other words, it will bring injustice directly to the heart of the life of the favored group.

If this is so, it seems that we have reached the general reason behind the claim that justice fails to be justice when it does not reach its proper limits. Any arbitrarily limited justice creates and maintains by its own existence the existence conditions of injustice. This is, I believe, the

kernel of truth that lies in the famous, and apparently mystical, dictum that no one is saved until everyone is saved. What I take it to mean is that no one – no moral agent – can be seen as exempt from unjust behavior until everyone – every moral patient – can be seen as exempt from unjust treatment. Contra the Stoics, true justice can exist only if it is extended to (many) nonhuman beings

Notes

1. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food*, Book I, 4-6, trans. Thomas Taylor. I have slightly modified the translation.

2. Martha Nussbaum, "Beyond 'Compassion and Humanity': Justice for Non-Human Animals", Third Tanner Lecture, delivered at Cambridge University, March 6, 2003.

3. On this, see Paola Cavalieri, "The Animal Debate: A Reexamination", in Peter Singer, ed, *In Defense of Animals*.*The Second Wave*, Blackwell, Oxford 2005.

4. Though two religious traditions meet to shape the image of justice – that of the goddes Themis, guiding social conduct, and that of the goddess Dike, guardian of the order of things – Dike in the end prevailed, as it is shown by the fact that it is to her name that the root of the words subsequently used to refer to justice can be traced back. Cfr. Pierre Guèrin, *L'idée de Justice dans la Conception de l'Universe chez les premieres philosophes Grecs*, Librairie Felix Alcan, Paris 1934, Preliminary Chapt., II ; and Jean Rudhart, *Themis et les Horai*, Librairie Droz S.A., Genève, 1999, Chapt. I, B, and Chapt. III, B.

5. Parmenides, *The Poem*, I, 11-14.

6. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* Book 5, I.[15].

7. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 3, XII.

8. Cf. e.g. Chaim Perelman, *De la justice*, Institut de Sociologie Solvay, Bruxelles 1945, Chapt. II.

9. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* Justice: Question #79, Article 1, Objection 3.

10. For an examination of how such strands of thought deploy the formal concept in terms of different substantive theories of equality – such as e.g. utilitarian interpretations based on the notion of welfare, or contractarian interpretations revolving around fairness – see Philip Pettit, *Judging Justice*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

11. For a discussion of *oikeiosis* and nonhumans see William O. Stephens, "Masks, Androids, and Primates: The Evolution of the Concept 'Person'", *Etica & Animali* 9 (1998).

12.. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De finibus* III 20, 67, trans. B. Inwood and C. P. Gerson.

13. For a critical analysis, see Malcolm Schofield, "Stoic Ethics", in Brad Inwood, ed., *The Cambridge companion to the Stoics*, Cambridge University Press, N. Y. 2003.

14. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1888, p. 469.

15. On this topic, cfr. the enlightening discussion of sociobiology in James Rachels, *Created from Animals. The Moral Implications of Darwinism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1990, pp. 73-79.

16. On speciesism see Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, The New York Review of Books, New York, 1990, p. 9 ff. Cf. also Paola Cavalieri, *The Animal Question. Why Nonhuman Animals deserve Human Rights*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, pp. 69 ff.

17. To the considerations about the allegation of practical absurdity it should be added that, for the Stoics, the order of the Cosmos cannot suffer an ethical dilemma such as the one allegedly involved in extending justice to nonhumans. This idea is apparent in Plutarch, Porphyry's source for some of the quoted passages, for Plutarch attributes to the Stoics the claim that: "justice could not then come into existence, but would remain completely without form or substance, *if all the beasts partake of reason*. For either we are necessarily unjust if we do not spare them; or if we do not take them for food, life becomes impracticable or impossible" [italics added]. In Plutarch, that is, the Stoics' rejection of the possibility of the allegedly involved dilemma issues in the a priori rejection of a (possible) fact – the possession of reason by the other animals.

18. See e.g. Marie-Angèle Hermitte, "Le droits de l'homme pour les humaines, les droits du singe pour les grands singes", *Le Débat* 108 (2000), pp.155-192.

19. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1971, p. 511.

20. See for example Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, trans. E. F. J. Payne, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1965, p. 91, and Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human,* Part I, trans. Helen Zimmern, Allen & Unwin, London 1909, aphorism 92.

21. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* Book IV, Chapter XVII.

22. John Stuart Mill, "The Enfranchisement of Women", in J. S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1998.

23. On this topic, see Peter Singer, *The Expanding Circle. Ethics and Sociobiology*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York 1981.

24. W. E. H. Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, George Braziller, N. Y. 1955 [1869], vol. I, p. 285.

25. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, John Murray, London 1871, pp 100-1.

26. Something of along these lines can be detected e.g. in Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter*, The University of Georgia Press, Athens 1983. p. 124.

27. Richard Wasserstrom, "Rights, Human Rights and Racial Discrimination", in James Rachels, ed., *Moral Problems*, 3rd. ed., Harper & Row, N.Y. 1979, p. 8.

28. See e.g. Thomas Pogge, "How Should Human Rights Be Conceived?", *Jahrbuch fuer Recht und Ethik*, vol. 3 (1995).

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Islam And The Enlightenment: Between Ebb And Flow

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Islamcan be doubly associated with the spirit of the Enlightenment. Long before, as early as the middle of the eighth century, it produced the premises of the Enlightenment; afterwards, starting in the nineteenth century, it experienced its effects.

Between 750 and 1050, authors made use of a surprising freedom of thinking in their approach to religions and to the phenomenon of belief. In their analyses, they bowed to the primacy of reason, honoring one of the basic principles of the Enlightenment. This phenomenon took place during a period of effervescence, of intense intellectual exchange, that Islam experienced a little more than a century after its advent, when its followers were seeking to develop a tradition capable of confronting much more sophisticated systems of thought. This was also a time when newcomers to Islam continued to remember theological systems and questions raised by the beliefs that had seen them come into being or evolve (like Judaism, various Christian sects, Manicheism, or Zoroastrianism).

Ibn al-Muqaffa' (720-756) was the first of these thinkers. Iranian by birth, and still influenced by the Mazdean and Manichean traditions, he was one of the first to create Arabic literary prose, especially by adapting, in his *Kalila wa Dimna* [Kalila and Dimna], a Pahlavi version of the Indian fables going back to the *Panchatantra* [Five Discourses] and the *Tantrakhyayka*. In his introduction as Persian translator to this collection, Ibn al-Muqaffa' criticizes religions and praises reason. For him, morality is independent of belief, and the *mulhid*[i] can be virtuous. Despite their multiplicity and their disagreements, all faiths have three kinds of followers: those who inherited their faith from their father; those who were forced to believe; and those who adhere to a religion in order to satisfy their worldly ambitions. Furthermore, Ibn al-Muqaffa' notes that few people are capable of justifying their belief. After this criticism, our author reins himself in and accepts the minimum about which different beliefs agree, which is reduced to moral principles hovering around negative virtues ("do not kill, do not lie, do not speak ill of others, do not deceive, do not steal…"), stipulations that announce the ethical strategy of an Enlightenment philosopher like Kant with his "postulates of practical reason."[ii]

In another book, *The Epistle on Friendship*, Ibn al-Muqaffa' addresses the caliph on the subject of politics. He suggests that the cleric must submit to the prince: the law must be taken away

from the religious sphere and be under the control of political power, but, since it is impossible to reduce religion, it should be subordinated to the authority of the prince. Several orientalists, including Goitein and Gabrieli, thought that if Ibn al-Muqaffa' had been followed on this point, Islam would have experienced an early secularization that would have spared it the traps in which it continues to this day to get caught. With Ibn al-Muqaffa', we discover the same premises of the great Western problematic that crystallized around dual authority, the prince and the pontiff. To ponder such a duality would constitute the great philosophical design that would lead the West to the Enlightenment, passing through many stages, including Dante's *On Monarchy* (1304) and Spinoza's*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), as well as Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). Despite the difference in context, issues, and aims, following the example of Ibn al-Muqaffa', all of these thinkers create a hierarchy of these two powers: either they call for the autonomy of both the temporal and the spiritual, or else they make the latter subordinate to the former. I do not think the actual force of Ibn al-Muqaffa's propositions should be slighted by linking them to power as it was exercised in the Persian Empire, where religion and royalty were concentrated in one single person.

Ibn al-Muqaffa' also carried on a radical critique of the Koran, and fragments of his work have reached us through the refutation of it by a nineteenth-century author. First of all, al-Muqaffa' quotes a number of Koranic examples that can be conceived of by neither reason nor intuition. He then declares that the anthropomorphisms applied to God contradict his invisibility and his mystery. He goes on to insist on the imposture of the prophets, one of the demonstrations of which is the overzealous battle of the founder of Islam to conquer the earthly kingdom. Finally he undertakes a critique of monotheism in general, which cannot escape dualism, because of the question of evil and of its presence in the world and inside men.

Later on, Baghdad in the ninth century saw, from its very beginning, the emergence of the *Mu'tazila* ['those who withdraw themselves'], theologians who spread the light of reason. Returning God to his transcendence, they withdrew Him from the world, so to speak, and the earthly sojourn was returned to the responsibility of man, who was supposed to confront evil by using his free will. But this movement distanced itself from the spirit of the Enlightenment by allying itself with the power of the caliph, who declared their doctrine the ideology the State sought to impose by the constraint and violence of an inquisitorial institution appointed to pursue contradictors and convert them.

The era remained open, however, to discussions and exchange between supporters of diverse beliefs. Among the great minds of that era, we will note the Christian Hunayn Ibn Ishaq (808-873) who played a major role as a transmitter of the Greek scientific and philosophical corpus. This multidisciplinary, polyglot intellectual, familiar with three cultures (Syriac, Greek, Arabic), well-informed about two others (Persian, Indian), reminds us of the great European figures of the Renaissance, the intermediary sequence that would lead to the Enlightenment: wasn't he comparable to Erasmus? In one of his books, transcending his own faith, freeing himself from apologetics and polemics, using the instrument of logic, he seeks to understand how truth can be grasped in religions, and how error is introduced and then imposed on the believer.

We will also note, among these first "freethinkers,"[iii] Abu 'Isa al-Warraq (died circa 861), who criticized his own religion (Islam) and all the others, revealing their contradictions and their implausibilities after passing them through the sieve of reason to end up finally at a logical monotheism that goes beyond established beliefs and cannot be authenticated by them. This critical approach to established religions places its author in surprising proximity to the Deism of the Enlightenment.

Many other authors bear witness to a like judgment that is critical, if not marked by skepticism. But undoubtedly it is Abu Bakr Al-Razi (circa 854-circa 925) who seems closest to the spirit of the Enlightenment. He was a famous doctor and philosopher, known in the Latin-speaking world by the name of Rhazes. In a controversy with another Razi (Abu Hatim ar-Razi, a Shiite theologian and an Ismaili preacher), one of the most famous debates ever produced in the Islamic theater, our doctor-philosopher asserts that, in order to acquire knowledge, divine gift and reason suffice; there is no need to believe in a particular Revelation, bearer of discords, disputes, and wars. In the best case, prophets are impostors, agitated sick men. Ordinary humans do not need to be guided by a divine law. They can think on their own, inspired by their theoretical and practical intelligence. Razi asserts that the philosophical horizon can only be darkened by a belief founded on superstitions, legends, and contradictions, to which ignorance compounded with dogmatism is added. He also criticizes ritualism, which creates maniacal beings obsessed with imaginary impurities. He thinks that he himself is worth much more than religious men: as a doctor and a man of science, doesn't he render an outstanding service to humanity by relieving his fellows of the evils and sufferings that overwhelm them when they are eaten away by disease? He was a man who believed positively in progress; convinced of having improved the knowledge he inherited from Galen, he was certain that the scholars and practitioners who followed him would in their turn improve the science and knowledge he bequeathed to them. He also thought that scientific truth is provisional, endlessly evolving, destined to be perfectible.

We would be right to wonder why this chain of critical thought was interrupted, why it did not have the necessary continuators who could have led it to have an effect on common ideas, in the realm of political realization, and why this precocious foreshadowing of the forerunners of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment remained futureless, without any practical realization in society, and without transforming collective imaginations.

Not that the intersection of ideas didn't have ideological effects or didn't result in political events. Still, very often, theological controversy experienced only two paradigmatic types of political effect: one destined to legitimize the seizure of power by one or another of the competing parties (as in the beginning of Islam in the opposition between the Umayyads and the 'Alids, between Sunnites and Shiites); and the one (analyzed by Ibn Khaldun, 1332-1406), that repeatedly sought to establish a purifying reform in order to reestablish power according to the vision people had of its prophetic origin (as illustrated by the Almoravids and the Almohads in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the Muslim West). That seems to be the historical structure where the link between thought and State, between ideology and power, theology and politics, can be found.

Considerable historical importance should also be attributed to the defeat of the Mu'tazila in the middle of the ninth century, some forty years after their triumph; their expulsion from the heart of the State occurred with an Inquisitorial violence that was just as radical and ferocious as the violence they had cause to exercise at the time of their hegemony. And their theories, which could have been precious for the evolution of Islam, were defeated forever. In fact, the theory of the "created Koran" could have taken part in a process that relativizes the sacrality of the Law and makes it less untouchable; and their theses on freewill, choice, and human responsibility faced with evil, could have led the follower of Islam to become acclimated to those key notions of modernity, freedom and the individual, which have been erased from his mental horizon.

It is through this episode that we see the absence of a notion of freedom in the social and political sense, that we observe the failure to emerge of any rudiments that might lead to the crystallization of the notion of the individual. The praise of reason, or its triumph over dogma, did not take notice of the warning signs of the problems to come.

One quality deserves to be recalled, which is probably at the source of these early tentative impulses: tolerance, that other Enlightenment notion. Islam recognizes a place for other monotheistic beliefs based on Revelation (the Jews, the Christians and the enigmatic Sabians, who have been linked to the Neo-Platonics, the Zoroastrians, or the followers of the Buddha). This disposition, along with some other Koranic principles (like the verse that says, "No constraint in religion," II, 256), encouraged the liberal tendency to self-expression and, in the atmosphere of cosmopolitan Baghdad (ninth-tenth centuries), to arrange conferences for theological debates where followers of the various sects could exhibit their points of view without being harassed; in fact the Manicheans were very active in this kind of debate. It was especially through this sort of "disputation," and through the literary genre that emerged from them, that testimonies have reached us concerning the critical and rational approach to religion and to the phenomenon of belief.

This tolerance in Islam, relative as it may be, was in fact pointed out in the famous essays that discuss it in the Age of Enlightenment: both Locke and Voltaire perceived in it a lesser evil compared to the triumphalist exclusivism they were familiar with, which made no place in the afterlife for members of other sects even though they shared one's evangelical beliefs.

Moreover, during the first four centuries after the Hegira, Islam, as it was developing, was marked by the dynamism such a phase requires. It was in the process of constructing itself as a religion, a theology, a culture, a civilization. It did so in the effervescence of exchange with and adaptation to the many traditions that preceded it and that had produced a profound body of work. This time of ingestion, assimilation, and enrichment could only be open. It was starting in the fifth century of the Hegira (eleventh century) that the tendency to rigidity began to triumph. At that time, all work on the Koran stopped; its definitive form was adopted. From that decision onward, the competing recensions and textual variants, which had given rise to heated debates, the very ones that the modern historical sciences are now trying to reconstitute and reopen, were blocked out.

At that time too, the notion of innovation *(bid'a)* became tainted with a paralyzing negativity, so much so that, to translate the word, Orientalists added a pejorative adjective to it ("blameworthy innovation"). This notion, however, had been necessary to legitimize the adoption of new things that had been discovered via contact with other civilizations that were complex in different ways, much more developed in various areas compared with the restrained archaism of Medina. It is as if they thought that whatever had already been constructed was adequate. So the effort of theological construction was replaced by the rigor of orthopraxis, of control and conformity to the rules of worship, as an identitarian reference-point subject to social censure.

In this context, vast syntheses would be composed, combining theology, mysticism, and philosophy, elaborating on practical morality, a kind of how-to-live based on the primacy of the religious, syntheses that seem definitive. The most eloquent of these is the one by Abu Hamid Ghazali (1058-1111), *Ihya' 'ulum ad-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences).

It is as if the literate members of Islam thought that their edifice was complete, that it had reached an unparalleled perfection, and that it was appropriate ever after to fix it in place and conserve it, to preserve its memory, remote from any dynamic or change. Hence the profusion, starting with that era, of encyclopedias and dictionaries concerning all the fields of knowledge.

But the worst was yet to come, at the end of the thirteenth century, with the Hanbali scholar Ibn Taymiyya (died 1328), who would radicalize even more the notion of *bid'a,* whose noxious presence he would index, all the way up to the already restrictive syntheses of the eleventh century. He never stopped hunting for what he considered intruders into the original home: he would denounce the introduction of Jewish, Christian, Greek, Manichean, Mazdean, and Hindu motifs in constructs that ought to have been induced only by the Koran alone. He would lambaste the echoes of philosophy (Greek), of mysticism (Christian, Hindu), of the worship of saints (polytheist), of visiting graves (pagan), so many borrowings that, according to him, disfigure the original building. This author would produce the pattern from which all future fundamentalism would derive; he was a sworn enemy of the Enlightenment, of its premises and its effects on Islam.

The Enlightenment as a movement of ideas was introduced into the land of Islam after Napoleon's expedition to Egypt (1798), which provoked something like electroshock in the Arab Orient. Islam had thought itself superior till then, or at least equal to Europe in military force, comforts, and the conditions of life produced by the achievement of civilization. But now it suddenly found itself confronted with arms, material goods, technical methods, and scientific approaches that were unknown and in some ways more efficient. So it wanted to understand the reasons for European advancement, for such progress that made it aware of its own historical lagging and, above all, of the balance of power that had reduced it to being in a weaker position, fated to be subjugated. Having reached this awareness, Muslim scholars, in their various Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Asiatic spheres, would discover the Enlightenment and its principles. Travelers from these various regions visited the European metropolises and communicated their fascination to their compatriots and coreligionists. A veritable movement

of Occidentalism, or even of Occidentalophilia, arose among the elite of these countries. A longing for Europe was expressed in the policies of the various governments, whether through the reforms of the *tanzimet* introduced in the Ottoman Empire by the sultans Mahmud II (reigned 1808-1839) and Abdulmejid I (reigned 1839-1861) or in the framework of the modernization of Egypt under the initiative of Mohammed Ali (1805-1849). The new problematic of the Enlightenment was then perceived in connection with the analogies or premises that the Islamic tradition might offer. Thus, the deism and tolerance preached by the new Europe encountered an echo in Akbarism, which shaped the Ottoman, Arabic, and Persian elite. Akbarism was the metaphysical and moral theory taken from texts written by the Andalusian theosophist Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), who spread his concept of the oneness of Being, and who redirected Islamic belief towards an immanentist form of deism coupled with religious relativism, making Koranic relativism even more systematic, going so far as to grant credit and a share of truth to all forms of belief, even the most pagan ones. A European during the Age of Enlightenment, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife of the English ambassador to Constantinople (1717), witnessed the effect of these ideas on the Ottoman elite, for whom non-Islamic beliefs were intelligible, understandable, visitable, likeable. What's more, the closeness of this "deism" to the philosophy of Spinoza (who was at the source of the deism of the Enlightenment and of Romanticism) helped a number of these enlightened Muslims to receive the Masonic message and to join some of its lodges, like Amir Abdelkader (1807-1883), disciple of his medieval master Ibn Arabi, whose interpretation he put into practice, before joining Freemasonry.

Moreover, faced with the challenge of adapting to the European novelties engendered by the Age of Enlightenment, Muslim theologians restored the primacy of reason, like Muhammad 'Abduh (1848-1905), the Egyptian Mufti, who wrote "that in case of conflict between reason and tradition, it is reason that has the right to decide." They had recourse to the notion of *bid'a* (innovation) to restore Islam's original positivity. With its help, the adoption by the Ottomans of the constitutional principle was legitimized. This notion was also combined with that of *maslaha,* an adaptation in the tenth century by the western Malakite school of the *utilitas publica*, taking into account the shared interest in the application of law, correcting the rules when it has been proven that the interest of the community calls for it (echoing the *corrigere jus propter utilitatem publicam* upheld by Roman law). In this traditional perspective, Zurqani, a theologian in Cairo, proclaimed, in 1710, the necessity of taking new measures with the appearance of new events: "One should not think it strange that laws be adapted to circumstances."[iv]

Muhammad 'Abduh and his disciples had recourse to these notions*(bid'a, maslaha)* to adopt the principles of the Enlightenment and to lead in its name political activity against both local despotism and the colonial aims of Europe. On this point precisely, they spotted a lack of agreement between principles and deeds in the behavior of European humanity. Such an argument was notably invoked in 1834, just four years after the Algiers expedition, in the first Francophone book that came out of the Maghreb*, Le Miroir* [The Mirror], in which the author, Hamdan Khodja,[v] notes in his preface how the French, by invading Algeria, were attacking the principles of 1789 and were inconsistent, since here, in Africa, they make destitute a

people, a nation, and a State that were already fully constituted, while there, in Europe, they defend peoples, nations, and States that are still in the process of being established (like Greece, Poland, and Belgium). We have elsewhere called this dishonoring of principle through action "the test of the universal" that "the Western aporia" confronts.[vi]

We can distinguish three sequences in which the effects of the Enlightenment are imprinted in the wake of a heritage that tends to be closely linked with Muhammad 'Abduh. First of all, Qasim Amin touched on the symptomatic question of women in two pamphlets, published in 1898 and 1900, where he proclaims loudly and clearly the equality of women, their liberation, their emergence from the gynaeceum, and calls for the establishment of a mixed society, for the participation of women in education, in the spread of knowledge, and in production: the modernization of women, he said, requires their unveiling, their enjoyment of freedom and equality. Such claims can also be illumined by a positive vision of *bid'a* (innovation) and of *maslaha*, that principle of public interest, which would be appropriate for an Islam freed of the letter so that the spirit can be found in it.

Then, Sheikh Ali Abderraziq (1888-1966) published in 1925 his essay*L'Islam et les fondements du pouvoir* (Islam and the Foundations of Power).[vii] Here, the author demonstrates that the notion of an Islamic State has never existed. He notes that the Caliphate, at the time of its greatness, under the Umayyads as well as under the Abbassids, did not produce a new form of government; it simply adopted the imperial structures of Byzantium and then of Persia, both of which had proven their administrative and military efficacy. Thus contemporary Muslims should construct their State by drawing inspiration from the best examples that other nations have produced; they should therefore construct a State, inspired by the Western example created by the Enlightenment. Abderraziq emphasizes moreover that what matters in the prophetic experience of Mohammed is spiritual and moral direction much more than giving military or royal examples; for him, Islam is a divine message, not a system of government; a religion, not a State. And he ends by recommending a radical separation between the spiritual and temporal in order to re-found the State and reconstruct law according to the requirements of modernity.

Finally, Taha Hussein (1889-1973) would intrude on the period between the two wars with his Western, positivist message, genealogically linked with the Enlightenment. It is Hussein who would draw the consequences of historical literary criticism so far as to perceive a legitimization and a posteriori authentication of the language and myths of the Koran in the creation of the collection of early Arabic poetry, whose roots in pre-Islamic times he considers in context. Moreover, Taha Hussein reminds his compatriots of the place of Egypt, and Alexandria, in the formation of Greek culture during one of its final phases, as well as the role of that same culture in the formation of Arabic classicism, a twofold reason that restores to Arab identity sources that it shares with the West. This sharing of roots legitimizes participation in the values of the modern, which is of an obvious European genesis, especially in the framework of the spaces opened by the Enlightenment philosophers.

However, we still have to discover why these undeniable effects of the Enlightenment did not

propel Islam towards a decisive, almost irrevocable mutation.[viii] The present state of these countries makes it evident that the effect of the Enlightenment was not only insufficient but frankly disappointing. Despotism, fanaticism, superstition, obscurantism, economic poverty, under-development, absence of an internalized social contract: that is the diagnosis that keeps the countries of Islam far from the lessons of the Enlightenment. I will suggest at least three reasons for what has ended up being thought of as a failure.

First of all, the policy of modernization that had begun in the beginning of the nineteenth century failed. Here it is a question of a modernization determined by the assimilation of Technology, the same standard by which Japanese success is measured when it came to expression through the military victory over Russia in 1905. This event fascinated Islam, since it revealed that Technology of Western origin can be mastered by an Eastern country on its own, through loyalty to itself alone. However, this loyalty to self, not subject to the principles of the Enlightenment, led successful Japan towards militarist and fascist nationalism, even if the Meiji era might have been etymologically linked to the notion of light, a term whose use as trope and metaphor grants it an ambivalent, if not suspicious, polysemy.[ix] Though the emergence of Technology is historically associated with the emergence of the Enlightenment, we should be aware of its autonomy, obvious in the Japanese example, as well as in the use to which it was put for barbaric purposes during the European twentieth century. But at the same time it is difficult to conceive of the Enlightenment taking root in a society that drew no advantages from the comfort and material wealth that Technology brought with it. It is necessary, then, to the advent of the Enlightenment, but it is autonomous from it. And the defeat of the Enlightenment can be seen as much in Japan's success as in Islam's failure in assimilating Technology.

I associate this failure of the Enlightenment with the fear of radical thinking that urges separation and rupture. The ideas and principles of the Enlightenment emerged by opposing tradition, by refuting it, by disengaging from it. This is a phenomenon that was not conceived to accord with the legacy of religion, or even to accommodate itself to it. The reformers and reformists of Islam did not risk the adventure of treason; timorous, they were limited by obsession with fidelity to their creed, which was not confined in a separate space, which might have trembled in the unassailable secret of the heart; it is as if they were afraid of becoming divided subjects, accepting their own dividedness.

Finally, added to this is the emergence, at the end of the 1920's, of anti-Westernism as a combative ideology developed by Islamic fundamentalists, who revived all the traditional rejections, which they radicalized even more, drawing support especially from Ibn Taymiyya, and through hunting down all foreign influence, which was supposed to contaminate original purity. They returned to the denunciation of the *bida'*, innovations understood in the most pejorative way, as it had been over-determined in its negativity in the eighteenth century by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabism, whose proselytizing aggression would become worldwide with the influx of petrodollars into Saudi Arabia after the oil shock of 1973, entering an Islamic domain that had been vacant since the defeat of various forms of postcolonial populism.

Faced with the ebbing away of the Enlightenment, I would like to insist on the role that Europe can play in its reactivation. I mentioned earlier that Western gap between the principles of the Enlightenment and the actions that ruined its universal dissemination. But the European individual, in these last few decades of peace, of work on self, of ethical vigilance, seems at last capable of producing deeds that are in keeping with his principles. I know that this good example is difficult to maintain in practice, especially when it is not easy to detach it from positions that distinguish between dominant and dominated, strong and weak, rich and poor. But it would still be tempting to put to the test such an exemplariness to the limits of the possible and the reasonable by committing ourselves to the principle of justice. Enacting it, the opportunity to reestablish the luster of the Enlightenment would be offered to us, and to give it back a universal credit that would help to revive its home in Islam, by supporting those who, in its heart, wish to live to their final consequences the divisions that have always agitated it, in this war of hierarchical structures, of authorities and interpretations, an incessant civil war one of the stakes of which is still winning the knowledge of the Enlightenment in a context of separation and rupture.

Notes

[i] The term means "one who deviates from the straight line," and designates, from the ninth century on, an atheist.

[ii] Dominique Urvoy, *Les Penseurs libres dans l'Islam classique* [Freethinkers in classical Islam], Paris: Albin Michel, 1996, p. 40.

[iii] As Dominique Urvoy likes to call them.

[iv] Quoted by Ignaz Goldziher, *Le Dogme et la loi en Islam*, Paris: L'éclat/Geuthner, 2005, p. 217. In English: *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

[v] Hamdan Khodja, *Le Miroir*, Paris: Sindbad, 1985, pp. 37-38.

[vi] Abdelwahab Meddeb, *Dédale*, No. 5-6, *Postcolonialisme*, Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, Spring 1997, p. 12.

[vii] Translated into French from Arabic by Abdou Filali-Ansary, Paris: La Découverte, 1994.

[viii] I say "almost irrevocable" to temper an absolute judgment and to remind us what experience has taught us, namely that no experience is definitive: the Enlightenment is not safeguarded on the very soil that saw its birth; it did not keep Europe from plunging into the darkness of the twentieth century (with totalitarianisms, National Socialism, and Stalinism).

[ix] We can testify to the use of this term in ancient times, in quite different metaphysical and religious horizons, far from secular reason: the fire cult established by Zoroaster, the Platonic

duality of the brilliance of Ideas and the penumbra of the cave, the Manichean duality of the good associated with day and evil linked to night, resurgence of the metaphysics of the *Ishraq,* illuminism reinvented by Sohrawardi (1155-1191), which combines the metaphors of Zoroaster, Plato, and Mani with the verse on Light ("Light on light…," Koran, XXIV, 35), to locate the gleam of dawn in the original East towards which the soul returns, in comparison with the West of the ending, prison of the body, condition of our sojourn here below.

*Translated by Charlotte Mandell

Black Gold: Mining Racial Fear In The Service Of Wealth

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I

For a whole generation, American politics has been an unpleasant tale of false promises, misplaced hopes, breathtaking incompetence, ideological cowardice and historic betrayal. Some evidence suggests that this period might be coming to a close, but we have to start by acknowledging that a distinctly conservative discourse has shaped the country's public life for more than a quarter of a century. That's a long time, and the Right's ideological success can't be understood unless we admit a few things right off the bat:

- it didn't come to power because of dishonest "framing," thievery, stolen elections or the unprincipled manipulation of national tragedy, although many of its leaders *are* thugs and there's been plenty of criminality to go around

- it wasn't able to reshape national politics because the general population is stupid, racist, sexist, religious, materialistic or apathetic, although it*was* able to appeal to some of the most retrograde and diseased trends in the country's history

- it didn't win because a handful of right-wing foundations, think-tanks, southern preachers, politicians and talk-show hosts elbowed their way to the center of national life, conspired to change the country and shouted down anyone who got in their way, although here too, there's been enough bullying to last a lifetime.

No, the contemporary Right is very different from the marginalized defender of an idle and backward-looking upper crust that it used to be. It rode to power as the patriotic, muscular and courageous champion of an aggrieved and ignored majority. It then reinvented itself as the forward-looking voice of the little man while successfully painting its enemies as elitist defenders of the past's "special interests." But that's the least of it. More than anything else, the Right has managed to reverse the old assumption that all it had was money while the Left had the ideas.

Indeed, the Right has come to dominate national politics precisely because it took advantage of opportunity with patient organizing and close attention to a distinct set of core principles. Its late-70s calls for political restoration, social order, individual freedom and economic

opportunity resonated deeply with a population that wanted an end to chaos and insecurity. In an environment of disorder, threat and danger, liberals had nothing to say and the Right ran the table in just a few years. As it rose to power, it constructed a formidable mass base, built an impressive set of institutions, and developed a coherent ideology that wasn't afraid to address core questions about American politics that were agitating millions of people.

This doesn't mean that the millions of voters who abandoned liberalism during those years did so because they wanted what they've been getting. They've been systematically betrayed for a long time, and if the emperor has no clothes now, we need to understand how the Right has managed to hide its hypocrisy for so long. Part of the answer lies in its unity of purpose. The Right advanced on a broad front, but everything it has done about world affairs, authority, race, morality, the state, and the economy has served a single core project. Above all else, its intellectual and political leadership has sought to eliminate social equality as a legitimate aim of public policy. Its success in doing so has facilitated the most dramatic, undemocratic, and dangerous transfers of wealth and power in recent American history. Understanding how it used the language of phony populism to mask economic royalism and political plutocracy might help us see how a country with a proud egalitarian tradition and a long history of social reform has become so deformed and so cruel.

We have to start with one simple, shameful fact: the United States is now the most unequal advanced industrial country in the world. It doesn't matter how this is measured, it's the same story across almost all social and economic indices. Whether it's who makes the big salaries, who walks away with gains in the stock market, who pays taxes, who has health care, who has managed to accumulate wealth, or who has political influence, the past twenty-five years have been the same story of the most extreme economic polarization since the Gilded Age and the Roaring Twenties. This didn't happen by accident and is not the unforeseen consequence of economic growth. It's the direct result of twenty-five years of conscious state policy. The Democrats have been deeply complicit from the very beginning, but it was always the Right that carried the ball. The important question is how they've been able to convince so many people to let them do it. As might be expected, race looms large in the answer. It doesn't provide the answer to everything and doesn't play the same role it used, but it's an important part of the story.

II

Insistent calls for discipline and authority found millions of willing listeners as the Right began to articulate a strategy of national strength and moral rebirth in the late 1970s. Things had seemed bad enough when American diplomats were held hostage in Teheran, when the Soviet Union appeared to be advancing everywhere, and when national politics had apparently fallen into institutional deadlock and permanent instability. But one particular area of public life

trumped everything else during this period. Nowhere was social crisis more acute, nowhere were its effects so visible, and nowhere was the Right's ability to exploit it more effective than when Americans turned their attention to the catastrophe engulfing the nation's black population.

As black working-class neighborhoods were battered by a series of ruinous plagues, the Right learned how to deploy images of crime, violence and social pathology to assist its larger political project. Skillfully adapting key elements of the nation's poisoned racial history, it constructed a new attack on equality and the welfare state that suddenly found a mass audience. As deindustrialization destroyed hundreds of thousands of jobs and disinvestment shattered prospects for recovery from riots and civil disorders, conservative solutions gained traction in conditions of chronic unemployment, a destructive heroin epidemic, a dramatic increase in violent crime, white flight, a cycle of arson and abandonment, the virtual disappearance of the two-parent black family, the collapse of basic institutions like public housing and schools, and, most important, liberal silence.

Working-class and lower-middle class whites could not easily insulate themselves from these developments and their political attitudes were inevitably shaped in response to them. None of this was particularly new, but the late 1970s brought their anxieties and insecurities to a head and drove many of them to the right. Lurid descriptions of chaotic, dangerous and disorderly black neighborhoods had played important roles in the anti-busing crusades of the 1960s, in George Wallace's 1964 presidential bid, in the mayoral campaigns of "backlash" candidates like Frank Rizzo in Philadelphia, Anthony Imperiale in Newark, Louise Day Hicks in Boston and Mario Procaccino in New York, and in the evolution of neo-conservatives like Norman Podhoretz and his *Commentary* magazine. Scary descriptions of urban crisis allowed the Right to mobilize white hopelessness, resentment and anger against an ostensibly selfish and demanding black population that had proven unwilling to respect the new rules that came with the victories of the civil rights movement. As blacks insisted on squandering their hard-won equality, conservatives claimed, they became increasingly parasitical on hardworking and productive taxpayers. It wasn't long before a picture of an ungrateful, demanding and undeserving people began to serve the Right's more general project of attacking social welfare.

Its core position was easy to make, all the more so because it seemed obviously true that a large stratum of poor people had become dependent on a welfare state that did little but transfer resources from the hardworking, talented and overburdened to the lazy, incompetent and undeserving. A popular narrative suggested that blacks systematically undermined the normal rules of social progress through acts of individual and collective violence, public expressions of contempt for middle class morality, and excessive demands on others. It fed a racial discourse that began to blame an allegedly self-destructive and irresponsible population for its own failure to advance. The "grass roots" sentiment that stood behind this was framed by conservative analysts who claimed that blacks' disorganized families, lack of respect for civility in public spaces, dependence on the state for direct income and benefits and constant demands for special treatment signaled how different their mores and behaviors were from those of earlier immigrants and hardworking, "normal" citizens.

Right-wing spokesmen claimed that city life was being undermined by the bad habits of black residents who rejected the norms of past generations of the urban poor. It wasn't long before they were seconded by polemics against the "affirmative" steps that had addressed black poverty, unemployment and social isolation. Although there were significant differences between some of these early commentators, they all agreed on one thing: the most important threats to social peace, political stability and democratic institutions came from below. The black poor were acting in ways that no other large group of recent urban migrants had ever dared, and the reckless demands of their extortionist leaders could no longer be accommodated within the moral framework of elementary fairness. Later arguments claiming that misguided liberal welfare policies had actively contributed to the destruction of inner city communities supplemented the discovery of a pathological "culture" of the black underclass that constantly destabilized and endangered the larger society. Inner-city troubles, it was said, came from destructive values and bad behavior. By the mid-80s, blacks had become symbols for everything that was wrong with the country and were systematically presented as greedy welfare mothers, wilding young people who saw every white person as an opportunity to launch a personal crime spree, opportunistic leaders who cried racism at the drop of a hat, cold-eyed predatory drug dealers, vicious rapists, hyper-sexualized irresponsible women, and the country's newest crybabies who were always ready to deflect attention from their own failures by blaming others for a predicament that they had only brought on themselves. Discrimination can no longer explain poverty and degradation, a unified right-wing chorus maintained, and the black community must cure its own profound moral deficits if it wants to win white support for its efforts to advance.

These claims don't resonate the way they used to, but they were profoundly attractive, deeply destructive, and they stand ready for instant redeployment should the need arise. As anxious whites sought peace and safety, they became increasingly willing to sacrifice many of their own claims for social welfare and began to move toward a right-wing political leadership that was openly prepared to discipline unruly blacks. The pain and anguish on both sides of the racial divide generated a set of arguments that exploited both the distress of the black poor and the anxiety of the white working and lower middle classes. All were hurt by the policies that followed. In the end, American history held the trump cards. The Right's calls for renewed militarism and the restoration of authority were powerful enough, but they paled in comparison to the historic force that lay behind its ability to take advantage of racial fear. As liberalism, equality and social reform became the point of attack, Irving Kristol's famous *bon mot* that "a neoconservative is just a liberal who got mugged by reality" anticipated more explicit racial barbs.

Black crime, illegitimacy, rudeness and welfare were effective images for the Right's attack on social equality because they were real problems. When drugs, protests, pornography, violence, abortion and obnoxious behavior threatened to overwhelm "middle America," the claim that the country had lost its moral underpinnings was an easy sell. As liberals proved unsympathetic to their fears, vulnerable whites fled to racial backlash in the belief that it would help them safeguard their hard-won and vulnerable position. Convinced by the Right that they were being squeezed between the unprincipled demands of the minority poor from below and the

contemptuous disdain of the liberal elite from above, millions of whites of modest means were ready to abandon the welfare state from which they had gained so much. Kevin Phillips expressed it best:

> The principal force which broke up the Democratic (New Deal) coalition is the Negro socioeconomic revolution and liberal Democratic ideological inability to cope with it. Democratic 'Great Society' programs aligned that party with many Negro demands, but the party was unable to defuse the racial tension sundering the nation. The South, the West and the Catholic sidewalks of New York were the focal points of conservative opposition to the welfare liberalism of the federal government; however, the general opposition which deposed the Democratic Party came in large part from prospering Democrats who objected to Washington dissipating their tax dollars on programs which did them no good. The Democratic Party fell victim to the ideological impetus of a liberalism which had carried it beyond taxing the few for the benefit of the many (the New Deal) to programs taxing the many on behalf of the few (the Great Society).2

Old-fashioned conservatives had long been skeptical of popular government, were often explicitly antidemocratic, and tended to embrace the "excellence" that came with tradition, blood and wealth. But the late-1970s combination of a broad religious revival, middle-class tax revolt, cultural conservatism and racial backlash helped fuel a right-wing populism that went far beyond glorifying the past or defending the status quo. As it became a forward-looking political movement, the Right developed a defense of hardworking, ordinary Americans against the spineless, effete cosmopolitanism of the urban liberal "elite." Tired of welfare, hostile to higher taxes, frightened by rising crime, worried about their children and suspicious of social engineering, important elements of the New Deal coalition became ripe for the picking.3 As it fanned resentment of disruptive social movements, demanding women, the youthful counterculture and the black poor, the Right tied racial fatigue and a desire for peace and quiet to an attack on the broad social programs that had built the welfare state. As more and more whites lost their faith in public programs and felt put-upon, misunderstood and ignored, right-wing spokesmen blamed an unholy alliance between a rapacious black underclass and the country's liberal elite for policies that were endangering their children and threatening their property. Convinced that they were being used and complaining that they just wanted to be left alone, millions of whites decided they were overtaxed, overregulated, underappreciated, and made to feel guilty for things that weren't their fault. The politics of danger and dispossession announced the beginning of retrenchment, fed by a near-universal sense that uncivilized blacks had to be brought under control before they ruined the country. The country announced that it had had enough.

Left to itself, racial anxiety can't fully explain what happened in the late 1970s. In alliance with the period's other forces, it proved to be exceptionally powerful. As liberals refused to deal with a broad desire that welfare be curbed, that deliberately offensive behavior be stopped, and that crime be punished, millions of whites abandoned them. They embraced the Right's claim that "culture" explained systematic black failure. The disappearance of explicit racial discrimination only made the argument more attractive. If crime, welfare dependency,

unemployment, drug abuse, offensive music, illegitimacy and all the rest can no longer be laid at the door of the racist institutions of white America, said the Right, then the explanation must lie in black individuals and their communities. Hostility to all broad, comprehensive social efforts generated dozens of books, articles and pronouncements claiming that any state action is bound to fail if its target population is not prepared to live in a cooperative and productive fashion. Self-serving and opportunistic civil rights leaders continue to find malign intent and conscious discrimination where there isn't any, said the Right, and public programs that fail to eliminate poverty demonstrate the power of "values" and the importance of individual responsibility. Liberal love of state activity is actively counter-productive, since it blinds people to the true source of failure and perpetuates a culture of dependence that does no one any good. The poor choose to remain chained by their own history, are unable to take advantage of opportunity and end up fleeing the responsibilities that come with equality. Blacks will never overcome poverty and dependence, it was said, until they drop their demands for "quotas," "reverse discrimination" and "preferential treatment." It's time to administer a healthy dose of tough love, take them off the dole, set them loose, and let them sink or swim.

III

Nathan Glazer and Thomas Sowell offered intelligent and thoughtful analysis of issues that went beyond liberal pieties, but the Right had broader targets than affirmative action. In 1978, William Simon and Irving Kristol had organized the Institute for Educational Affairs with start-up grants from the right-wing Olin, Scaife and Smith Richardson Foundations. Coca Cola, Dow Chemical, Ford Motor Company, General Electric, K-Mart, Mobil and Nestle made substantial contributions to enable the IEA to "seek out promising Ph.D. candidates and undergraduate leaders, help them establish themselves through grants and fellowships and then help them get jobs with activist organizations, research projects, student publications, federal agencies or leading periodicals." The Institute began to construct a network of conservative college magazines, and a year after its formation the *Dartmouth Review* appeared. Its attacks on affirmative action, gay students and women's groups, promoted as expressions of free speech and reactions to liberal conformity, conferred immediate national recognition, and deserved notoriety, on the paper and its editor, an undergraduate named Dinesh D'Souza. After graduation, D'Souza went to work for the Reagan White House. Making the rounds of the American Enterprise Institute, the Hoover Institution and kindred safe havens, he became something of a young conservative celebrity and has published a series of books on such subjects as "What's so Great About America." Like other right-wingers who appeal to racial anxiety, he does not want to be misunderstood. *The End of Racism* begins with the claim that the author is a friend of blacks, supports civil rights, understands multiculturalism and believes in equality. But new conditions demand new thinking.[4]

D'Souza starts with what's wrong. The primary explanation for black failure in the United States, he tells us, is "a culture that was an adaptation to historical oppression but is, in several important respects, dysfunctional today." Neither genetic, psychological nor historical explanations can account for the persistent black failure that sets African-Americans apart from all other groups. Neither multiculturalism nor targeted programs incorporating

proportional representation will cure it. No, "black failure to meet merit standards of academic achievement and economic performance" must be met head on and confronted with honesty, bravery and compassion. The United States has succeeded in eliminating official racism, so the Right's cultural argument explains that blacks are responsible for creating their own problems, and for overcoming them.

Black rage, white backlash, and liberal helplessness have made a toxic brew of festering problems and inadequate solutions. Togther, says D'Souza, they are the legacy of an antiracism that has been inadequate for years and is now collapsing under the weight of its own failure. Old nostrums won't do. It's imperative to start at the beginning, and D'Souza is not afraid to name names. Black "cultural" deficiency, not racism, disinvestment or economic structure, is responsible for failure and explains why equality before the law has not led to substantial progress. Simple-minded multicultural tolerance won't help. It's time to break with the illusion that all cultures are equally worthy of respect and frankly recognize that some are better than others. A "civilizational crisis" that afflicts the black underclass above all was D'Souza's chosen point of attack, buttressed by the unstated but clear implication that the failure of all blacks comes from the same poisoned source: "excessive reliance on government, conspiratorial paranoia about racism, a resistance to academic achievement as 'acting white,' a celebration of the criminal and outlaw as authentically black, and the normalization of illegitimacy and dependency. These group patterns arose as a response to past oppression, but they are now dysfunctional and must be modified."[5]

D'Souza doesn't explain how these pathologies once worked for blacks, but that's not the point. It's important to understand what needs to be done and who needs to do it. The civil rights movement had gone as far as it could and had succeeded in eliminating official racial supremacy, so it makes no sense to talk about racism any more. Blacks are being childish, self-indulgent and dishonest if they cling to the misguided notion that they live in a hostile society, and they will make no progress until they change their irrational ideas and their consequent bad behavior. Until they do so, they will deserve what they're getting: white indifference and hostility. Their social pathologies, criminality and violence legitimize what D'Souza winningly calls "rational discrimination", the sort of behavior that leads a white woman to cross the street when a group of young black men are on the same sidewalk or that encourages a store clerk to follow a browsing black customer around. Unfair treatment does exist in American life, but it's not racism. It's "rational discrimination."

White perceptions that blacks are lazy, loud, parasitic on government, sexually promiscuous and disposed to crime have a "rational" basis that is built on white observation of black behavior.[6] After all, said D'Souza, blacks *do* commit more crimes, *are* more dependent on welfare, *act* more obnoxious in public, *have* more illegitimate children and *make* more noise than whites. Predictive generalizations like these don't arise out of thin air, he reassures his reader. There's a rational basis, built on observation and experience, for claims that blacks know how to dance. There's a rational basis, built on observation and experience, for the high arrest rates of young black men. There's a rational basis, built on observation and experience, for cabbies' refusal to pick up black fares. There's a rational basis, built on observation and

experience, for regarding young black women as sexually irresponsible parasites. There's a rational basis, built on observation and experience, for the high rates of black incarceration. But none of this is racism, for we have equality before the law. It's "rational discrimination," and it's triggered by bad black behavior. It might be ethically suspect in some instances, but the responsibility for eliminating it falls on those whose behavior elicits it in the first place. Until then, rational discrimination is a perfectly understandable and defensible strategy for coping with a difficult, dangerous and uncivilized population.[7] Racial backlash wasn't a monopoly of urban white working-class neighborhoods. D'Souza's was its soft, published, considered voice, substituting the language of fairness and worried concern for that of rage and threat:

> The last few decades have witnessed nothing less than a breakdown of civilization within the African American community. This breakdown is characterized by extremely high rates of criminal activity, by the normalization of illegitimacy, by the predominance of single-parent families, by high levels of addiction to alcohol and drugs, by a parasitic reliance on government provision, by a hostility to academic achievement, and by a scarcity of independent enterprises. Civilizing institutions such as the small business, the church, and the family are now greatly weakened and in some areas they are on the verge of breaking down altogether. The next generation of young blacks is especially vulnerable.[8]

The disappearance of stable blue-collar jobs, capital flight from the country's cities, attacks on organized labor, politically-supported residential segregation, racial profiling, conscious state policies that shortchange urban public schools, a generation of cutbacks in social programs, none of this figures in D'Souza's world. Neither does the Great Society's undeniable success in prying open broad sections of the economy, tamping down urban disorder, helping to integrate higher education, expanding the black middle class and denting the hard edge of persistent poverty. No, a pathological and dependent black "culture" has metastasized past the ghetto and now threatens the entire society. All blacks are afflicted with this diseased culture, all are responsible for its continuing strength, and Americans will remain reluctant to help until blacks deal with it. "The civilizational crisis of the black community is not the result of genes and it is not the result of racism," says D'Souza. "The conspicuous pathologies of blacks are the result of catastrophic cultural change that poses a threat both to the African American community and to society as a whole."[9] The black underclass has become dangerous to everyone. Racism might still exist in society's nooks and crannies, but it's vestigial and can no longer explain or justify black failure. The only time it matters is when the black underclass elicits it, and then it's deserved.

White America had done quite enough, d'Souza announced. Racial anxiety and profiling had turned out to be rational and white suspicion that blacks were responsible for their own misery had been correct all along. Consistent black failure is a sure sign that white generosity has gone unrecognized and unrewarded. A disorganized, ungrateful and pathological population cannot make full use of American citizenship because it has been morally unprepared to do so. The future is up to blacks; if they "can show that they are capable of performing competitively

in schools and the work force, and exercising both the rights and the responsibilities of American citizenship, then racism will be deprived of its foundation in experience. If blacks can close the civilization gap, the race problem in this country is likely to become insignificant."10

Since official discrimination has ended, it's an article of faith for the contemporary Right that the remaining difficulties facing blacks are their own responsibility. If only blacks worked as hard as whites, saved as much as whites, studied as hard as whites, trusted American institutions as much as whites, played soccer as much as whites, bought homes as much as whites, went to college as much as whites, supervised homework as much as whites and read for pleasure as much as whites, then the country's residual racial issues would fade away. A generation of right-wing propaganda seized upon evidence of pathology to blame black communities for continuing inequality and failure. Under the circumstances, many whites were open to the argument that the country's collective obligation had come to an end with legal equality. It wasn't long before the Right extended this position to develop a broad assault on social equality and the welfare state.

IV

Two enormously influential books led the way. Published in 1981, George Gilder's best-selling *Wealth and Poverty* was followed three years later by Charles Murray's equally popular *Losing Ground*. Their argument that the welfare state both caused black poverty and paralyzed efforts to eliminate it has defined almost all subsequent positions, starting at the top with those of Presidents Reagan, Clinton and both Bushes. Aiming their fire directly at Johnson's Great Society, Gilder and Murray claimed that the most ambitious redistributive effort in modern American history had made poverty worse and demanded that all programs aiming at economic equality be abandoned before they fatally damaged the work ethic, family structure, popular expectations, race relations and the prospects of their intended beneficiaries. Building on Irving Kristol's earlier claim that the War on Poverty had been "one of the great reform disasters of our age," they went far beyond his lament that Johnson had done little more than throw money at the black poor.11

Long before George W. Bush started talking about "compassionate conservatism," Gilder and Murray were arguing against social welfare in the name of the poor and talking about race without talking about it. *Wealth and Poverty* was written to address "the devastating impact of the programs of liberalism on the poor," said Gilder, and from the very beginning the book argued that the welfare state was harmful to its intended beneficiaries and that ending it would be good for all concerned.12 As they defended established wealth and inequality, Gilder and Murray developed an argument against all political programs that aimed at economic redistribution. The idea was to take equality off the table entirely, and the best way of doing so was to blame liberalism for making poverty worse. It would be a short jump from there to the claim that any public program that encourages economic equality was immoral and doomed to fail.

Like D'Souza, Gilder started off on the high road, talking morality, announcing that he wanted

to end poverty and inventing a "golden rule of capitalism." Pursuing one's own interest isn't inherently selfish, he assured his readers, for individual gain requires that someone else be satisfied. Capitalism originates in giving and can be sustained only through sharing. Its moral core "consists of providing first and getting later," every market transaction forcing rational actors to give up something they have before they can get something they want.13 Gilder's market was a moral network that linked self-serving and generous actors in a matrix of mutual support. Economic redistribution will make moral life impossible because "its deeper effect is to challenge the golden rule of capitalism, to pervert the relations between rich and poor, and to depict the system as 'a zero-sum game' in which every gain for someone implies a loss for someone else, and wealth is seen once again to create poverty."14 Before Gilder identified the moral relationship between wealth and poverty that is "perverted" by too much concern about inequality, he decided to reveal the real cause of poverty.

Gilder started at the beginning: poverty is not the fault of the rich. And he named a much more substantial villain than D'Souza's favorite, but vague, "culture." It's the welfare state that causes poverty. If the past few years have taught us anything, he said, it is that the Great Society was an unmitigated catastrophe *for the poor*. The fault lay in the inherent logic of all public programs. Johnson's "war on poverty" was really a disguised war against wealth that had perversely worsened the lives of the poor. It discouraged work, penalized marriage, encouraged men to drop out of the labor force, and made it easy for unmarried women to have children. Gilder saw a general lesson here. Keynesian-inspired social welfare programs that redistributed wealth and sought to create purchasing power put the cart before the horse, and the results were always catastrophic for their intended beneficiaries. They promoted sluggishness, penalized risk-taking, depressed productivity and rewarded personal failure, exactly the opposite of what they should be doing.

Gilder's "supply-side" attack on Keynesian social welfare policy played a central role in the developing right-wing assault on the welfare state. It claimed to have uncovered the reason why high-minded projects of social reform ended up solidifying exactly what they intended to uproot. Keynes had it wrong, Gilder announced; supply calls forth demand, not the other way around. A sensible anti-poverty program requires stimulating production first and foremost, and this means that the interests of the poor are best served by helping the rich accumulate, invest and make big profits. Tax cuts, deregulation, and privatization are good for the poor. The state cannot organize an orderly and successful project of social reform. Keynes just didn't understand how the golden rule operates.

Gilder's "theology" of capitalism is simple: the rich can help the poor by investing and getting even richer. Accumulated wealth provides the neutral, unencumbered cash that can be devoted to the economic expansion that will help everybody. The wealthy are always ready to invest because they have more wealth than they can consume, but they require fiscal and monetary policies that will encourage them to help others and become the benevolent agents of capitalism's golden rule. Cutting their income taxes, eliminating their estate taxes, lowering their capital gains taxes, reducing their corporate taxes, privatizing Social Security, and deregulating as much as possible is not just good economic policy for society as a whole. Now

it's the height of morality. One must give in order to get, but first it will be necessary to change misguided liberal economic policy. For the moment, morality and good economic policy mean that the rich need to get before they can give.

American blacks have fared worse than other generations of the poor, and it's not their fault. It's because they've been treated differently from everyone else, and the results have been catastrophic for them and for American society as well. As long as politicians insist that black poverty is the outcome of racism, technological change, corporate greed, globalization or capital's need for surplus labor, they will continue to design social and governmental programs that are certain to fail. And, worst of all, they will not pay the price for their failure. That price will be borne by the black poor, for government programs cannot help but institutionalize and reward their failure. The dead end of liberalism, said Gilder, is that poverty cannot be cured or even ameliorated by redistributionist schemes, no matter how laudable their moral intent. If one wants to lift the incomes of the poor, "it will be necessary to increase the rates of investment, which in turn will tend to enlarge the wealth, if not the consumption, of the rich." Liberalism's failure to eliminate poverty was inevitable because it doesn't understand that "an effort to take income from the rich, thus diminishing their investment, and give it to the poor, thus reducing their work incentives, is sure to cut American productivity, limit job opportunities, and perpetuate poverty."15

American blacks need more work, family, and faith. This is why their culture is so destructive, irrational and counter-productive. But it's not entirely their fault. Prevented from working by liberal social policies, discouraged from forming stable families by welfare, and suffering from a misplaced faith in social engineering, they will never prosper until they discard the ideology and the social programs that perpetuate their difficulties. Poverty isn't caused by capital, the rich don't oppress the poor, and liberalism's "war against wealth" has so distorted peoples' thinking that they can't understand that "what causes poverty is the widespread belief that wealth does."16 Gilder had inadvertently revealed his priorities, and those of the Right as well. He was never all that interested in poverty. It was always wealth that turned him on.

Only in the Age of Reagan could Gilder have gotten away with painting his defense of the rich as an anti-elitist populism. Liberalism's hostility to wealth, he said repeatedly, characterizes a snobbish, aristocratic and morally degenerate elite whose influence had to be eliminated if the poor were to advance. All of a sudden, defending the rich helps the poor, inequality is populism, markets express the most elevated principles of social morality, and the wealth of the few helps everyone. "There is something, evidently, in the human mind, even when carefully honed at Oxford or the Sorbonne, that hesitates to believe in capitalism: in the enriching mysteries of inequality, the inexhaustible mines of the division of labor, the multiplying miracles of market economies, the compounding gains from trade and prosperity."17 The "enriching mysteries of inequality" add a level of religiosity to Gilder's repeated assertions that the market is the way out of poverty. It is in the economy, not in the protected enclaves of state bureaucracies or in their permanent welfare rolls, that people can learn the skills that will make them successful. Liberalism perpetuates poverty because its welfare state can go no further than make-work and charity. It might not be possible to learn

this at Oxford or the Sorbonne, but the home-grown truth is there for all to see. “The “dead end of egalitarianism,” Gilder assured his many readers, is that “to help the poor and middle classes, one must cut the tax rates of the rich.”18

Gilder’s book was so popular because it captured the mood of the Reagan presidency and summed up the developing right-wing assault on equality. Best-selling author, White House advisor, influential columnist and Reagan’s most-quoted source, he was just the man to argue that morality and social health demanded rewarding the rich. There was nothing particularly new in any of this. The unprecedented concentration of wealth that has characterized the past twenty-five years has been accompanied by all sorts of reminders of the Roaring Twenties, which, with the Gilded Age, is the only historic period in modern American history that comes close to contemporary levels of inequality. It’s easy to argue that the moral thing to do is to make the rich even richer if others can be convinced that the concentration of wealth is good for everybody, and particularly for those at the bottom. Ideas about economic equality and social welfare are things of the past, obsolete vestiges of an earlier that will harm those who need help the most. It’s time to break with the old and embrace the new. Enlightened and forward-looking social policy requires that the state unapologetically protect and encourage wealth.

Charles Murray shared Gilder’s deep concern for the poor. As clear-eyed as Gilder about the importance of accommodating the rich, *Losing Ground* was relentless in its attack on equality and the welfare state. Where Gilder had invested his approach with a thin veneer of moralizing concern, Murray articulated a frank Social Darwinism that identified a generation of liberal social policy as the worst enemy of the poor. But it was always the black poor he was talking about, and when *Losing Ground* talked about poverty it was really talking about race. Murray wanted to help, he assured his readers, but he was put off by the frustrating tendency of government programs to reproduce what they intended to eliminate. Thus it was that busing programs produced more white flight and more segregation in public schools, welfare payments produced more dependency, the burden of affirmative action fell hardest on working-class white males, and all these programs ended up creating more poverty. Seeking to understand why all this happened, Murray made a dramatic and far-reaching claim: *any* state attempts to organize social reform will be undermined by “the law of unintended consequences.” Since all government welfare programs end up exacerbating that which they are designed to ameliorate, almost all should be abolished, for the sake of the poor, of course. The Great Society had failed to eliminate poverty,and not because it hadn’t been given a chance. On the contrary, the problem was that it had been tried at all. Seemingly endless prosperity, the discovery that poverty cannot be automatically removed by economic growth and the understanding that the country’s racial problems are not confined to the South had enabled liberals to say that poverty originates in something more substantial than individual failure. The claim that it was embedded in the social system justified state redistributive and regulatory activity. When the urban riots erupted, white America stood ready to make good its historic debt to blacks and manage an acute social crisis at the same time. The Great Society’s community action programs, direct income transfers, manpower development projects and job training encouraged hope that poverty could be licked once and for all.

But they all failed, said Murray, and he continued that "it soon became clear that large numbers of the American poor were not going to be moved off the welfare rolls by urban development schemes or by training programs."19 But even the failure of federal anti-poverty programs didn't shake the prevailing orthodoxy about race and poverty, not yet. Despite the fact that experts, politicians and bureaucrats knew better, said Murray, the structural approach to poverty encouraged the poor to believe that poverty wasn't their fault. Something more insidious and powerful than personal shortcomings must be at work if the War on Poverty had failed so miserably. And so, said Murray, liberals found their answer. "It was the system's fault. It was history's fault."20 And, if "the system"would spontaneously produce injustice and inequality, then it had to be prevented from doing so. Interventionist, proactive and statist interventions would prevent it from doing what it was naturally disposed to do.

None of this was necessary, Murray assured his readers. Black poverty, the only kind of poverty he was ever interested in, had been getting better before the Great Society had ever occurred to President Johnson and the elitist axis that Gilder had identified. The 1950s and early 60s saw improvements for blacks across the board in matters of employment, education, wages, crime and family structure, he said. But all that changed once the government got involved. The federal programs designed to compensate for failure were actually responsible for accelerating the deterioration of the black poor. As the 1960s faded into the 70s, it became clear that the old ways of thinking about poverty, race, crime, and the like were no longer adequate. Things were getting worse, not better, for the black poor despite historic levels of federal commitment and activity. It would have been better to have done nothing.

The number of poor rose during these years in stubborn defiance of the enormous amount of money being spent. Murray was sure of the reason: large numbers of black men had left the workforce and there was an accompanying increase in the number of female-headed black families. Like Gilder, he insisted that restoring male authority in the family was essential to civic health and economic betterment. But liberalism was unable to design programs that would protect two-parent households, and the core insights of the popular wisdom that elected Ronald Reagan in 1980 signaled the beginnings of a new approach to a problem that was getting dangerous. "The popular wisdom," he said, "is characterized by hostility toward welfare (it makes people lazy), toward lenient judges (they encourage crime), and toward socially conscious schools (too busy busing kids to teach them how to read). The popular wisdom disapproves of favoritism for blacks and of too many written-in rights for minorities of all sorts. It says that the government is meddling far too much in things that are none of its business."21 He acknowledged that much of this "popular wisdom" was mean-spirited, even racist, at its core. But there was something to its basic claim that social policy had to be aimed at civilizing and moralizing the uncivilized and amoral black poor. It was time to change liberalism's mix of rewards and punishments so people could be held accountable for their actions and others were not forced to pay the price for their failure.

The failure of liberal social policy, Murray went on, lay in its systematic failure to pay attention to these elementary requirements. Because they were unwilling to get tough with the poor, liberals undermined the link between present behavior and future outcomes and made

destructive action rational. If “the system” was responsible for failure, then self-sufficiency was devalued. If an attack on middle-class norms of work and sobriety legitimized poverty, then welfare became a right and self-sufficiency was no longer a goal.

The net effect of all this has been a disaster, he said. Its core message to the black poor was that, since they are not responsible for their poverty, they were not responsible for ending it. This message took away all the incentives to work, to save, to invest, to defer gratification, to marry and plan for the future that have been the essential conditions of upward mobility for generations of the immigrant poor. When the lazy are rewarded and students who don’t study are passed along with those who do, then working is for chumps and studying is for fools. If the way to get anything from the welfare state is to be a failure, then it doesn’t pay to be a success. If all are victims of “the system,” then no one is responsible for his own failure. Society can’t work this way, said Murray. It must distinguish between the deserving and the undeserving poor so it can identify those who should be helped and those who shouldn’t. But liberals can’t do this. Their weakness and pandering have created a monster that can be tamed only with a new mix of authoritarian punishment and laissez-faire.

Murray was sure that the welfare state was rewarding what was wrong and punishing what was good. Poverty should not come with entitlements, incapacity should not be valued, and self-reliance should not be discouraged. Simply throwing money at people who are in a difficult position will do nothing to help them better their condition. Liberalism harmed the poor and damaged the wider society, since it “demanded an extraordinary range of transfers from the most capable poor to the least capable, from the most law-abiding to the least law-abiding, and from the most responsible to the least responsible. In return, we gave little to these most deserving persons except easier access to welfare for themselves, the one thing they found hardest to put to ‘good use.'”22 Unable to develop a morally defensible case for redistribution, liberalism has failed to solve the very problems that constitute its*raison d’etre* and has saddled the entire society with unjustified entitlements, misplaced rewards, counterproductive messages, and a chaotic bundle of contradictory policies.

Murray’s critique of liberal failure touched a nerve, but his central target wasn’t poverty, race, or even the Great Society. He was going after all public programs that aimed at economic redistribution and social equality. His central claim, that no defensible moral position can ever justify transferring resources from the rich to the poor, rests at the heart of the Right’s long attack on the welfare state. Murray claimed that he was trying to distinguish between the deserving and the undeserving, but it was always the interests of the rich that he had in mind. Confident that the lives of the poor will be immeasurably improved if they’re cut loose, he ends with a simple slogan that eloquently expresses the right’s defense of wealth and its hostility to social welfare and economic equality. “Billions for equal opportunity, he proclaims, but “not one cent for equal outcome.”0

IV

Whether they were the product of a pathological culture, liberal weakness or the immutable

laws of nature, the black "underclass" served as a particularly potent reinforcing image for right-wing attacks on equality. An unchanging picture of predatory youth, drug-addled men, and slovenly women described a parasitical and dangerous population that dominated the way the Right talked to white Americans about the country's concentrations of black poverty. Its very presence was a constant rejection of the nuclear family, bourgeois morality, the work ethic and the most elementary obligations of citizenship. The image was so powerful because it was oddly comforting to discover a mass of black desperation. Anxious whites could veer from pity to disgust in a heartbeat, secure in the Right's assurances that intractable black poverty was due to moral deficits, governmental inefficiency and genetics. One needn't bother with equality, since many blacks are beyond hope and cannot be helped.

The right-wing racial narrative of culture and unintended consequences was never about poverty. There's a reason why its focus on "values" was largely reserved for the black poor and why it has studiously ignored the real question of unemployment and social isolation.24 Riding the wave of a widespread white backlash that it encouraged and from which it has benefitted for years, the Right positioned itself as the authentic spokesman of "average" white Americans besieged by greedy blacks and put-upon by arrogant liberals. It constructed a discourse about affirmative action, poverty, welfare and race that drew on both halves of that backlash and allowed it to zero in on equality and the welfare state. Its "cultural" argument blamed the black poor for being dependent and poor, and its Social Darwinism blamed the welfare state for keeping them dependent and poor. It constructed a perfect self-reinforcing frame of reference. It could accuse the black poor of abusing the welfare state, then turn around and accuse the welfare state of abusing the black poor. Both arguments resonated deeply with a white population that had grown tired of feeling guilty. Both were widely available and could be adapted to any given situation, as could a second, related ideological scissors that the Right constructed. If the situation of black Americans was improving before the Great Society, then that proved that governmental programs were unnecessary. But if the situation of blacks had worsened since then, then that proved that government programs didn't work. Many ingredients formed the period's arguments about race and welfare. However it was sliced, the Right had its cake and ate it too.

Its real aim was never the color-blind meritocracy of its official position. Like its apologies for militarism and its call for order and authority, the Right's appeal to racial fear aimed at paralyzing the welfare state, legitimizing inequality and taking economic redistribution off the table. Distinguishing between the poor who deserved help and those who didn't attached moral judgements of merit and worth to success and failure. Welfare and "reverse discrimination" now explained economic stagnation and moral decay. Low wages, union-busting, restricted opportunities for women, unemployment, deindustrialization, capital flight, an insufficient minimum wage, and the virtual absence of child care couldn't explain black poverty. Liberalism was at fault.

Economic justice and political democracy soon fell off the country's racial radar screen. Now "culture" explained why people were poor and why they remained so. Misguided social programs, particularly affirmative action and the Great Society's efforts at redistribution, only

made matters worse. The welfare state hurt the poor by demoralizing them and encouraging a poisonous "culture of dependence." If one wanted to help the poor, the best thing to do was cut their benefits, send them back to work, put them in jail when necessary, shovel more money to the rich and let the market work its magic.

The right was never really interested in the debate about poverty, but it was virtually alone in talking about important issues that were agitating millions of Americans. Something terrible was happening to the country's black population, and liberals were silent. The Right seized on the fear, resentment and anxiety provoked by crime, litter, graffiti, welfare and decay. Liberals didn't want to go anywhere near these matters, and in the absence of any credible alternative the Right's account soon became the standard model. It didn't have to be that way, but liberals were unwilling to make a strong defense of social welfare and clearly assign blame where it belonged. Medicaid and Medicare, AFDC, food stamps, Supplemental Social Security, and indexing Social Security payments to the rate of inflation were significant accomplishments that succeeded in virtually eliminating poverty among the elderly and alleviating the difficulties of millions of others, but the Right had opposed them all. Even Nixon's surprising proposal for a guaranteed minimum income for families had been unacceptable. Federal housing programs, Head Start, Upward Bound, college loans and grants, Legal Services, the Job Corps, all these highly successful programs had demonstrated the ability of government to act as an agent of change. That's why they elicited such violent opposition. The Right has always opposed programs like them because they demonstrated that public power can be effectively used to advance economic equality and social justice. But cutting back on social programs is only a means to the Right's larger end. Everyone knows that big government is inevitable in an advanced economy like that of the United States. The Right's project is to make sure that it works to the advantage of the wealthy.

VI

The Right used virtually the same tactics in other areas of national life. Whipping up and taking advantage of genuine anxiety, conservative leaders constructed a narrative of military weakness, domestic chaos, wasteful social programs and grasping incompetents to create a broad assault on the very idea of economic equality and social justice. Having constructed a right-wing populist rebellion against the "elitist" welfare state, they have systematically betrayed those in whose name they pretend to speak and have spent a quarter of a century rewarding the wealth and protecting the property of a tiny percentage of the population.

Defeat in Vietnam, a new arms race and humiliation in Teheran caused millions of anxious voters to worry about their personal security and the future of their country. Frightened that the United States faced growing threats from implacable foreign enemies, they listened as the Right told them that things had changed and they couldn't afford both guns and butter. They didn't want increased military spending to gut social welfare and shovel obscene amounts of wealth and power to the rich, but that's what they got.

A widespread breakdown in public order led millions of hard-working Americans to tire of

social chaos and look for the restoration of peace and civility. The Right took their legitimate concerns about disorder and danger, dressed them up in religious clothes, nostalgic “family values” and the authoritarian language of law and order, and used them to attack social welfare, shared responsibility and the very idea of equality. Given the cowardice of the Democrats and the absence of any credible alternative, these arguments carried the day as the attack on economic justice accelerated. It’s not what people who worried about their kids’ education, the safety of their neighborhoods or the identity of their country wanted, but it’s what they got.

The Right managed to construct a “positive” argument that economic growth has to make the market the central organizing principle of modern life. Here too, a cynical betrayal rested at the heart of all the cheap attacks on government programs and the sunny optimism that an “ownership society” would make it easy for anyone to get rich. Accelerating inequality isn’t what millions of citizens who were offended by welfare, troubled by unresponsive bureaucracies and convinced that the government was wasting their money had in mind, but here too, it’s what they got.

Even as it recast itself as the party of growth, the Right stepped forward as the defender of responsibility and opportunity. Its spokesmen have worked hard to convince millions of people that freedom means the chance to get rich and equality means that elitist do-gooders will take their stuff and give it to others. Here too, populist sloganeering masked a project that has made the United States the most unequal advanced nation in the world. A political program of direct handouts to the rich, regressive tax cuts, deregulation, unprecedented levels of corporate power and historic levels of inequality isn’t what those who wanted to be left alone had in mind, but it’s what they got.

As potent as these arguments were, blacks have always been special, and they played a special role in the Right’s triumph. It was one thing to demand that liberals stop making excuses when cities were burning, children were being shot, public spaces were being defaced and urban life had become dangerous and unpleasant. It was quite another to use racial anxiety in a cynical and conscious project of channeling wealth upward. This wasn’t the first time that the Right betrayed those for whom it claimed to speak. A comprehensive assault on social welfare isn’t what the whites who resisted busing, demanded stronger policing and grumbled about affirmative action had in mind, but it’s what they got.

This has been going on for a quarter of a century, and it’s time to end it. The stakes are as high now as they’ve ever been. Terrorist attack, foreign war, the Right’s arguments, and the Democrats’ bankruptcy have made it difficult to address the inequality that deforms American society and threatens its democracy. The relentless enrichment of the few has led to stagnant wages, longer hours, greater stress, disappearing pensions, heightened job insecurity, reduced income, shorter vacations, and poorer health for the many. Enough is enough. Contemporary inequality is a cruel mockery of freedom and a bitter threat to democracy.

Modern history and elementary decency provide a simple lesson: the more equality there is,

the better. Democracy and freedom can flourish only by reaching into the broadest areas of political, economic, *and* social life. They require that the economy, the state *and* the society be brought under public supervision. It's time to name names. The present crisis demand that we speak plainly about who's been winning, who's been losing, and why. It calls for clear and decisive political action to reverse decades of organized robbery and corruption. Our action must be driven by the unshakeable understanding that more equality, rather than less, is the measure of a democratic society and the content of a free one.

Notes

1. This article is adapted from my *Servants of Wealth: The Right's Assault on Economic Justice*, just published by Rowman & Littlefield

2. Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New York: Anchor, 1970), p. 37.

3. See Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

4. Dinesh D'Souza, *The End of Racism* (New York: Free Press, 1995), ix.

5. *Ibid*., p. 24.

6. *Ibid*., pp. 259ff.

7. *Ibid*., p. 287.

8. *Ibid*., p. 477.

9. *Ibid*., p. 478.

10. *Ibid*., p. 527.

11. Irving Kristol, *Two Cheers for Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), p. 235.

12. George Gilder, *Wealth and Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), p. ix.

13. *Ibid*., p. 23.

14. *Ibid*., p. 10.

15. *Ibid*., p. 67.

16. *Ibid*., p. 99.

17. *Ibid*., pp. 96-7.

18. *Ibid*., p. 188.

19. Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 39.

20. *Ibid*.

21. *Ibid*., p. 146.

22. *Ibid*., p. 201.

0.44. *Ibid*., p. 233.

24. See Michael B. Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare* (New York: Pantheon, 1989) and William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), *The Truly Disadvantaged : The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) and *When Work Disappears : The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Vintage, 1997).

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Brecht Today

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"Brecht today" sounds like a wake-up call or a polemical assertion, reassuring us that indeed Brecht's works are still relevant today. Yet, one might just as well imagine the rising intonation of a question – "Brecht today?" – expressing doubt as to whether Brecht's writings can still generate interest beyond their historical value. Who or what is Brecht today? Thinking in a Brechtian way, we would have to consider first what is meant by "Brecht" as well as by "today," who is asking the question and for what reason. Do we specify Brecht the playwright, the theater theoretician and stage practitioner, the poet, the prose writer, or the intellectual critic and modernist thinker? Are we referring to the Brecht read and received in Germany (East vs. West), with the ups-and-downs of his popularity there, or to the Brecht translated into other languages and known in different socio-cultural contexts? Are we pointing to Brecht the person or to the collective practices and collaborative productivity, which he coordinated throughout his life? These are not idle questions but indicators of an ongoing interrogation into the nature and limitations of understanding Brecht's creative work. The following comments will be divided into three sections that expand the title into Brecht yesterday, today, and tomorrow.[i] Part I traces the contours of Brecht's reception over the past 50 years. Part II outlines the major contributions identified with Brecht's enormous intellectual output. Finally, Part III speculates about the ongoing relevance of Brecht's work or a Brechtian approach. In other words, I will focus less on specific texts than on our work as readers, asking where or whether Brecht fits in the current intellectual context with its shifts and adjustments.

Brecht Yesterday

Has Brecht become boring, antiquated, and anachronistic? In 1964 the prominent Swiss author Max Frisch expressed probably for the first time the frustrated accusation of "Brecht exhaustion" when he spoke of the "striking ineffectivity of a literary classic."[ii] Frisch was not referring to Brecht's own works but to the dull reception of his plays among theater critics and to the resistance among theaters to his dramaturgical innovations. In other words, he was summarizing the attitude of those who treated Brecht *as if* he were a classic writer, thereby robbing him of his effect. If in 1964 Frisch had perceived Brecht exhaustion, by 1994 Brecht was declared by a German critic to be "dead as a doornail" and mummified, while his status as a literary classic advanced to a point where the controversial Brecht biographer John Fuegi could be criticized in turn as a "defiler of monuments."[iii] Naturally there was no lack of confidence in 1996 (the fortieth anniversary of his death) and again in 1998 (the centenary of his birth) that Brecht had definitively become a classic (i.e., meaningless), just as the defiled monument had finally fallen from its base. The compulsive repetition of these judgments suggests the extent to which this person still occupies us as intellectuals, and here I mean not the real person but rather Brecht as the sum of a contradictory life's work and its reception.

Today Brecht may indeed strike us as a classic in the traditional sense as far as his popularity is concerned. For over thirty years his plays have dominated the statistics as the most produced in Germany, and outside Germany he is counted together with the classical Greek tragedians, Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, and Chekhov among the most frequently staged dramatists. These are remarkable statistics, since Brecht's kind of theater is an intellectually ambitious one that aims at undermining the relationship between a complacent audience and a dramatic tradition based on entertainment. Brechtian techniques of distanciation, the rupturing of realist illusions, and the notion of *gestus* based on the constructed relation between performer, spectator, and author have become familiar elements not only in the theater but also for the aesthetics of the cinema, television, and even advertising, albeit without his political aim of interventionist thinking, of "changing the world because it needs it."[iv]

Who, then, was this Brecht? There is no *essential* Brecht to be distilled out of his critical writings or to be carved out of his *oeuvre*, which was in any case a work in progress.[v] One answer to this question emerges from a consideration of the ways in which Brecht has been instrumentalized for various agendas. Brecht scholarship and Brechtian theater practice have a history in the postwar period with identifiable ideological commitments, shifts, and revisions both in the East and the West. In the divided Germany this reception followed fairly clear but countervailing patterns. His return to East Berlin in 1948 and the establishment of the Berliner Ensemble were celebrated by the East German government as a major public relations coup, since he represented a strong line of cultural continuity with left intellectuals of the Weimar Republic. Nonetheless, in the course of the fifties until he died in 1956, Brecht's politics and aesthetics were treated by the government's cultural functionaries with suspicion because his "formalism" did not fit the orthodox image of Socialist Realism. After his death and with the international success of the Ensemble's tours to Paris (1954) and London (1956) Brecht's work became acceptable as a model of political theater when applied to the fascist past and to western capitalism, but not to real existing socialism. Here, then, are the seeds of separating the political person Brecht from his artistic texts and playing the two off each other. Much of the subsequent reception in both East and West suffered precisely from this dogmatic definition of "the political" which sustains narrow and polemical positions either for or against the playwright's politics. Such positions tend to close off the innovative, experimental energy of Brecht's project before it even begins to develop.

Meanwhile, in a world sundered by the Cold War the development necessarily took a different course in the West. Esteemed or even venerated by a select few in the fifties – and this actually more often in Western European countries like Italy, France, and England than in the former Federal Republic – Brecht's choice for the "other," socialist Germany led to a virtual boycott at all publicly subsidized theaters in West Germany until his death. By the mid-sixties Brecht had become petrified in the East as an official icon of Socialist Realism, while in the West he was on the verge of being discovered by the young generation of politically motivated students as an alternative to the stuffy and dominant heritage of middlebrow humanism. For some he became the springboard to an alternative, critical form of thinking, for others, a weapon in the left's factional battles. During the seventies a renewal took place: a generation of younger writers in

East Germany schooled in Brecht's dialectical thinking and language extended his legacy into the present (e.g., Heiner Müller and Volker Braun); in West Germany the initial enthusiasm for the classical Brecht of the Berliner Ensemble had paled and the early Brecht and his learning plays – largely ignored in the East – dominated the attention of progressive theaters and scholars. By the eighties Brecht had become in both Germanies part of the respective, but different canons. His work had become professionalized, institutionalized, and specialized, ironically now part of a system of ideological authorization and legitimation in the universities and subsidized theaters. His stories, poems, and plays were anthologized in school readers. Literary scholars and theater historians focused attention on their object of interest, comparable to other privileged writers who had achieved the status of "poets and thinkers" in the German pantheon. A new 30-volume edition of Brecht's complete works, the first such East-West German collaboration, was launched in 1988.[vi] No wonder, then, that a full-blown case of Brecht weariness set in. Embedded in a context of competing and contradictory discourses, a Siamese image of Brecht flourished among the East-West tensions. A sometimes aggressive rhetoric of accusations and self-righteousness marked the opponents: on the one side the political Brecht, on the other the poet Brecht; here the rebel Brecht, there the Stalinist Brecht; here the antiquated Brecht in the museum, there the totalizing critique of the status quo.

The stagnation of global as well as German-German political relations in the eighties did not simply consign such an eminently political artist to the dustbin of history. Translations into all the major languages and the magnetism of a non-dogmatic thinker made Brecht into a favored object to be deconstructed from a critical distance by scholars and directors from other countries. In Central and South America, Asia, and Africa Brecht's work has played and continues to play a vital role for articulating the emancipatory political process of national transformation. Similarly underground, fringe, and avant-garde theaters "read" Brecht against the grain through various filters: feminism, performance theory, the body, humor, etc.[vii] After the end of the Cold War, interest in new Brecht images revived, even while it once again brought forth falsifying assessments: Brecht the chauvinist, who bought text for sex, the totalitarian Brecht, Brecht the anti-Semite. It is unnecessary to stress that this has nothing to do with the person Brecht, but rather he has become a projection screen. Brecht passed away long ago and does not need to be protected like a relic in a shrine. An ongoing interest in Brecht cannot be motivated by nostalgia for the apparently clear lines of distinction in the past nor is it simply a matter of turning the canonized Brecht back on his feet as an iconoclast. The pre-Classic Brecht, the student movement's Brecht, the Brecht "against-the-grain" were historically mediated and now obsolete responses to present challenges, while the widely acknowledged Brecht "exhaustion" or the museum-quality Brecht simply refers to the half-life of much intellectual reasoning. **Brecht Today**

What is Brecht's relevance today? The ever expanding forces of global capitalism, the hegemony of commodity market mechanisms, the growth of communications technologies, the tendency to move from class-based to identity and life-style politics, all these factors demand new conceptual and analytical tools if we are to understand where and how the cultural terrain is today being contested. Meanwhile traditional conceptual categories such as enlightenment,

pedagogy, progress, reason, and historical agency – all fundamental tenets in Brecht's vision of transforming society – have been called into question by postmodernist theories as being universalist and therefore oppressive master narratives in the service of dominant elites. On the one hand, this relegates Brecht's oeuvre to a historically superseded period of modernism while on the other it echoes the crisis in representation that grounds Brecht's entire aesthetics. The historical illusions of modernism have become in the postmodern age a problem of positioning oneself as subject in radically discontinuous realities. The momentous changes in the map of Europe over the last decade of the past century suggest that this problem of positioning is one of practical politics as well, for the intersecting demands raised by local, national, and international entities are becoming visible as functions of the increasingly complex multinational space we inhabit. Meanwhile the substitutes for the disintegrated utopias of modernism (nationalism, regionalism, ecology, a renewed awareness of tradition, etc.) must still prove themselves as more than apologies for a new hierarchy of authoritarian or totalitarian relations between the particular and the plural. With our distance to the person Brecht and to his political reference system, it ought to be possible to read his texts without *his* ideological blinders in order to discover how he used and transformed the material out of which he constructed representations of reality.

To answer the question whether Brecht is relevant is to consider whether political art is (still) possible. For this it is helpful to explain what Brecht meant by interventionist thinking ("eingreifendes Denken"), a central category in his own conviction about the need to change the world.[viii] Not surprisingly, it is no simple task because, like so much in the thinking of this pragmatist, his suggestions were oriented toward concrete historical conditions and situations. Interventionist thinking – a concept that arose in the early thirties during what perhaps was Brecht's most productive work phase – was realized in various forms and with differing goals in the time of exile and after his return to East Germany. First, it is important to establish the oxymoronic connection between "intervention" and "thinking." Thinking describes a contemplative relation to an object, to an event, or to the world; it marks above all a distancing process between the subject and object. Thinking about something triggers analysis and logic, which deconstruct and then reconstitute this "something." In the long tradition of Enlightenment philosophy, *cogito* ("I know") is the point of departure and essence of the subject. Brecht, who directly experienced the vicissitudes of the "dialectic of the Enlightenment,"[ix] found this definition of human existence too limiting. Intervention is the opposite of thinking, since it describes an act. From the perspective of the subject, intervention refers to changing the object, the course of an event, or the condition of the world. In short, interventionist thinking is typical for Brecht's antagonistic world view. His creativity lived off crises and found its most productive inspiration from the intensification of contradictions. For this he devised ever new, dynamic poetic and aesthetic forms. The concept of interventionist thinking abstracts from such a dynamic; it signifies an attitude which demands not only contemplation and cognition but also application and effect. Interventionist thinking is, then, a result of specific aesthetic forms that set in motion the addressee (e.g., the reader, the audience, the participant) by means of an analytical, distancing process.

Based on this definition I maintain that political art and interventionist thinking in Brecht's

sense is still imaginable. Many or even all of his plays are directly political, that is, they address specific political themes (e.g., *The Rifles of Senora Carrar,* 1937, is set during the Spanish Civil War, *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui*, 1941, takes up Hitler's ascent to power, *The Days of the Commune*, 1949, treats the Paris Commune of 1871), but this is a very narrow idea of the political. Brecht's political interest did not exhaust itself in the specifics of a historical juncture, rather he used topical events to generate a political attitude on the part of his readers and audience: the desire to change things. Moreover, in a broader sense politics in the theater was for Brecht the opposite of boredom and lethargy. All his plays and theoretical writings are aimed against the institutions of art, which he considered to be essentially conservative. His practical work consisted in producing contradictions, revising texts, and breaking through the passivity of audience consumerism. As an abstraction, then, the concept of interventionist thinking is still viable, but it becomes problematic when we attempt to define its content. Which aesthetic forms are today still usable? Is there a set of "Brechtian techniques" or stylistic elements devised by Brecht in the thirties, forties, or fifties for specific social situations and institutions that are today still valid? Such questions can not be answered abstractly and universally, that is, interventionist thinking will be engaged differently in Germany than in the United States, for it is not a formula but an attitude toward experience and imagination.

Can Brecht still be relevant if he failed in his project? For he certainly did fail, at least in Walter Benjamin's sense of history, which moves forward by means of failure rather than triumphs.[x] Brecht was a radical partisan of change, and the way he envisioned and represented change relates to the constraints of his experiments in imagining something different from the historical reality in which he lived. Here we must consider Brecht's utopianism, since this is where the very capacity to imagine change reveals its own absences, its historical limits and systemic repressions.[xi] With its utopias modernism sought to rehabilitate the subject in its anomie and alienation by imagining a non place outside of space in which the ideal of unity reigned between work and life, the individual and the collective, art and politics, economy and morality. In the twenties German novelists like Alfred Döblin and Hermann Broch developed exemplary techniques for creating a timeless space in their prose by running together mythic and contemporary time and by dissolving specificities of place into allegorical, universal space. Brecht too is on one level indifferent to time and place, shifting from a mythic Chicago to the Caucasus or to China and playing with anachronism in *Mother Courage*, 1939, *St Joan of the Stockyards*, 1932, or in his adaptations. Yet, he insists precisely on difference in order to produce new insights into structural relations and between historically mediated specificities. Distanciation (e.g., the alienation effect, Epic theater, *gestus*) is Brecht's primary means of historicizing perception, of demonstrating that the past was different than the present and that, because the past has changed, the present is changeable. Undoubtedly this is related to a deep empathy for the struggle to survive, one that he faced existentially as an exile during the Third Reich. But it is also an imaginative space shared by modernists in their response to modernization and industrialization, whose effects of alienation became the trope of utopian thinking. Brecht's plays, especially the mature parable plays, construct situations that show the transition from historically outmoded time and the contradictions between still functional old behavior and new situations. This disjuncture

between historical time and the time of the subject is mediated by utopia with the intent not to reform an oppressive system but to transform it, to empower people so that they understand their present in order to change it. This, then, is Brecht's dialectic, his effort to imagine something that is not yet possible but already inevitable. Its negative moment is the critique of bourgeois forms and their reactionary consequences, and its positive, most problematic moment is utopianism.

The absence of the ideal condition produces utopian energy in the modernist project. Yet here the other side of utopianism becomes visible. Modernist art and literature is characterized by negativity, by the fundamental gesture of representing the unrepresentable ("ou" + "topos" = no place, absence of place). Shock, revolution, and the "new man" describe aesthetic strategies for this impossible function. Modernist utopias were motivated by the idea of harmonizing or bringing together art and life. In this equation art was considered to be the paradigm of non-alienated labor in which individual self-determination and control are most fully realized. Committed to the political avant-garde, Brecht aimed at a different kind of utopia, which would integrate art and social praxis. Of course, this vision emerged from a particular social situation and was subject to important shifts in emphasis over time. Witness to the collapse of the old order and to the problematic constitution of an increasingly unacceptable new one during the twenties in Germany, Brecht was attracted to the idea of redemption through the negation of self. The excess and isolation of the asocial antiheroes of the early plays (Baal, Garga, Kragler, Fatzer) express his critique of the bourgeois subject without slipping into the modernist solution of escaping the masses through hyper individualism. In the late twenties and in particular with the experimental learning plays (*Lehrstücke*) of the early thirties Brecht sought to formulate an alternative to this subjectivist, antibourgeois stance. It takes the form of a collectivity that derives from the consciousness of individual subjects transformed into a class identity through the dynamics of mass struggle. The earlier social chaos and individual rootlessness give way to a consensus model of obedience to the collective (*Einverständnis*) and to a new individual who is defined not in opposition to but through the masses.

This collectivity had not only aesthetic but also biographical consequences in Brecht's practice of collaborative authorship. One of the distinctive features of the modernist crisis in Germany during the Weimar Republic was a rapid shift in the conditions of cultural production. The increasing commercialization of leisure-time activity with the rise of popular entertainment (cinema, sports, dance revues, jazz, etc.) and the commodification of cultural relations that accompanied it marked the social crisis in the function of traditional cultural institutions. The educated, bourgeois audience was dissolving, and taking its place was a much broader audience of consumers with new demands for imaginative and recreational activity. This tendency toward cultural democratization also affected the role and the self-identity of the writer. On the one hand, the avant-gardists as well as the traditionalists sought new, distinctive ways of asserting their elitism; on the other, writers like Brecht embraced modernity's tendency toward social disintegration and massification as liberatory. The constraints of bourgeois individualism were falling away. Working with Lion Feuchtwanger on the adaptation of Marlowe's *Life of Edward the Second* (1924) and with Elizabeth Hauptmann

on *Man Equals Man* (1926), Brecht began to develop a habit of production that submerged the author's subjectivity within a collective. The very notion of aesthetic activity as "production" (rather than creation), theorized by Brecht in his book-length essay *The Threepenny Lawsuit* (1932) indicates this fundamental shift. Indeed, *Man Equals Man* thematizes a sociological model of identity constitution based on exchange value and collective need. The demystification of the bourgeois notion of the individual is equally pertinent for the demystification of the bourgeois notion of the author.

This collaborative practice has led to accusations that Brecht suppressed the autonomy of his collaborators, in particular of his female collaborators. Such critics misapprehend the fundamental response to and intervention in the modernist crisis as well as the fact that he worked closely with male collaborators. At the same time, the issue of gender oppression – the "price" that Brecht's female collaborators paid to be used by him – needs to be historicized. History has not made it easy for women to develop their artistic creativity, and many women have found it productive to be connected to a literary environment controlled by male writers. Brecht certainly no longer fit the traditional model of the poet and his (female) muse. That he could bind women to himself on the condition that their love too was to be socialized in the context of creative productivity was an innovation within the context of German society in the first half of the twentieth century. Historically, then, the scale was weighted in Brecht's favor; his women worked on his material and were his material. In a very real sense they served at times as the medium of his productivity. Yet it is foolish to assert that women's creativity could or did exist outside of the history of patriarchy. Thus, to understand the role of Brecht's female collaborators and to identify who was responsible for what, is part of the process of historically defining the constraints and the possibilities of women's creativity.

Brecht's vision of a more humane society altered with the threat of new forms of domination during the thirties, specifically with the rise of fascism. It became more and more abstract. He tried and failed for the most part to represent convincingly the alternative order that could confront contemporary fascism. The denial of the part for the whole, the elimination of the individual for the sake of the collective in the learning plays, reverted in *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (1938), in the historical novel fragment *The Business Affairs of Mr. Julius Caesar* (1938/39), and in the fragments in the *Book of Changes* (1935-42, also known as *Me-ti*) to a contemptuous analysis of the collapsing old order. Forced into exile and faced with the horrors of National Socialism, Brecht focused on new possibilities of representation rather than on constructing a new order. On the one hand the formal reductionism of the parable plays from this period seems to function as a kind of protective shield against the impossible contradictions of reality, but on the other the shift in subject and technique to more deliberate forms of distancing decenters the text-audience relation by transferring the utopian imagination into the spectators themselves. The prologue to *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (written in 1944, first published in 1949) suggests succinctly the political and poetic utopia Brecht envisioned in his mature plays. The members of the collective farm represent an anticipated collective destiny in which art and labor have both become equally valuable forms of production for them as free subjects. Not among the pleasures rationed in wartime, the narration of a story (like work) is a necessity despite the existential threat they face.

Representation, aesthetics, and the work of imagination become political acts with a use value comparable to labor. In his theoretical writings of the forties Brecht characterized this collectivity as living together ("Zusammenleben"), and after the war his endeavors at the Berliner Ensemble comprised the practical model in the theater for such a collective, at least in a rough, imperfect form.[xii]

Brecht studied and then became a Marxist in the late twenties. Like the early Marx, his critique of capitalism was not anti-capitalist but rather posited it as a material force, as a motor that leads to ever more complex relations of production. Yet there is an idealist continuity in Marxist utopian thought that adheres to Brecht's as well. It presumes that everyone shares the imagined collective's interests because of a fundamental class identity, whereas the highly differentiated interactions in such a social constellation suggest a much more complex intersecting of needs, demands, fears, and desires. Brecht, too, insisted on a political and sociological definition of class as the primary or hegemonic articulation of subject identity, although he was not oblivious to the complexity of the subject in other ways. His entire poetic model, for example, undermines the strong tradition in Marxist understanding of the dialectic as a movement towards the resolution of contradictions ("Aufhebung"). The definition in the thirties of the Epic Theater – with its separation of elements and stress on the positive quality of the fragment owing to its openness to the audience – as well as the later revision in the fifties of the "cofabulating" audience in the Dialectical Theater are examples of his view of contradiction as a productive moment rather than one of closure. Moreover, Brecht's reformulation of the collective as the intersubjective "living together" of a community stresses the positionality of the subjects who are constantly producing themselves *as* subjects through conflict and contradiction with one another. Clearly he understood the idea of the subject as construction, something he demonstrated in the transformation of dramatic characters like Jeraiah Jip in *Man Equals Man*, Fatzer, and the Pope in *Life of Galilei* (written in 1938/39, revised in 1955/56) and something he tried to conceptualize as the *gestus*, which problematizes the relation between the self and history.

Brecht was no rosy-eyed utopian but an intellectual who developed his critical faculties through the experience of personal gains and losses, of political reversals and historical ruptures. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the ossified socialism identified with it is a powerful indictment of traditional left utopianism. But Brecht's project of a more just, egalitarian society never sought to provide answers on how to make the world better, rather his writings are scripts for how to ask questions, how to formulate the right questions for a given situation that is untenable and therefore must be changed. While he believed in the power of reason that enables people to recognize the problems around them and to solve them, he was neither a narrow-minded rationalist nor a naive believer in the inevitability of progress and human emancipation. Thus, his critique of emotions, which is frequently misunderstood or implemented as a dramaturgy of "coldness," was not directed against feeling or spontaneity as such but rather against the *function* of emotions in traditional theater. Like interventionist thinking, Brecht's belief in reason is a functional concept that enables individuals to determine this interest and to act on its behalf, in other words, a principle of reasoned action excluding neither passion nor emotion. **Brecht Tomorrow**

Our image of Brecht is a mediated one, constructed from biographical and historical facts, from interpretive readings and polemical speculations, from instrumentalized needs and utopian desires. This Brecht-in-process, whose image is never finally established, contributes precisely to its quality that can still provoke us. Yes, Brecht is a classic today, recognized as a canonical thinker and artist in the modernist, Enlightenment tradition who reflected on and wrote about some of the major catastrophes in the past century. In a world governed by media and technologized communication, the voice of Brecht sounds strangely old-fashioned, while simultaneously Brechtian practices – like vandalizing world literature, mixing poetry and kitsch, using mass culture positively, and "complex seeing" in the presentation and reception of art – have not only been coopted by the market economy but have been integrated into its very functioning strategies. In the age of television flow, virtual internet identities, and Benneton advertisements featuring aids victims even the alienation effect can be used to sell commodities more efficiently. Yet, this nihilism validates a part for the whole in a system that raises media images to the definitive experiences in advanced capitalism. For those still committed to Brecht's critical project, seeking forms of pedagogy and communication that encourage thinking and undermine merely contemplative attitudes is the goal.

Brecht was a cunning master of throwing "sand in the gears" of institutional hierarchies. In this respect he is a particularly relevant example for the public intellectual today. He lived at a time when the self-image of the artist and thinker as a socially and politically engaged person corresponded to the expectations of the public; today, however, the autonomy and self-preservation of artists and thinkers seems more important. In a historical situation that threatens critical thinkers and devalues strategies of critique, we need models of oppositional voices, lest we forget the necessity of protest. Brecht is such a model. Partisan without being bound to a party, independent of official institutions yet experienced at surviving within institutions, again and again prepared to entertain risks and undertake unconventional attempts: this was how Brecht accommodated a world which he envisioned as changeable. In our times, when media consciousness shapes the values of public opinion, attempts and strategies to throw "sand in the gears" become quite useful, even if the global media culture has already long since forgotten the plays and poems of a Brecht. In a world of simulations, where everything is communicated through codes, and where social life is characterized by dispersion and stress, tools are useful that can strengthen insight, render visible human relations, and destabilize habits of seeing. For we are witnesses to how new technologies displace familiar securities and identities. Here aporias and new feelings of insecurity emerge, which in turn necessitate new strategies of distanciation, that is, methods of un-learning in order to learn anew. To maintain this attitude, even when stagnation, paralysis, reaction, and regression are the order of the day, is no small feat.

Brecht's main contribution, then, is to be found in the innovative ways he devised for examining history and making the processes of history visible as changeable ones. While his means may themselves no longer be usable, the search for ways of historically anchoring meanings – even the multiple meanings of a postmodern age – is modeled for us in Brecht's work. Inscribed with the collisions and ruptures of the century in which he lived, his significance as a writer and thinker will become relevant whenever his sort of vision becomes

necessary, whenever a situation conducive to ideological unpredictability allows for ideas to be criticized, radically, without worrying about re-establishing certainties. In short, Brecht's impact is not to be found in any recipes he may have provided but rather in the possibility of his writings to enable our own creativity in thinking about historical truths and processes.

Notes

[i] This essay is an expanded and updated version of ideas I developed in two earlier essays: "A Postmodernized Brecht?" *Theatre Journal* 45:1 (March 1993), 1-19, and "Brecht-Ehrungen: Eine Übung zur Vorschau auf einen Rückblick," in Thomas Jung, Hrsg., *Zweifel – Fragen – Vorschläge: Bertolt Brecht anläßlich des Einhundertsten* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 13-29.

[ii] Frisch made this comment in a speech he gave at a theater conference in Frankfurt am Main in 1964.

[iii] See Willi Winkler in *Die Zeit*, 12. August 1994 and the review of the English-language edition of John Fuegi's *The Life and Lies of Bertolt Brecht* (London: Harper Collins) in *Der Spiegel* 38 (1994).

[iv] See the song by this title in Scene 5 of *The Decision* (1930, also known as *The Measures Taken*).

[v] Typical for this misunderstanding is the status of model books ("Modellbücher") with photographic sequences and explanations for some of Brecht's most important and successful productions at the Berliner Ensemble. They have led to the unfortunate misconception among some directors that Brecht intended these as authoritative paradigms which should be reproduced. In fact, they offer a fascinating documentation of the work *process* Brecht engaged as a director rather than a prescription or recipe.

[vi] The "Grosse kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe" of Brecht's *Werke*, published together by the West German Suhrkamp Verlag (Frankfurt am Main) and the then East German Aufbau Verlag (Berlin and Weimar), was originally expected to be completed in 1993, whereas in fact the final index volume appeared only in May 2000.

[vii] See *Brecht in Asia and Africa*, *Brecht Yearbook* 14, eds. John Fuegi et al. (Hong Kong: International Brecht Society, 1989) and *Brecht then and now / damals und heute*, *Brecht Yearbook* 20, eds. John Willett et al. (Waterloo, CA: International Brecht Society, 1995). The International Brecht Society (IBS) was founded in 1969 in the United States and publishes the *Brecht Yearbook* as well as the journal *Communications*. See the IBS website at: www.brechtsociety.org. For a guide to English language translations, see "Brecht's Works in English – A Bibliography": http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/BrechtGuide/

[viii] The concept of interventionist thinking comes up repeatedly in Brecht's writings of 1930-33. See, for example, "Eingreifendes Denken" (1931), in Brecht, *Werke* (Berlin and Frankfurt am Main: Aufbau and Suhrkamp, 1988ff), 21:524f, and "Anmerkungen zu *Die*

Mutter" (1933, published first in 1938), 24:188.

[ix] "The Dialectic of the Enlightenment" is the title of a series of essays authored by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno while in exile in the United States and first published in German in Amsterdam in 1947. Their thesis traces the sources of fascist violence to the processes of rationalization and alienation set in motion by the Enlightenment.

[x] See Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," especially Thesis XIII, in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 253-264.

[xi] On Brecht's utopianism, see Klaus-Detlef Müller, "Utopische Intention und Kritik der Utopien bei Brecht," in Gert Ueding, ed., *Literatur ist Utopie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), 335-66, Friedrich Dieckmann's incisive "Brechts Utopia. Exkurs über das Saturnische," in *Sinn und Form* 5/1987, as well as Barbara Buhl's longer investigation concentrating mainly on the early and middle works, *Bilder der Zukunft: Traum und Plan. Utopie im Werk Bertolt Brechts* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1988).

[xii] On "living together," see Brecht, *The Messingkauf Dialogues*, ed. and trans. by John Willett (London: Methuen, 1965), where the notion is introduced by the "The Philosopher" as the very material of theatrical representation, as well as the last entry (No. 77) in *A Short Organum for the Theatre*, in *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. by John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 205.

Velvet Revolution In Iran?

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November 17 marks seventeen years since the Czech Civic Forum and the Slovak Public against Violence choreographed the demise of one of the last Soviet-orbit regimes. In kind, there are three anniversaries coming up in 2007—the centennial of Jan Patočka's birth; thirty years since his death; and the thirtieth anniversary of "Charta 77." That bold Czechoslovak Manifesto for human rights issued in January 1977 by Václav Havel, Jan Patočka, and Jiří Hájek, Charta 77 paved the way to the events of the "Velvet Revolution" of November 17, 1989. Patočka's birth and his Socratic death (in March 1977, he suffered brain hemorrhaging during his interrogation at the hands of the Czech secret service and was left untreated at the police station) will be commemorated in Prague 22-28 April 2007.[i]

"A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of Communism," famously wrote Marx in the Communist Manifesto of 1848. "A specter is haunting Eastern Europe: the specter of what in the West is called 'dissent'," said Václav Havel in 1978 in "The Power of the Powerless." Jacques Derrida prophesied in his 1994 Specters of Marx about "a spectrology of Marx" that continues to haunt us even after the fall of the Soviet empire in 1989.

Indeed the specter of "velvet revolution" continues to haunt, perhaps nowhere so much as in the Islamic Republic of Iran of today.

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Not unlike the Czech philosopher-dissident Patočka, the Iranian philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo is an intellectual in deep trouble with the ruling regime. And just like Havel in pre-1989 Czechoslovakia, Jahanbegloo has become part of a democratic, nonviolent movement of the Iranian powerless. On April 27, 2006, the Iranian philosopher was detained at Tehran's Mehrabad airport, and shortly after was accused of actively preparing to take part in a "velvet revolution" in Iran. This polyglot thinker did his Ph.D. at the Sorbonne while Western Marxism was demanding the impossible, but elected to write his doctoral dissertation on Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolent change, Satyagraha. Jahanbegloo continued to espouse nonviolence after returning from the West to his homeland. The question of violence looms large in Iran, whose regime was born of the convulsions of 1979. The Iranian Revolution contained several currents of thought—it included Marxist anti-imperialists and Third-Worldists as well as liberal-democratic nationalists and feminists. Yet in the end it was overtaken by the anti-modernist Islamists, and so became a conservative-clerical revolution rather than a democratic one. On one of his many trips to India, Jahanbegloo met with the Dalai Lama, who in turn has made frequent visits to Prague to meet with Havel since 1989. All such links reinforce suspicion among Iran's clerical rulers that "the velvet revolution" is at hand.

Rasool Nafisi has suggested that the main reason for Jahanbegloo's arrest was his research

project for the German Marshall Fund in which he compared the Iran's democratic dissidents with their East-Central European predecessors.[ii] This line of comparative inquiry analyzed the balance of political power between Iranian civil society and the governing clerical regime. While Jahanbegloo sat in Tehran's notorious Evin prison, eminent international figures—among them Havel and Habermas—sent an Open Letter to Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad protesting the philosopher's detention. The Iranian minister of the interior, Hojjatoleslam Qolamhoseyn Mosheni Eyhe'I, said in a July interview that Jahanbegloo was arrested on suspicion that he had been assisting the US to provoke "a velvet revolution in Iran," an activity that, according to him, seems to be the US's main business these days. The irony, of course, being that nonviolence has not exactly been the modus operandi of US foreign policy strategy: that the empire should be accused of fomenting nonviolence is rich in paradox.

Meanwhile, the reaction of Tehran's clerical regime to this Iranian dissident was as if taken out of the (secular) Soviet cook book. The state-run press, Kayhan and Resalat, and the student agency, Isna, proclaimed the good news of Ramin's video "confession" in which he uttered mea culpa for his sins: he was to be used by foreign agents (the CIA and Mossad) in order to act against the regime which was once called by the head of the Assembly of Experts, Ayatollah Ali Meshkini, "the most divine and heavenly" in the world. The confession was at first observed by the Revolutionary Cultural Committee, whose members are appointed by Iran's supreme religious leader, (today Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, before him the inventor of the clerical regime, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomenei) and whose task it is to supervise the ideological correctness of all cultural and educational programs in the land. Just as during the Soviet-era witch hunts on domestic spies and Zionists, or during the Joseph McCarthy-era witch hunts of Communists in every closet, so also in Iran today, Ramin Jahanbegloo is far from alone in being compelled to "confess" to appease the regime. Such confessions have been prepared for a televised public propaganda.[iii] Just as in the Soviet bloc, so also in Iran assassinations and torture are gradually being replaced by "softer" methods of psychological and economic repression. The Iranian regime uses now more varied threats to keep would-be dissidents in line: threats of financial reprisals, loss of home or medical care, forced exile, or repeated arrest. When Jahanbegloo was released on August 30 of this year, he was given a valid passport, but he had to place as bail both his house and the house of his mother as a guarantee that he would not speak about the tortured origin of his confession or otherwise against the regime.

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Who's afraid of the "velvet revolution"? Fearful are those who don't understand civil society or non-governmental initiatives. Such fears nowadays strike Central East Europe itself, where among the most vocal and persistent critics of Charta 77 and of the entire era of Central-East European dissent and today's NGOs is Havel's nemesis, the current Czech President, Václav Klaus. His and similar revisionist voices of the dissident history and of the role that civil society played in 1989 arise as if they were taken from another cook book—that of the Great Leader, by whom I do not mean the Soviet cult of personality but the Supreme Iranian cleric. If Timothy Garton Ash is correct that the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah "Khomenei was both the Lenin and the Stalin of Iran's Islamic revolution,"[iv] then the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei is the

one who tries to suppress and normalize all mounting dissent against it.

Consider this irony: both the Islamists and the Klaus-type revisionists cannot be right. Klaus would like his cronies to believe that the dissidents were a bunch of elitist losers; that the Actually Existing socialist regimes collapsed of their own overweight; and that it is the unfettered pro-market forces that played the main role in the overthrow of Communism and should play the leading role in post-Communist societies. Dissidents, with the exception of Havel and at the beginning also of the Polish Solidarity leaders, were effectively pushed aside after 1989. The market entrepreneurs and party technocrats took over. Klaus heard Lenin's question loud and clear already when he worked at the top Prague Communist think-tank, the Prognostic Institute: What is to be done? He formed the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) soon after 1989, which proved to be more effective than the dissident Civic Forum that facilitated the velvet transfer of power, and Klaus thus took power.

Yet can both Central-East European revisionists and the Iranian clerics be right about dissidents and civil society? When unlearned lessons of history repeat themselves, they return as farce. Enter the first farce: the clerical regime fears that it will suffer something that Klaus claims never happened in the first place. Then comes the second farce: the conservative religionists in Iran and the conservative market ideologues of Central-Eastern Europe rally—as the Communist apparatchiks before them—agitate against civil society. Klaus, who likes to portray himself as a student of American democracy and of Margaret Thatcher, invented and introduced derogatory anglicized neologisms into Czech political discourse, such as "NGOism" and "humanrightism," so as to poke fun of the very civil and non-governmental initiatives in his country that Toqueville once identified as the heart of American democracy.

Here comes the third farce: the reactionary Islamist regime recruits former agents who spied on anti-Communist dissidents but were left unemployed by the fall of the Berlin Wall; they collaborate on figuring out how to prevent democratic dissent from turning into "velvet revolution."[v]

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The specter of nonviolent democratic Islam is haunting the suicide bombers and religious zealots of every stripe. The fear of democratic civil society among Islamist fundamentalists grips the entire Middle East region with the realization that the Iranian dissidents have outgrown both the ultra-left and the religious right—the two forces responsible for the anti-democratic subversion of the 1979 revolution's emancipatory promise. It is possible this might only apply to Iran, and that the situation in other Islamic countries is more complex, especially regarding the relationship between Islamism, civil society and democracy; yet crucial for my point is that the Iranian dissidents, within the framework of Islam, now embrace nonviolent change and what Karl Popper and George Soros call the open society. Iranian dissent has become, like the Central-East European and Soviet underground before it, the laboratory for imagining another possibility, a future world that would wed the most spiritual resources of religious life with the most advanced forms of democratic and economically-just institutions.

This is the fear that the Prague Spring of 1968 shares with the Velvet Revolution of 1989—and both share with the current global situation: the pro-democracy yet deeply religiously-inflected dissent in Iran is underscored by its radical nonviolence and opposition to all religious terror (whether by a totalitarian state or by religious fanatics). Yet it is likewise opposed to the notion of a permanent war on terror, which is perceptively unmasked by the proponents of nonviolent change as the Jacobin variant of all aggressive wars and modern revolutions.

Any violent foreign intervention in Iran would mean the end of the democratic movement. Even Condoleezza Rice's offer of 75 million dollars to support the opposition forces in Iran is in this situation the kiss of death (and was dead on arrival—the dissidents don't want a dime of it). The Islamist regime fears the velvet of dissidents as much as they fear the mystical dance of the Sufis, whose prayer gathering was attacked by a state-sponsored gang in February 2006. Both the Iranian dissidents and the Sufis embody dangerous ideas that another world is possible. Just as in 19th-century Denmark, Søren Kierkegaard protested from within Christianity that in Christendom there were hardly any Christians left (the uneven length of Kierkegaard's pants was then the only Danish religious caricature), so today the devout Muslim dissidents ask where are Muslims in Islamdom? Along with the secular critical modernists, Jahanbegloo chief among them, theirs has been the voice sorely missing from the entire equation! Should suicide bombers and authoritarian clerical regimes be confused with Islam any more than in our post-Christendom Christianity or democracy with what Noam Chomsky calls military humanism?

Saturated by the suffering at the hands of the Islamic Republic, the democracy movement in Iran has been tested by the fires of its own incredibly accelerated modernity. The result is the post-Jacobin realization that it is impossible to impose democracy and freedom by force. Religious dissent in Iran is to Islam today what Kierkegaard was to Christianity in Denmark. The major world conflicts are not, as Samuel Huntington claims, among world civilizations or between the secular and religious worlds, but rather they arise between religious-political fundamentalisms and open societies. This conflict exists today as much within as among existing civilizations, including within the developed Western societies. The global question before us is this: shall we learn how to share public and open space in which, as the Mayans in Chiapas say, "many worlds could coexist"? Afraid of a "velvet revolution" are those who do not want to live in an open space of many secular and sacred worlds.

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"Reading philosophy in Iran is like reading Patočka and Husserl in Prague in the late 1970s," Jahanbegloo said in his interview with Danny Postel in these pages.[vi] This entirely astonishing comparison resounded with even greater truth during the presidency of the Iran's reformist Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005). Just as the Central-East European dissidents during the 1970-80s gathered in their apartments in order to hold underground seminars with philosophers visiting from the West, so too Jahanbegloo has organized international conferences and interfaith debates, publishing books and essays, and attracting a great number of thinkers to Tehran, among them Richard Rorty, Agnes Heller, Adam Michnik, Ashis

Nandy, Antonio Negri, Michael Ignatieff, and the late Paul Ricoeur. Ramin has published more than twenty books, numerous articles on topic ranging from tradition and modernity, nonviolence, to studies of Kant, Machiavelli, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Tagore and books of conversation with Isaiah Berlin, George Steiner, and Nandy. Some of Ramin's seminars on Kant and Hegel were attended by more than four thousand students.

Having awakened intellectually in Prague during the totalitarian period of the early 1970s, I feel a certain envy about the intellectual hunger and omnivorous literacy of the Iran's youth: they remind me of my own famished soul thirsting for conversation and books during the post-1968 normalization of my native Czechoslovakia. The new regime of President Ahmadinejad—he has famously denied the Holocaust (he organized an exhibit of caricatures about the Holocaust in Tehran—which virtually no Iranians attended) and unleashed a crackdown on intellectuals and journalists—has effectively ended those reformist hopes. The current period in Iran is somewhat comparable to the Czechoslovak normalization era after the Soviet invasion in the late 1970-80s with the birth of Charta 77 in 1977 and the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

Postel's interview with Ramin was conducted via email in the weeks before his April arrest.[vii] When I wrote my book Postnational Identity (Guilford Press, 1993) and placed alongside each other in the subtitle the names of Havel, Habermas, and Kierkegaard, who could have imagined that in today's Iran Havel and Habermas would join forces in becoming intellectual stars? What do Habermas and Havel bring in common to the Iranian pro-democracy movement? I put this question to the Iranian dissident Akbar Ganji during a recent dialogue between him and the philosopher Martha Nussbaum at the University of Chicago on September 28, 2006.

Ganji is perhaps the best known Iranian dissident and journalist. He was sentenced to six years in prison for writing a series of articles in which he exposed the roles of high-level Iranian officials in committing political murders of intellectuals and writers. On May 11 2005, Ganji began a hunger strike from his cell in Evin prison, both against the conditions of his imprisonment and for his unconditional release. That fast lasted incredibly long: double the full length of Ramadan (and with no food consumed either before or after sundown). Upon his release from prison, Ganji embarked upon a sojourn through Europe and the US in the fall of 2006. He fully expects to return to prison directly from the airport upon returning to Tehran. Ganji was fasting during his dialogue with Nussbaum, as it was the first week of Ramadan, and he is a deeply devout Muslim. At dinner we continued our conversation about Havel and Habermas.

Havel and Charta 77—these days both under assault in the home of their origin by those in power who have no dissident credentials—are for the Iranian dissidents symbols of nonviolent democratic change. The clerical regime has not yet managed to become thoroughly totalitarian and, as with Charta 77, the pro-democracy movement gathers many different strata of the society, from former Marxists and leftists to secular liberals to religious believers and Muslim feminists and many students. Habermas represents for the young generation perhaps the most attractive model of open, deliberative, and communicative democracy. He was treated as a rock

star during his visit in Tehran in 2002. The Masarykean-humanist Havel and the left-liberal Habermas have thus become two axes of the Iranian democratic imaginary integrated into, what after Kierkegaard, I would call an existentially transformed Islamic religiosity suited to open society.

My all-too-idyllic imaginary comparison compels me to leave aside three glaring anomalies, though I am prepared to mount a small defense for each one of them. First, Heidegger, who also inspired, along with Husserl and Patočka, the Czech dissidents (including Havel himself), enjoys popularity in Iran today among conservative clerics. (Yet the Czechoslovak Communist regime could stomach neither Husserl, nor Heidegger, nor Patočka, who was also hated by the Nazis, nor the Jewish thinker Emmanuel Lévinas, who was read by Czech dissidents along with Heidegger.) Second, Habermas supported the first Persian Gulf War and the NATO bombing of Serbia. (Yet with the US invasion of Iraq, Habermas articulated a highly forceful critique of Bush and US foreign policy more generally.) Third, Havel, unlike Habermas, supported the US invasion of Iraq. (Yet Havel also warned the U.S. in an ironic comment addressed to a NATO conference in Prague that the allies could easily end up hated like the Soviets with their brotherly invasion of Czechoslovakia.)

Indeed, there is a fourth anomaly that could not be easily ignored or excused if it were not acknowledged: Ganji, sometimes called the Havel of Iran, was as a teen a fervent Iranian revolutionary who helped to form the Revolutionary Guards that were to protect Iran during its war with Iraq but turned into an instrument of repression at home, a fixture of the Islamic Republic's domestic security apparatus.

In an interview, "Islam and Democracy,"[viii] Ganji voiced the view that "revolution cannot create democracy." The anti-Shah revolution was not hijacked by the clerics, he said, just as the Bolshevik revolution was not stolen by Stalin, as Trotsky had claimed. "We began revolution, in order to create a paradise, but we created hell." An unjust regime can be changed only by civil disobedience, nonviolently, he holds. Invasion cannot export or impose democracy either. The American revolution of independence avoided the Jacobin variant of the French revolutionary model of founding. Enter an epiphany of a political holy trinity: Jefferson, Habermas, and Havel. In today's Iran, the struggle is not about religious orthodoxy but power. Ganji thinks that many clerics in power, just as among the late Communist nomenclatura, no longer "believe" in anything but their own power, and that's why such a regime becomes what Max Weber called "sultanist." This is one more reason why the relation between civil society and the established powers in present-day Iran is comparable to the life in the 1980s in the Soviet bloc. Ganji has always worried about the fascist reading of religion and wrote about clerical fascism twenty years ago, for which he was sentenced to jail time. For his reporting on then Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani and the murders of dissidents he earned a six-year prison sentence. He expects a third sentencing upon his imminent return home.

At our dinner in Chicago our table debated the Iranian nuclear program. Ganji worried about the Libyan model: the US and EU would compromise with the authoritarian Iranian regime about the end or control of the nuclear program and receive assurances for the preservation of

the regime. One could also call it the Soviet post-Yalta model or perhaps the Saudi cheap-oil model. Paradoxically, from an entirely different barrel, the question of the nonviolent transfer of power from the Communists to the dissidents and the preservation of certain sinister post-Communist continuities after 1989 will haunt the legacy of the Velvet Revolution for many years precisely for its non-ultra, nonviolent, or "orange" handling of the deposed regime. That revolution, some say, was no revolution—it lacked the Jacobin or Bolshevik edge and neither executed its enemies nor ate its own children, it only pushed aside the majority of dissidents whose story today it wishes to revise. Not only do fascist regimes desire to destroy civil society, as the Iranian dissidents are keenly aware, but no authoritarian politician or party can tolerate private citizen initiatives. Ganji, who declined an invitation from the White House, has on his current trip met with Habermas and with Havel during a fall conference in Geneva. (He has also met with Chomsky, Rorty, David Held, Mary Kaldor, Alasdair MacIntyre, Anthony Dworkin, and Nancy Fraser.) He was a bit surprised when I told him how a great number of former dissidents and student participants in the events of November 1989 think that something had been robbed from the Czecho-Slovak Velvet Revolution. But if Ganji is right that we are creators of our future in the way we act in the present, then, I proposed to him, he should ask Havel how the story of Charta 77 ended: what happened to the East European dissidents (whether ushered overnight into political power or again becoming powerless) and civil society? Ask Havel, I said: given the Central-East European experience, what should Iranian dissidents be thinking about today—already? Whether or not Havel and Ganji did discuss this topic we might learn when a new chapter, about which one dreams Iranian "velvet" dreams, is written.[ix]

Notes

[i] While a first-year student at Charles University, at age nineteen, I signed Charta 77. I became a political refugee in August of that same year.

[ii] Rasool Nafisi, "Ramin Jahanbegloo: a repressive release," openDemocracy, 1 September 2006 (www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-irandemocracy/jahanbegloo_3867.jsp), and Nafisi, "The meaning of Ramin Jahanbegloo's arrest," openDemocracy, 16 May 2006 (www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-irandemocracy/jahanbegloo_3545.jsp)

[iii] See Ervand Abrahamian, Tortured Confessions, Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran (University of California Press, 1999)

[iv] Timothy Garton Ash, "Soldiers of the Hidden Imam," The New York Review of Books, 3 November, 2005.

[v] Cf. Timothy Garton Ash, "Cedar revolution," The Guardian (3 March 2005); Ash and Timothy Snyder, "The Orange Revolution," The New York Review of Books, 28 April 2005.

[vi] Danny Postel, "Ideas whose time has come: A Conversation with Iranian philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo" Logos 5.2 – spring/summer 2006 (www.logosjournal.com/issue_5.2/jahanbegloo_interview.htm)

[vii] The interview now appears as well in Postel's book Reading Legitimation Crisis in Tehran (Prickly Paradigm Press, 2006).

[viii] "Islam and Democracy: Conversation with Akbar Ganji," 10 August 2006 (http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people6/Ganji/ganji-con0.html)

[ix] This essay is published simultaneously in Czech, "Sametová demokracie v Iránu?" Literární noviny (Prague, 13 November 2006), also on line at www.literarky.cz. On a related topic, see also Matuštík, "Sametová demokracie a jiné změny režimů," Literární noviny, 15 November 2004, in English as "From 'velvet revolution' to 'velvet jihad'?" openDemocracy, 18 November 2004 (www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/article_2231.jsp). I am thankful to Danny Postel and Nader Hashemi for helpful editorial comments.

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Doctor’s Orders: Revisiting James Dobson’s Dare To Discipline

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To read Dr. James Dobson’s *Dare to Discipline* (1970) is to be transported, as if by the tang of a Proustian biscuit, back to the ’60s, back to the lived reality-the very *qualia* of that era are resurrected in this book. But the perspective is unfamiliar. Instead of a Bobo stroll down the lane of memory that leads from Kent State to Joan Baez singing *Barbara Allen*, we find ourselves among Americans of conventional persuasion threatened by disorder on every hand. They are horrified and angry-and Dobson writes on their behalf, addressing them and representing them, with just the right message, and in prose pitched perfectly to the needs. The book provides a vivid picture of a certain frame of mind while it’s under construction.

Dare to Discipline launched Dobson’s career as a political force. You probably know him as one of several powerful religious conservatives who keep watch on the Bush administration on behalf of the so-called base. You might also know him as the man who outed Tinky-winky, the gay Teletubby-which is actually more revealing of the particular nature of his enormous influence. No organization on the hard right has more influence than Dobson’s *Focus on the Family*. He originally set up shop as the anti-Benjamin Spock, as a pediatrician speaking out for traditional *mores.* He now dominates the whole field of ideas that cluster under the rubric “family values” because he embodies the authority of medical science as well as religious fundamentalism. What *The Closing of the American Mind* was to secular neo-cons, *Dare to Discipline* was to Christian fundamentalists. It is an ur-document of movement conservatism in America that shows us what domestic brands of fundamentalism have in common with their kindred in other lands.

Academic experts on fundamentalism, focused on the Islamic variety, routinely agree on the importance of humiliation as a motivator. The gist is this: the experience of violation through occupation-literally, in the case of military intrusion, figuratively, in the case of cultural and technological domination-cuts deep and burns steady. For some, nothing short of terror can purge the shame.

But the experience of violation also motivates domestic forms of fundamentalism that limit themselves to fantasies of redemptive vengeance, to elaborate visions of Rapture and End Times. It’s the terror drama-but it’s played out symbolically. If you happened to see Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson gloating over the carnage that 9/11 inflicted on Sin City, you will know that this is no exaggeration. In the emotion of that moment, the civil façade they usually manage to maintain slipped a bit, and we caught a glimpse of the abiding longing for apocalypse that shapes their mission in the world. For fundamentalists of all kinds, the threat of violation is diagnostic. That’s why they need an invincible system of doctrine and practice

that can bind the totality of life into a single, invulnerable arrangement.

Take, for example, the commonplace observation that puritans are obsessed with sexual display in popular culture. The conventional implication is that they wouldn't be obsessed if they weren't aroused. And that's true but it misses the essential point. Over and above that, there's the fact that lust, once stimulated, invades the body whether you like it or not. For a puritanical man, sexual display-from the ubiquitous ads to the way Western females inclined to bodily candor dress-is experienced as a violation that deprives him of bodily autonomy. Hence the emphasis on family values in *all* forms of fundamentalism, not just among Americans. The omnipresent forces of sexuality has to be contained in an order of comparable strength. So men must gather here and women there on this occasion, and then in some other fixed place on that occasion, dressing and behaving in just this way and not that. It's all about boundaries and categories that make it possible to live *in one way,* and so secure the true believer from pollution in a fallen world. And nowhere is that security provided by those boundaries and categories more urgently needed than in the domestic realm, the very nursery of society.

That security is what *Dare to Discipline*promised its besieged readership back in the 1960's.

The book opens with a cleansing gesture. Right away you know you're in good hands, the firm hands of a leader willing to draw lines. He dismisses-casts out-the hippies and radicals on the other side of the "generation gap." No point in compromise, he tells the reader, right up front; no point in dialogue-those kids are a lost cause. Leave them to their miserable fates.

That alone was enough to stiffen parental spines in threatened households across the land. But the doctor also offered a diagnosis to explain the loss, and a prescription for a brighter future that put the spotlight on those same parents. It was not to late to save the next generation because the anarchy (one of Dobson's favorite words) of the 60s was easily explained. Nothing to do with Jim Crow or Vietnam or one dimensional mass society. It was the fault of permissive parenting. And, by extension, of permissive educating and, by further extension, of a permissive "anything goes" culture-but it all begins at home.

Hence the doctor's prescription: dare to discipline. The cure for the 60s was as simple as the diagnosis. All that was wanting was the will.

Right from the beginning of the book, you notice how much jargon and slang Dobson uses, to peculiar and revealing effect. He so often misapplies these expressions in ways that show how far removed from what he refers to as the "youth scene" he actually was-as when he calls the "Playboy Philosophy" the banner of this younger generation, as if the Diggers of Haight-Ashbury were hanging out with Hugh Hefner in Vegas when they weren't holding Be-Ins in Golden Gate Park. But, however applied, he almost always puts jargon and slang in scare quotes, an expression that might have been coined to explain this little tic in his style. As you settle into the flow of Dobson's language, you realize that he experiences slang and jargon as, in their own little way, yet another threat to order. He needs sometimes to use these expressions, to show an understanding of what's going on out there, but they have to be set

apart somehow, so as not to contaminate the unaffected language of ordinary folk and the official terminologies of medical men. As when, for example, he describes the lavish Thanksgiving celebration that takes place each year at his home in a "family blessed with several of the greatest cooks who ever ruled a kitchen, and once a year they do their 'thing'…"

Women, in their proper place, are both sovereign and happy, you see. Their "thing" is most truly theirs when they are fulfilling traditional roles.

Scare quotes like this are surface symptoms of a commitment to order that informs *Dare to Discipline* at every level. That explains why Dobson can't tell the difference between Sinatra's Rat Pack and Kesey's Merry Pranksters, between street crime and campus demonstrations, inner city gangs and rural communards, pot and heroin, Woodstock and Altamont. To him it's all the same-one big chaos violating the duly constituted order.

Dobson's language in general leaves no doubt that he feels personally violated. It is most evident when he confronts The Filthy Hippie, that walking symbol of all that reactionaries loathed and dreaded in those years. So, for example, Dobson describes the sad fate of permissive parents Mr. and Mrs. Holloway, who had not dared to discipline their daughter Becky during the critical early years ("Truly, the toddler is a tiger") and thus the "ticking time-bomb" that is the teenager was set to explode. Becky's now got Mom and Dad so buffaloed they'll agree to anything. She gets them to throw a party for her and they work "very hard to get the house decorated and the refreshments prepared" but "on the appointed evening" their hospitality is flouted as "a mob of dirty, profane teenagers swarmed into the house, breaking and destroying the furnishings as they came…"

Decorations and refreshments and appointed evenings-it's all so fragile, so vulnerable.

That was the gist of the 60s as Dr. Dobson understood the era that shaped him as surely has it shaped his enemies. Violation of an established order, once underway, will not contain itself. It won't stop with dirt and a few ruined "furnishings." There's a very slippery slope. The Holloway fable ends with Becky beating Mrs. Holloway unconscious in the family bathroom where Mr. Holloway finds her "lying in a pool of blood" when he returns. Meantime, our undisciplined Becks is out "in the backyard, dancing with her friends."

Hmmm…let me see. I was around at the time. I don't *think* I remember *that* happening very often.

But in Dobson's world there are no gradations. Gradations are a threat to boundaries. It's all or nothing, always.

He does provide his readers with some retribution fantasies, though, as if to right the balance there and then, in anticipation of the generational turning of the tide his system of parenting will bring. So, for example, Dobson discourses on the kind of teenager who might benefit from discipline of the military variety and it turns out to be-guess who?-the "sullen, filthy, hostile young men" who "come sauntering into the Marine Corps processing station [?] with the same

snarl and glare they used for frightening folks back home." Dobson's hippies seem to be morphing into 50s delinquents at this point, but, whatever, they morph back soon enough. After getting off a few remarks like "Hey, man-don't bug me, man!" they are conducted to the climactic encounter "a few hours later" when "these hairy adolescents" are "shorn absolutely bald-until nothing but ears remain amid all that skin."

Ah, justice.

Dr. Dobson has a thing about hair. But so did a lot of people back in the day. You had to be there. It is next to impossible to overstate the significance of unruly hair in defining that epoch. Disorder incarnate. Disgust with filthy hippies was as intense and widespread as it was purposefully provoked. Shaggy hair on boys, hairy legs on girls-hair was the symbolic war toy that perfectly suited both sides, a concrete representation of the kind of violation that was ultimately at stake, the kind Dobson and his people dreaded most, the attitude that was, as they rightly discerned, really driving the counter-culture.

Defiance.

That's why, when the doctor lays out his program for parenting, the entire system hinges on one issue-authority and its enforcement. Like so many authoritarians, going back to Hobbes himself, Dobson is a behaviorist. He can barely contain his delight as he dotes over the powers that this "magnificent theory for the control of behavior" has placed in the hands of those in charge. He rhapsodizes on for pages about experiments with animals, descriptions tinged with a certain sadism-a fish that starves to death because it has been conditioned not to lunge for food is comically portrayed, unfortunate frogs that allow themselves to boil to death are referred to as "our little green friends," that sort of thing. Dobson is at his creepiest when he thinks he's being funny.

The point of this foray into science is to show how malleable living creatures are *by nature,* to the rule of pain and pleasure. This is evidence of God's design, of His provision for authority on earth. It starts in the home, but the child's "view of parental authority becomes the cornerstone of his later outlook on school authority, police and law, the people with whom he will eventually live and work, and for society in general."

So. A big responsibility for parents. But once the God-given principles of behaviorism are grasped, there is practically no limit to what can be done to shape a child's conduct-and attitude. Indeed, "proper attitudes" are the ultimate point. Dobson's goal is not enforced conformity; it is willing, even eager, compliance. That's why, in the chapter called "The Miracle Tools" in which the theories of Thorndyke and Skinner are explained and applied, Dobson advocates a regime of mostly positive reinforcement-that is, of rewards. He dismisses the prevalent opinion that children should not be bribed into doing what they are supposed to do and, typically, he makes his case by invoking the whole social order. "Rewards," he informs us, "make responsible effort worthwhile. The main reason for the overwhelming success of capitalism is that hard work and personal discipline are rewarded materially."

That's why parents should preside over the child's environment in positively reinforcing ways. They might, for example, draw up a chart called "My Jobs" which lists the things they expect their 4 to 6 year old to do around the house. Dobson provides a sample chart with 14 sample items like "I emptied the trash without being told," but also things like "I said thank you and please today" and even "I minded Mommy today." So the definition of "jobs" is capacious. Every behavior imaginable can be governed in this way. Nothing need be left to chance, or to the influence of the outside world.

The behavioral items are arrayed in a column on the right side of the chart and the days of the month are strung out in a row along the top, creating a grid of little squares. The doctor then explains:

Immediate reinforcement is the key: each evening, colored dots (preferably red) or stars should be placed by the behaviors that were done satisfactorily. If dots are not available, the squares can be colored with a felt tip pen; however, the child should be allowed to chalk up his own successes…a penny should be granted for every behavior done properly in a given day; if more than three items are missed in one day, *no* pennies should be given.

So much could be said about this fantastical proceeding-and others like it, which Dobson describes in similar detail. The point system for teenagers (and the thermometer chart that goes with it) gets into numbers as high as 10,000. It would take a full time chore supervisor and maybe an accountant to maintain it. But, in this context I want simply to highlight Dobson's compulsion to oversee *everything.* Once he begins to imagine his system implemented, he can't stop. He hovers over parents like a SuperDad, instructing them with the same relentless consistency he expects of them in relation to their children. It's that drive for an all-encompassing structure of doctrine and practice that characterizes fundamentalist religion, but channeled here into an elaborate "scientific" calculus and procedure weirdly reminiscent of Jeremy Bentham at his most utopian.

But that doesn't make it secular, not in Dr. Dobson's hands. The business of raising children who will respect authority and function appropriately in a capitalist society turns out to be an intricate exercise in behavioral engineering, that's true, but it's part of God's plan. God was the one who fashioned those pleasure/pain switches, after all-and Dobson is His deputy because Dobson is the one who understands His intelligent design and knows how to make it work.

Mere selections from the text cannot do justice to Dobson's confidence in his own judgment, based on this knowledge. There's a cumulative effect, a rhetorical cadence that never lets up. Adults inclined to decide things for themselves must eventually recoil from this monotonous pounding, but, for Dobson's readers, longing for authority, the effect is vastly reassuring. A fortress is under construction, a fortress that promises to protect their families in the short run and found a kingdom in the long.

What Dobson, credentialed now as The Maker's Engineer, is essentially doing is deputizing

parents in their turn. He envisions legions of them, doing God's work in their homes, one by one. He is quite explicit about his deputizing function. Responding to a question about the role of fear in the child's attitude toward parents, he says:

He can enjoy complete security and safety-until he chooses to attack me. Then I'll give him reason to fear. This concept of fear is modeled after God's relationship with man. "Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom," we are taught. He is a God of awesome wrath as well as a God of infinite love and mercy. These attributes are complementary, and should be represented in lesser degree in our homes.

A fundamentalist schema is complete. An architecture is provided that fuses the natural and social orders and subjects every action to prescription.

This is the proper context for a fair assessment of Dobson's oft-quoted remarks about spanking. Awareness of that context does nothing to diminish the severity of his attitude, as evident in his descriptions of the deed as in his visage and manner. But it does bring out the consistency of Dobson's thought. There is only one situation in which spanking is called for, and that's when a child under ten years of age directly defies a parent.

When a youngster tries this kind of stiff-necked rebellion, you had better take it out of them and pain is a marvelous purifier. When nose-to-nose confrontation occurs between you and your child, it is not the time to have a discussion about the virtues of obedience…You have drawn a line in the dirt, and the child has deliberately flopped his big hairy toe across it. Who is going to win? Who has the most courage? Who is in charge here?

Big hairy toe? On a child under ten?

It's that hair again. Images of violation crowd into Dobson's mind whenever he contemplates defiance of authority. They can get very explicit, almost pornographic, reflecting his determination to incite the outrage such violations should provoke in any righteous heart. Take, for example, the case of a tiger toddler who spat in his mother's face whenever she put him to bed. Not daring to discipline, she tried discussion instead but "her lecture was interrupted by another moist missile." Corrupted by dogmas of permissiveness, impervious to her own humiliation, this poor misguided Mom actually "wiped her face and began again, at which point the youngster hit her with another well-aimed blast."

Another student radical in the making.

But the most revealing aspect of the whole spanking business is actually to be found in Dobson's prescription for presiding over the aftermath. His programmatic commitment to Pavlovian principles in a God-ordered world never wavers. After assuring us that "it is not necessary to beat the child into submission," he explains why. It seems that a spanking of "sufficient magnitude to cause the child to cry genuinely" will often lead that child, after a certain "emotional ventilation," to "crumple to the breast of his parent" and, if he does that, "he should be welcomed with open, warm, loving arms."

Negative reinforcement, positive reinforcement, God of Wrath, God of Love.

That'll teach 'em.

To be fair to Dobson it must be said that he goes to great lengths to condemn arbitrary, impulsive punishment. He issues a stream of caveats. He does not want to be misunderstood. He is not carrying a brief for parental abuse. He really believes he is talking about what he calls "corrective love." The strict guidelines for corporeal punishment (child under 10, in direct defiance etc.) are all the more urgently strict because of the threat of disorder represented by out-of-control parents who are *not* qualified to be God's deputies in the home. Spanking must be performed deliberately, with emotional clarity and restraint.

Hmmm.

Dobson obviously enjoys the power that goes with authority, and, as we have seen, a bit of sadism is evident in his depictions of experiments on animals. We catch of whiff of it too, in relation to punishing kids, especially when they are teen-agers. His anatomically detailed instructions on how to squeeze a particular muscle in a toddler's shoulder to administer a bolt of pain is inexplicably decked out with a gratuitous anecdote about how he himself (with his "rather large hands") used the technique on some rowdy adolescents-this story reads like a soft core *Death Wish* script. But Dobson's top priority is unquestionably order, whatever secondary gains might accrue to the punishing authority. In the home, in the school, in the state-ultimately in all Creation-order above all.

And so he insists: the one who dares to discipline must *be* disciplined.

With one truly bizarre exception.

This is the only moment in the book that is obviously inconsistent with the rest of it. Dobson is a smart man; he must have known, at some level, that this anecdote didn't fit. That can only mean he was so attached to it that he couldn't bring himself to leave it out. That happens to writers sometimes.

My own mother had an unusual understanding of good disciplinary procedures. She was very tolerant of my childishness, and I found her reasonable on most issues…But there was one matter on which she was absolutely rigid: she did not tolerate "sassiness." She knew that back talk and "lip" are a child's most potent weapons of defiance, and they must be discouraged. I learned very early that if I was going to launch a flippant attack on her, I had better be at least ten or twelve feet away. This distance was necessary to avoid being hit with whatever she could get in her hands. On one occasion she cracked me with a shoe; at other times she used a handy belt. The day I learned the importance of staying out of reach shines like a neon light in my mind. I made the costly mistake of "sassing" her when I was about four feet away, She wheeled around grab something with which to hit me, and her hand landed on a girdle. She drew back and swung that abominable garment in my direction, and I can still hear it whistling through the air. The intended blow caught me across the chest, followed by a multitude of

straps and buckles, wrapping themselves around my midsection. She gave me an entire thrashing with one massive blow!

Well, well.

So much could be said about *that* one too.

But let us content ourselves with the realization that Dr. Dobson had his own reasons for craving order.

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How The Us Lost Latin America To Hugo Chavez

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Background: Open Market "Freedom" vs. Democracy

Inrecent times there has been a general shift to the left in Latin American politics. The traditional center-right parties that had controlled politics in most of the South and Central America were not really democratic ones. They were patronage parties deeply rooted in a culture of corruption and often in league with military despots. Often, the elections that were held turned out to be rigged, and the poor bribed for their votes or shut out from the polls. While in power, these parties relegated most wealth to a relatively small elite and left the poor to live out their lives in shanty towns and rural degradation. When, finally, popular pressures resulted in relatively honest elections, as they have in many countries over the last twenty years, the result was a political expression of popular revulsion that swept many traditional parties into political oblivion. In exchange, ever more of the population in South America have followed the dictates of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and voted in favor of those who offered programs to meet their primary requirements for food, clothing, shelter and security.

For the United States there is much irony in this trend. Despite the fact that the administration of George W. Bush claims to be the world's champion of democracy, *the practice* of honest elections has meant that a many Latin Americans have turned their backs on the U.S. Why is this so? As it turns out, Washington has never been interested in democracy unless it provided the "freedom" of the "open market." As we will see, American politicians have persistently confused these two often conflicting ideas, popular democracy and economic laissez faire. However, there has been no confusion on the part of a majority of Latin America's poor. Their experience tells them that they need protection against the ravages of "open market" capitalism. Given the chance, they have used democracy to elect governments that will give them just that.

The political consequences have not pleased Washington. Remarking on the possibility of the election in Bolivia of a populist president (actually realized the December 2005 victory of Evo Morales) promising to nationalize the country's resources and use them for the improvement of the downtrodden, Charles Shapiro, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs declared "it would not be welcome news in Washington…." In typical fashion Shapiro exhibited no interest in why Latin American voters, exercising their democratic rights, would use them to reject all that United States and its regional class allies stand for.

If we could instruct Mr. Shapiro and his superiors on the reasons things are working out as they are, here is what we would tell them:

1. An American foreign policy that prioritizes economic penetration can only alienate the poor. Those exploited by such a policy do not care that Washington now calls this pursuit neo-liberalism. In fact, neoliberalism is but an updating of the 19th century's classical economic practice of unregulated, and mostly untaxed capitalism. Under this practice, both in the 19th century and today, the more wealth that is generated the poorer the bulk of the population is likely to become. That is because the wealth is appropriated by a relatively small elite that always demands minimum government expenditures (except in the case of the military) and therefore minimum government taxation. Thus, this elite and its state representatives object to government investment in social services just because it would raise their taxes. Countries operating this way inevitably find their social infrastructure (education, health care, and the like) going to hell while, simultaneously, the "rich get richer." It is variations on this the sort of system, ready made to maximize corporate profits, that American influence has, in practice, sought to create for its own economic benefit in Latin America. Maintaining the ability to exploit such "free markets" by keeping in power cooperative local elites was and is much more an American policy goal than securing democracy, to say nothing of economic justice.

2. We have used what can be called "argument ad nauseam" to label as communists, radicals, rogues, and other dangerous enemies of "freedom" those who seek to shape their economies to some other end than the profit of U.S. concerns and their allies. And, to prevent them from obtaining or maintaining power we have aligned ourselves with all manner of military and civilian conspirators and dictators who have, almost unanimously, practiced terror, torture, and repression against their own people. In this process the U.S. has overthrown the democratically elected leaders in Guatemala and Chile, and helped replace them with brutal dictators, as well as rendered support for other dictatorships in Argentina and Uruguay. It has aided right wing insurgents and death squads in Nicaragua and El Salvador. From 1900 to the present there have been 49 U.S. military interventions in South and Central America, and the Carribean, to assure the imposition or maintenance of friendly, if brutal and undemocratic, regimes.

3. The United States government and the special interests that input into policy formation for Latin America have a depressingly persistent inability to learn from past mistakes and therefore have so alienated all but the upper classes of Western Hemisphere that, come honest elections, we must inevitably be hoisted by our own petard (in this case our recent propaganda about spreading democracy).

It is doubtful if Mr. Shapiro would admit to any of these points. More likely he would reply that Latin American corruption, brutality and class selfishness can all be chalked up to some sort of regional cultural and political "dysfunction", a factor of backwardness and a lack of civic responsibility. This, of course, is nonsense. While all societies are subject to governmental

and economic corruption, it is the United States that has encouraged the “neo-liberal” form of this ailment in Latin America.

In the past, American policy was easy to implement. South and Central America, as well as the Caribbean, were poor areas and the local elites usually quite bribable. On the occasions when that approach failed you simply sent in the Marines and the Halls of Montezuma crumpled. However, today things are more complicated and we are no longer dealing with only banana republics and corrupt leaders. Our own politicians’ inability to understand the nature of changing circumstances means that it is they who are dysfunctional and addicted to self-destructive policies. In truth we are now likely to find ourselves dealing with politically aware citizens, whose leaders are men and women of integrity, and who are determined to seriously pursue alternative development models. As important, some of these countries now have control of important resources that make independent action easier. Present day Venezuela is a case in point.

The Case of Venezuela

Venezuela is a country of over 25 million people. Its population is ethnically mixed: 65% mestizo, 20% white, 10% black, and 2% indigenous Indian. Having won its independence from Spain in 1821 it has since passed through a history of autocratic rule, civil war and military coups. Only in recent times has democracy taken tenuous hold. One of the most egregious of its recent authoritarian governments was that of Marcos Perez Jimenez who ruled the country from 1948 to 1958. Russ Olson, an American diplomat who served in Venezuela at this time, has described Jimenez as “a pompous general” who turned himself into “a brutal military dictator.” He was kept in power by a US trained and supplied “National Security Police” who were best known for shooting down peacefully protesting school children. This was a record that did not prevent U.S. government officials from applauding the chief of the Security Police, Pedro Estrada and encouraging him to “keep up the good work.” Jimenez and Estrada were nothing if not brutal, but, as Secretary of State Cordell Hull once said of the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo, “He may be a son of a bitch, but he is our son of a bitch.” Indeed, the Pentagon even awarded Marcos Perez Jimenez the United States Legion of Merit.

Why was Jimenez and his minions (all of whom were enemies of democratic politics) favorites of the United States? The reason was repeatedly explained to the Venezuelan people by the U.S. ambassador of the day. This was Dempster MacIntosh who held his office because of his links to the Republican National Committee. MacIntosh would go around Venezuela delivering speeches, readily translated into Spanish (a language he did not know) reminding the citizens of that country “how lucky they were to be living in an*economic democracy*.” As Olson explains, “what he really meant was that United States Steel (MacIntosh was a steel magnate) had access to 17 million tons of iron ore annually and the oil companies…to three million barrels of oil a day.” In other words, Jimenez smoothed the way for US economic penetration and in Washington this was equated with ‘freedom.” That is why the United States supported “the son of a bitch.” He was not the first, and he would not be the last.

A good number of the Venezuelan people, most of whom were then making less than $2 a day, failed to appreciate Ambassador MacIntosh's message. This became clear enough when in 1958, only months after Jimenez had finally been replaced, Vice President Richard Nixon arrived in Caracas for a state visit. So violent were the protests that Nixon and his wife barely escaped the country without injury. Most Americans at this time were convinced that such a reaction, which found the Nixons literally spat upon whenever they dared appear in public, was the consequence of a pervasive communist propaganda campaign that twisted the minds of the Venezuelans. Even well educated Americans could not imagine any other reason. For instance, Lewis Hanke, a Latin American scholar at Columbia University, was at a loss as to why "people would stoop so low as to spit on the Vice President of the United States." He addressed this question to the then President of Costa Rica, Jose Figueres, who replied, "Its simple. You can't spit on a foreign policy."

Unfortunately, it was only simple if you examined the impact of American foreign policy from outside the U.S., as did many millions of Latin Americans. Inside the U.S., however, a distorted informational environment had convinced even such men as Hanke that American foreign policy almost always consisted of programs to spread abroad the nation's allegedly benign ideals–like democracy, development and modernity. Periodic slaps in the face, such as the outbreak of anger in 1958 Caracas were always blamed on communists, radicals, or "outside agitators." Such excuses have helped prevent any politically significant domestic questioning of our policies. Therefore, American foreign policy toward Latin America, as well as most other parts of the world (one can especially think of the Middle East), has not qualitatively changed.

As a consequence, the basic dislike of the United States by many citizens of a country like Venezuela has not gone away. Until recently poverty has continued to prevail unchecked in the country, while the neoliberal economic policies championed by the U.S. government and its allied multinational corporations, skewed the distribution of resources to the benefit of a small upper and middle class. Under the circumstances, another slap in the face for the United States was almost inevitable.

Enter Hugo Chavez

The man who has delivered that slap is Hugo Chavez. Chavez is the second son of poor primary school teachers. He entered the Venezuelan Academy of Military Sciences at the age of 17 and it was then that he began to develop his "left-nationalist ideology." This ideology is sometimes referred to as Bolivarianism, and it is named after Simon Bolivar who was a Venezuelan and the man who led much of Latin America in its independence struggle against Spain. Bolivar is Hugo Chavez's hero and in his honor he has changed the name of the country to The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. For today's Venezuelans, Bolivarianism entails the following:

1. Maintain Venezuela's political and economic sovereignty.

2. Encourage grassroots political participation and a sense of patriotic service.

3. Promote economic self-sufficiency

4. Maintain an equitable distribution of the country's oil wealth.

5. Eliminate corruption

6. Do away with the political monopoly of the traditional, and US backed, bourgeois parties.

By the time Hugo Chavez graduated and began his military career, he was deeply imbued with these principles. He was also a vocal critic of the political, social and economic status quo,a state of affairs which he identified with U.S. influence and intervention. In 1992 he participated (some would claim he initiated) a failed coup against a business oriented government that had responded to falling oil prices (and thus government revenues) with an austerity program that made the lives of the Venezuelan poor all the harder. Although he spent two years in prison as a result, the failed coup made Chavez very popular, in a Robin Hood fashion. Indeed, he was so popular that in the 1993 presidential elections, all candidates promised to pardon him if elected. After his release Chavez gave up conspiratorial activities for open politics and founded his own party, the Fifth Republic Movement. He then began to campaign for the next presidential election.

As Richard Gott's biography of Hugo Chavez tells us, he made "no secret of his aim to be president of the poor." Thus, Chavez's Bolivarian platform aimed at capturing the support of Venezuela's vast lower class population by promising to attack the problems of poverty and eliminate the political and economic corruption of those who had "ransacked" the country. It was a popular message and, in 1998, the forty four year old Chavez won the presidency with 56.2% of the vote. The election was certified fair by the Atlanta based Carter Center. Since 1998 Chavez has gone on to win nine different electoral contests and, in every one of them, the now enfranchised poor have voted for him in overwhelming numbers.

This record has given him the confidence to undertake a social and economic revolution. The country's oil wealth no longer goes predominantly into the pockets of foreign oil companies and Venezuela's upper class but rather is now, in good part, used to fund programs for the poor in such areas as health, education, food and housing subsidies, employment programs, and the like. A series of government subsidized 'missions" aims to eliminate illiteracy, greatly increase the numbers finishing high school, teach useful trades to those without skills, revive tourism and traditional crafts. Assets (such as landed estates and abandoned factories) that are deemed "unproductive" are subject to seizure and redistribution to poor peasants and workers. Simultaneously, there has been a tightening up of tax collection on corporations and upper class individuals, many of whom never paid taxes in the past. The result is a mixed economy (Chavez's motto is "as much state as necessary and as much market as possible") but one apparently moving in a socialist direction. Certainly there is an on-going redistribution of income and resources as part of a long term effort at economic and social development, an effort that has realized a 5% reduction in household poverty between 1999 and 2005.

Chavez is able to undertake this ambitious transformation of Venezuelan society largely because his country is rich in resources. Venezuela's primary source of wealth comes from oil (it also has the greatest gas reserves in the western hemisphere) which represents 80% of export income and 50% of government earnings. It is interesting to note that 60% of it is sold to the United States, or as Chavez calls it, "the Empire." Back in 1976, well before Chavez attained power, Venezuela had nationalized its oil industry. But the neoliberal nature of its economy prevented any equitable distribution of resources and resulted in a classic case of a simultaneous increase of national wealth and rates of poverty. In the 1980s and 1990s world oil prices were relatively low and that meant austere government budgets and a building national debt for Venezuela. At that point the number of Venezuelans living in abject poverty was around 68% of the population. Those living truly well off and modern lives were no more than 6%. The resulting social unrest among the lower classes helped bring Hugo Chavez to power. He has been fortunate because for most of his tenure oil prices have held high, initially helped along by Chavez's own policy of lowering production so as to drive up the price. There is, however, an underlying fear that, as one Venezuelan poll taker put it, "if oil prices drop again, the whole revolution becomes a mirage."

Chavez understands that his revolution is caught between the populace's rising expectations and a precarious dependence on oil revenue, and that this makes his social revolution inherently insecure. Therefore, has inaugurated the "Oil Sowing Plan: using oil wealth so Venezuela can become an agricultural country, a tourist destination, an industrialized economy." He also is working hard to diversify his customer base for oil, gas, coal and other exports and has initiated "joint exploration deals with Argentina, Brazil, China, India and others." To do so, however, he must rigorously defend Venezuela's "economic sovereignty" against such American proposals as the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). This is just the sort of program that promotes America's economic interests to the detriment of local industry. Chavez has observed that, under the FTAA, competition between US and Venezuela businesses would be like "a fight between a 12-year-old boy and Cassius Clay." His opposition to "free trade" has contributed to the failure of the FTAA and subsequent downturn in U.S.-Venezuelan relations.

As noted, the way Chavez has chosen to use his country's wealth has meant a reversal of the traditional economic winners and losers. If you will, those accustomed to being first now find themselves, if not quite last, then with a declining profit margin. From their point of view Chavez is "ruining the country." Either he is a threat to democracy and aiming to be president for life, and/or he and his supporters are systematically mismanaging the nation's wealth. Some of the now alienated upper class, and a number of those in the middle class who are financially dependent on them, decided around the year 2001 that Chavez had to go and that it was now their turn to plan a coup. This coup attempt occurred in April of 2002 and was led by the head of the country's largest Chamber of Commerce, businessman Pedro Caromona Estanga, in alliance with right wing elements of the armed forces and police. Chavez was kidnaped and held at an army base. Almost all the privately owned media outlets in Venezuela abetted the coup by charging that Chavez had been mismanaging the country and falsely reporting that he had now resigned. The major TV stations also purposely edited their film to

make it appear that Chavez supporters were attacking unarmed opposition supporters. This too turned out to be a lie. Later, when back in power, Chavez would bring forth a law making the media responsible for the veracity of its reporting (a law similar to one on the books in Europe's Common Market countries). Washington's response was to accuse him of censorship and interfering with the free press. Last but not least, from all available evidence, the coup attempt was encouraged and financed by the American government. This evidence was unearthed by Eva Golinger, a supporter of Chavez living in the U.S., using the Freedom of Information Act. As a result Chavez told a reporter in New York in September 2005 that there "was no doubt whatsoever" that Washington "planned and participated" in the 2002 coup and continues to "want me dead." Certainly, it is something more than coincidence that the participants in the coup (some of whom are now under indictment for treason) were mainly funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the U.S. AID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) working out of the US embassy in Caracas. Each of these agencies would later claim that they were simply trying to "promote democracy." Chavez, on the other hand, has vowed that he will not allow "the U.S. to finance the destabilization of our country" in the future.

The coup ultimately failed. Indeed it lasted only 47 hours, but that was long enough for the American Ambassador to be seen at breakfast congratulating Carmona on his achievement. Carmona gave the Ambassador a hug, ate his breakfast, and proceeded to disband the legislature and suspend the constitution, allegedly in the name of restoring democracy. It is at that point that Chavez's supporters rallied and the coup collapsed. Today, Carmona, who fled to Miami, is popularly referred to as "Pedro the brief." It is to be noted that the coup did not result in a Chavez instigated revengeful bloodbath. What it did lead to was the reform of the judiciary, legislature, military, and electoral apparatus making these institutions less likely to become corrupted by political partisanship and more likely to follow the rule of law. Perversely, these are some of the actions which the Bush administration says prove Chavez is too authoritarian to be tolerated.

It was at this point that American government spokesmen revived the technique of "argument ad nauseam" and began repeatedly labeling Hugo Chavez as a "demagogue awash in oil money who is undermining democracy and seeking to destabilize the region." This mantra continues to be heard to the present day.

The claims that Hugo Chavez rules as a dictator have, as of now, little basis in reality. Much of the country's political structure is decentralized. A good amount of both political and economic power is broadly spread among citizens' councils, workers' cooperatives and other grass roots organizations. Almost everywhere, and in every phase of civic life, citizens are encouraged by the Chavez government to join together and use local initiative to come up with projects that will both meet their immediate needs and benefit the greater community. If these projects prove at all practicable the national government proceeds to fund them. Local communities are also encouraged to critique government bureaucracies and offer suggestions for improvement. As one local organizer put it, "I have a thousand criticisms of the Chavez government. However, the difference between this government and what came before is that

under Chavez the government pays attention to our complaints."

In short, what Chavez is doing is encouraging a form of participatory democracy that has let loose the idealism and hope of almost every progressive activist in the country. There motto often heard from these activists is "ideals plus oil wealth plus time equals a new Venezuela." It is to be admitted that the results can be spotty as some projects and solutions work out better than others. What this approach has not produced, however, is a dictatorship centered in the office of the president. None of this gives US spokesmen any pause. Be it a function of ignorance or mendacity, they blithely continue to label Chavez an evil and authoritarian fellow.

Chavez now is president under a new constitution that allows him to hold office for two consecutive six year terms. Pro-Chavez parties have full control of the legislature, though not all of the country's provincial governorships. The opposition did manage to force a recall election in August of 2004 (again largely financed by the United States through the NED), but Hugo Chavez won that with 58% of a vote certified fair and free by international observers. As of the end of 2005 his approval ratings among Venezuelans stood at 70%, and that was according to polls taken by his opposition.

Chavez and the United States,A War of Words

The fact that the U.S. has such a long and violent history of meddling in Latin America, and that its hand, or at least its pocketbook, can be seen behind both the coup attempt and recall movement against his government, has the Venezuelan president understandably convinced that Washington is a real threat. He seems to believe that his country is in imminent danger of US aggression including a possible invasion. He has expelled all active duty American military personnel and some American based missionary groups from Venezuela. Chavez has also established a militia of approximately 20,000 under his personal control. Eventually, he aims to build this militia up to 2 million people in arms, mostly purchased from Russia. Some analysts dismiss President Chavez's fears and suggest that "the only conventional army likely to threaten Chavez is Venezuela's own." But others point to the fact that a military rebellion would be an indirect aggression by the United States. Larry Birns, Director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, puts it this way, "There is no prospect of the U.S. invading Venezuela, but there is every prospect of it ceaselessly looking for factions within the Venezuelan military and hoping to induce…elements to rise up." Given past experience, Chavez feels that a growing militia provides him with a "safety net." And, if nothing else, it is a useful way of putting some Venezuela's unemployed (which now stands at about 12% of the labor force) to work.

Is this fear of the U.S. warranted on Chavez's part? With the U.S. tied down in Iraq it might well be exaggerated. However, in the long run, there is good reason to assume that the Bush administration will move "preemptively" to bring Chavez down if it can. Washington's war of words has recently expanded as it seeks to convince not only Americans, but the people of Latin America as well, that Hugo Chavez is some sort of *bete noire*. Once more the effort is to portray him as a dangerous opponent of democracy, not only in Venezuela but elsewhere in the hemisphere.

In 2005 Portor Goss, a former Director of the CIA, told the U.S. Senate Select Committee On Intelligence that Venezuela had become a "potential area for instability" and a "flashpoint." He alleged that Chavez was "consolidating his power by using technically legal tactics to target his opponents…." The use of the term "technically legal" indicates that the Bush administration, once more caught by its own propaganda about supporting democracy, is struggling to find a way to get at Chavez despite his elected status. Since Chavez's electoral record makes it impossible to accuse him of coming to power in an undemocratic fashion, Washington now insists that he is a "democratically elected ruler who rules undemocratically." Thus Gross's successor at the CIA, John Negroponte, declared that Chavez's "technically legal" position as president of Venezuela can only lead to the "suffocation of democracy." In addition, he charges that Chavez is "spending hundreds of millions, if not more, for his very extravagant foreign policy" which is aimed at "meddling in the internal affairs of his neighbors…." Venezuela's Justice Minister, Jesse Chacon, noted that Mr. Negroponte has such a sordid and bloody personal record of immoral "meddling" in Central America that his criticism of Chavez is not only misleading but is an act of pure hypocrisy. One of the Bush administration's Latin American "experts," Otto Reich, has pointed out Chavez's growing alliance with Castro's Cuba and labeled it the "axis of subversion." Chavez has retorted that it is the "Axis of Good." The CIA has backed up the charge of "axis of subversion" by appointing a special "mission manager" who will now "integrate collection and analysis on Cuba and Venezuela across the intelligence community." Chavez sees this move as preparatory to a program of U.S. subversion prior to Venezuela's next presidential election in December 2006.

The U.S. media has fallen into line with Washington's anti-Chavez message . As the media monitor Justin Delacour has pointed out, both print and TV establishment media "have consistently reflected the Bush government on Chavez. Often, the simply quote their sources as unnamed government officials." As an exception that proves the rule, one of the very few progressive American journalists, Mark Weisbrot, has pointed out, "although there are any number of scholars and academics,both Venezuelan and international,who could offer coherent arguments on the other side, their arguments almost never appear….For every report that cited one…pro-Chavez [source], there were more than 17 stories in which one or more…anti-Chavez [sources] were cited." The ever predictable FOX News has done its part to maintain this imbalance by running a three part "documentary" entitled "The Iron Fist of Hugo Chavez" in which it portrays him as a "brutal dictator" who is "threatening U.S. interests." Most American private sector political and economic analysts also are outspoken in their dislike for Venezuela's president. Michael Shifter of the Washington based Inter-American Dialogue, the most quoted anti-Chavez analyst, has noted that "Venezuela under Chavez potentially poses a challenge to U.S. policy objectives, leadership and core values in this hemisphere." The principle "core value" is, apparently, "free trade" as expressed by the FTAA. One should keep in mind that in Washington, freedom means capitalist style economic freedom first and foremost.

Finally, there is the occasional yet well reported belligerency of influential private American citizens who call for Mr. Chavez's assassination. The best known case is that of Pat Robertson who, in August of 2005, declared on his "700 Club" TV program that Chavez was turning

Venezuela into “a launching pad for communist infiltration and Muslim extremism all over the continent.” (Pastor Robertson appears oblivious to the contradictory nature of communism and Islamic Fundamentalism.) Therefore, the U.S. government ought to kill him. Robertson is not alone here, similar suggestions have been made publically by retired CIA agents and, in a regular fashion, on Florida radio stations run by a the Cuban exile community. Government officials in the State and Defense departments have dismissed this sort of talk as hot air and avowed that their departments “do not get involved in such acts.” Nonetheless, there is at least one witness who has implicated the CIA in the November 2004 car bomb assassination of Danilo Anderson, the Venezuelan state prosecutor who had been investigating those allegedly involved in the 2002 coup against the Chavez government.

It is no wonder then that Chavez feels insecure. However, he is not one to be cowed. President Chavez has his own way with fighting words. If the Bush administration can call his policies “destabilizing,” Chavez can call American policies “colonialist” and “imperialist.” These latter characterizations have more resonance in Latin America than the former. If the Bush administration can accuse him of “training terrorists,” Chavez can retort that “the current U.S. government is a “terrorist administration” and, using facts from Iraq, Guantanamo Bay, and elsewhere, offer more evidence to prove his point than his foes can do against him. He also says the Bush administration is a “threat to humanity” (referring here to global warming), and operates in a way that is “war-like” and is “dangerously eroding the possibility of peace…in the world.” That led Hugo Chavez to characterize George W. Bush as “the devil” from the speakers podium of the UN General Assembly on September 20, 2006. Earlier, in September 2005, Chavez suggested to a Washington Post reporter he would “very much like to debate issues” with President [Beelzebub] Bush but, he continued, “with this administration it is impossible to talk because they want to impose things on you.”

Whether Bush wants a debate or not, Chavez is moving ahead to open a new and wider front in the war of words. This will be done via Telesur, a satellite information system described as the “voice of the Americas, by the Americas.” While this is a joint venture of Venezuela, Argentina, Cuba, and Uruguay, it is Chavez’s government which owns 51% of the operation. Chavez claims it will help to “integrate the region” while offering a point of view opposed to that of the United States.

Chavez and the Rest of Latin America

Despite President Chavez’s anxiety over U.S. intentions, the United States is not the sole focus of his foreign policy. Indeed, Venezuela is an actor on the world stage. Chavez sees the world as a multipolar one and, as Richard Gott observes, he is set upon the “formation of a Latin American pole.” The way he has chosen to achieve this goal is to promote regional integration, an objective which harkens back to the long range aim of his hero and model, Simon Bolivar. He also characterizes this end in left-wing terms, as “a move toward socialism” that would allow Latin American “countries to relate to each other on the basis of cooperation, solidarity and complementarity.” To this end integration is multifaceted. Chavez is pushing for economic integration in terms of shared markets and expertise and he has made Venezuela a

full member of Mercosur, which is Latin America's common market organization. Integration has political overtones in that one of his goals is a regional alliance that would allow participants to face challenges collectively and strive for consensus when faced with problems that cross borders. There is a military component in that Chavez wants the Latin nations to be able to coordinate and cooperate for self defense. And finally there is a cultural component aimed at building regional pride and awareness of historical connections.

Venezuela is also promoting economic integration by using its oil resources. Chavez has already proposed the formation of a regional oil company, to be called Petroamerica, that would partner the state oil companies of Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil. He has also pledged Venezuela to a $1.5 billion investment in Bolivian energy development. Chavez's goal here is to eventually see oil and other energy revenues used to develop and expand other parts of a country's economy so that it can develop with minimum dependence on foreign loans and the resulting indebtedness.

When it comes to world oil policy, Chavez has allied himself with Iran, warning that any U.S. attack on Iran would certainly send the price of crude oil over $100 a barrel. Venezuela is helping Iran with its plans to establishment an "Iranian Oil Bourse" that will allow trading for oil in Euros rather than the U.S. dollar. If successful, this could mean a decrease in investment in dollars to the detriment of the U.S. economy. Chavez has also joined Iran in actively urging OPEC to cut production so as to maintain higher prices, and thus revenues. Simultaneously, he has established programs to reduce the impact of high oil prices on poorer Caribbean nations.

Chavez has used this program to help the poor meet increasing energy costs to bait the lion in its own den, so to speak. In November 2005 Chavez offered subsidized heating oil to the people of the United States and, as a consequence, officials of the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Illinois and Pennsylvania signed agreements with Venezuela's wholly owned American subsidiary, Citgo, to provide hundreds of millions of dollars in heating oil at a 40% discount to low income families. The program is to be expanded over the winter of 2006-2007 eventually assisting 1.2million poor people in 17 U.S. states.

Finally, Hugo Chavez has now gained a world wide reputation as a leader striving to realize an alternative model of sustainable development free of the restrictions that come with aid from such U.S. allied institutions as the International Monetary Fund or World Bank (Chavez wants to replace the IMF with an IHF, an International Humanitarian Fund.") To break free from such institutions is, he believes, the only way to establish and maintain one's economic sovereignty. Chavez aims to achieve economic sovereignty not only for Venezuela but for much of Latin America as well. To this end, Venezuela has loaned Argentina $2.4 billion so that country could get out from under the control of the IMF. Caracas has also invested in $300 million worth of Ecuadorian bonds so as to give that country financial breathing space without having to go to the World Bank. At the same time, Venezuela withdrew $20 billion of its own investments from the U.S. Federal Reserve. In other words, when it comes to the Americas, Venezuela is acting as an alternative banker to the United States and its allied institutions.

The enormous influence that the U.S. has traditionally held over the economies of Latin America due to its control of sources of credit is therefore being eroded. Venezuela's position as a competitive lender seems secure for the foreseeable future. In April of 2006 it was determined that Venezuela, and not Saudi Arabia, has the world's greatest estimated heavy crude oil reserves. When this news broke in New York's Banking district one noted banking executive was heard to remark, "Surely by now George Bush must realize that God is not on his side."

If we are to keep a scorecard in the battle of words and strategies between Chavez and the Bush administration, we would have to say that, in the arena of Latin America, Chavez is winning. One of the aims of the U.S. government, according to Secretary of State Rice, is to "isolate" Venezuela from the rest of the region using an "inoculation strategy." Whatever this might precisely mean, it does not seem to be working. Condeleeza Rice has gone around South America claiming that Mr. Chavez is "an undemocratic and negative force" but most do not believe her. Indeed, travel through such major Venezuelan cities as Caracas and Maricaibo and one can find plenty of evidence that democratically expressed criticism of the government is a frequent affair in Venezuela. If anything the persistent American harping on the dangers of Hugo Chavez are backfiring. For instance, in the Spring of 2005, for the first time in 60 years, the U.S. supported candidate for President of the Organization of American States failed to be elected. The winning candidate was one backed by Venezuela. Certainly, the United States will continue to bring pressure to bear, but it would seem that Chavez's defiance has emboldened many countries in the region to stand their ground against American arm twisting. The result is that it is the United States, and not Venezuela, that seems to be more and more isolated.

Conclusion:**What Really Threatens Venezuelan Democracy?**

Hugo Chavez's "Bolivarian revolution" is not the cause of Latin America's movement to the left. That was caused by the greed, corruption and incompetence, the class arrogance and uncaring of South American civilian and military elites and their multinational corporate allies. Various American administrations, so ideologically driven that they have mixed up the "freedom" of the market with real political liberty and economic justice, put their money on those corrupt elites, self-centered corporate boards and military despots. For a considerable time Washington won this game. Now the U.S. is losing.

In its frustration the Bush administration has spent a lot of time painting Hugo Chavez as authoritarian and a threat to democracy. This is done despite Chavez's winning electoral record, his on-going overwhelming popularity, and the participatory nature of Venezuela's evolving political culture. South of the border, many politically aware people see these U.S. complaints as all too common lies and displays of hypocrisy. Nonetheless, in the long run, Washington's behavior may constitute something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Government's usually do not get more liberal the more threatened they feel.

In the long run, the realistic question for Venezuelans may not be, 'do you want democracy or

do you want authoritarian government?' With the United States more than willing to support subversion leading to right wing dictatorship to sustain its economic interests, it may only be an authoritarian government of the left (perhaps with a pseudo-democratic face) that can ultimately withstand Washington's covert machinations. If that is the case, the real question becomes 'do you want an authoritarian government of the right or the left?' Assuming the Chavez government survives by becoming more authoritarian, just how far it goes in that direction will also, in good part, depend on how much the United States meddles in Venezuelan affairs.

There are many who expect that meddling to be deep and persistent. They expect that, whatever the present circumstances, ultimately this is a fight Venezuela cannot win. Obviously, there are just as many throughout Latin America who are not so sure, and feel the fight, no matter how difficult, is worth it. Certainly this includes Hugo Chavez who has concluded that conflict with the U.S. is unavoidable. "Whoever tries to push a transformation project forward in Latin America inevitably will collide with the U.S. empire." And, Venezuela's president is determined to push his transformation. Most of the Venezuelan people, reflecting what all sides describe as a "new self-confidence" are, to date, with him. If Chavez stays alive, and the price of oil stays high, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela may prove the cynics wrong and attain a political staying power underpinned by a steady increase in the economic well being of its citizens. It may in fact become a truly successful socialist society. Then what will the gringos do?

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Democracy, Social Change, And One-dimensionality: Reviving Marcuse

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 3-4

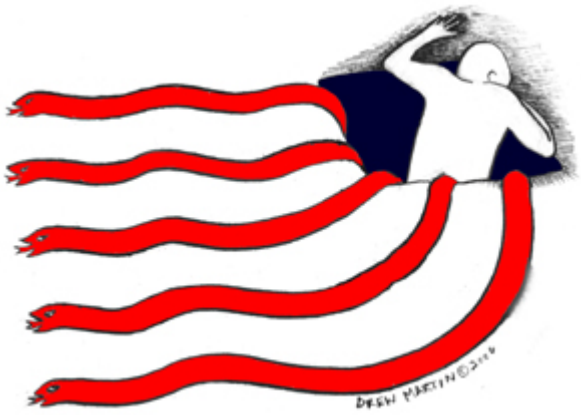
Books discussed in this article:

Herbert Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, xvi + 278 pages. $ 90.00

Herbert Marcuse, *Towards a Critical Theory of Society*, x + 242 pages. $ 90.00

Herbert Marcuse, *The New Left and the 1960s*, xiv + 209 pages. $ 80.00

Edited by Douglas Kellner. Volumes One and Two include a Foreword by Peter Marcuse. Volume Three includes a Preface by Angela Davis.



In the fall of 2001 I had the opportunity to teach a senior philosophy seminar on critical theory. I took advantage of this opportunity to immerse myself in the works of one of my favorite members of the Frankfurt School for Social Research, Herbert Marcuse. Although I had read some Marcuse before, this more recent study really had an impact on me. My students also became fascinated by the profound and relevant insights developed in *One-Dimensional Man* and *Eros and Civilization*. The other critical theorists, everyone from Horkheimer to Adorno to Habermas did not seem to affect my students in the way that Marcuse did. During this semester I discovered a series by Rowman and Littlefield entitled The New Critical Theory. The New Critical Theory was a call for a return to the unfinished project of the early Frankfurt School. The first volume of this series *New Critical Theory: Essays on Liberation* is very Marcusean in spirit.

This Marcusean epiphany gave birth to a conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Eros and Civilization* at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia in November 2005. During this very successful conference the participants established an International Marcuse Society. A couple of weeks after the conference I had a conversation with Peter Marcuse. Peter reminded me that the main theme of Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* is that our society is basically irrational. Peter wondered why there was this renewed interest in his father's work since it does seem to be the case that our society has become one-dimensional and irrational. My response was that in a time like this, a time wherein it seems that his father's work is irrelevant, it is most relevant. That is, Marcuse's work is still relevant because it describes in

great detail the very social mechanisms that have prevented positive social change in our society. Marcuse explained the ways in which irrationality has come to replace rationality. However, his critique of the erasure of rationality and the containment of non-repressive possibilities also embodies the possibility for liberation and a more rational or reasonable society. I will elaborate on this further latter in this essay.

While my students and I had a Marcusean epiphany in the fall of 2001, I discovered that we were not the only ones. As I continued to do more research on Marcuse I discovered that there was already a revival of Marcuse's work taking place. It was obvious to me that Marcuse was not finished speaking to us literally and figuratively. While Marcuse still speaks to us through the relevance of his classic works, he also continues to speak through new works. I was delighted to discover that six volumes of Marcuse's essays and letters (most of which were never published) were scheduled to be published in English. In this essay I want to examine the relevance of Marcuse's voice in the 21th century by examining the issues raised in the three recently published volumes of Marcuse's unpublished works.

Although there are many issues addressed in these three volumes, this essay will focus on three themes that seem to stand out or at least provide us with a particular orientation. These issues are social change, democracy, and one-dimensionality. I will begin with the problem of social change which will be examined in two parts. As a dialectical thinker Marcuse was always sensitive to the possibilities for social change while at the same time he was very aware of the impediments to social change. This has made reading Marcuse difficult for some who would like to make a decisive claim about the direction in which our society is headed. Marcuse's analysis of social change does not make it possible for one to make a decisive claim about the direction in which society is headed but it does make one aware of the potential for change and the potential for further repression. With this awareness one is in a better position to develop a strategy for social change. Hence, Marcuse never gives in to the paralysis of pessimism or the opiate effect of blind optimism.

During the 1940s Marcuse and his Frankfurt School colleague Franz Neumann were working together on a theory of social change. Several of their essays have been published in Volume One of Marcuse's unpublished works entitled *Technology, War and Fascism*. Before addressing the problem of social change it is necessary that we first understand what social change is according to Marcuse and Neumann. In the essay "Theories of Social Change" Marcuse and Neumann argue that up to the 18th century the theory of social change has always been a philosophical theory. Marcuse and Neumann briefly outline the history of theories on social change that was to be examined in greater detail in a future work. Of importance to us here is the transition of theories of social change from static to dialectical.

Marcuse and Neumann write:

The dialectical conception of change was first elaborated in Hegel's philosophy. It reversed the traditional logical setting of the problem by taking change as the very form of existence, and by taking existence as a totality of objective contradictions. Every particular form of existence

contradicts its content, which can develop only through breaking this form and creating a new one in which the content appears in a liberated and more adequate form.[1]

They continue:

Social change was no longer an event occurring in or to a more or less static system, but the very *modus existentiae* of the system, and the question was not how and why changes took place but how and why an at least provisional stability and order was accomplished.[2]

The above passages contain a type of inquiry that is central to all of Marcuse's work. Every text by Marcuse is an exercise in the above type of dialectic.

Static theories of social change see society as basically stable or static. Social change occurs as a rupture or a sudden alteration of the previously stable society. On the dialectical view society is always undergoing alteration. Although change is a part of the very structure of society, there are moments of stability and order. It is also possible for a society to undergo change and maintain a certain order or stability at the same time. For example, one may consider the ways in which advanced industrial societies have changed while maintaining their capitalist form of production.

Marcuse's concern is with the way in which societies are able to prohibit social change, that is, the way in which a certain social structure achieves stability. More specifically, the question is how do oppressive, repressive, dehumanizing, social structures maintain themselves against the possible resistance by those who suffer from these structures? The achievement of stability by oppressive societies is a central theme in volumes one and two of Marcuse's unpublished works as well as his focus in *One-Dimensional Man*.

Much of Marcuse's work involves an attempt to rescue individuality as a source for resistance. The erasure of individuality is the path toward one-dimensionality. In his essay "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology" Marcuse examines the ways in which technology affects individuality in advanced industrial societies. Marcuse makes an important distinction between technics and technology. He begins the essay, "In this article, technology is taken as a social process in which technics proper (that is, the technical apparatus of industry, transportation, communication) is but a partial factor." Technics is not necessarily oppressive nor is it necessarily liberating, but rather, it has the potential for either. Marcuse uses the term technology to refer to social forces and structures that determine the use of technics. He writes:

Technology, as a mode of production, as the totality of instruments, devices and contrivances which characterize the machine age is thus at the same time a mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behavior patterns, an instrument for control and domination.[3]

What Marcuse refers to as technology is an oppressive and repressive use of technics. This theme also occurs in Marcuse's more well-known writings such as *Eros and Civilization* and

One-Dimensional Man. Technology does not refer to the instruments used for production in advanced industrial societies but rather to a kind of social logic or rationality that determines the use of these instruments.

In the above mentioned article Marcuse examines the way in which critical rationality and individuality has been replaced by technological rationality. His position is similar to that developed by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and his own position in his more well-known works. Technological rationality is similar to what Horkheimer called instrumental reason. The technological society is the same as what the Frankfurt School called the administered society. Even in these early essays Marcuse is laying the foundation for the long-term preoccupation of Frankfurt School critical theory.

In "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology" Marcuse argues:

In the course of the technological process a new rationality and new standards on individuality have spread over society, different from and even opposed to those which initiated the march of technology.[4]

The march of technology has its origins in the desire for greater human autonomy and more control by the human being over the circumstances of his or her life. However, instead of increasing autonomy technological progress has actually reduced human autonomy. Technological progress has led to the development of a value system wherein the individual human person is not given the highest value but instead the technological apparatus has been given the highest value. The individual must conform to the demands of technological rationality. This conformity to the demands of technological rationality adumbrates what Marcuse calls in *Eros and Civilization* the performance principle. That is, in our society real needs go unmet while new needs are created. Everyone thinks that he or she must have the latest thing. We are even told what to desire. We should all have a certain type of body, a cell phone, an ipod, etc…

In the second volume of these unpublished works, *Towards a Critical Theory of Society*, Marcuse continues to examine the ways in which technologically advanced societies prohibit the autonomy of the individual and resist social change. In an essay entitled "The Problem of Social Change in the Technological Society" he writes:

One of the accomplishments of advanced industrial civilization is the non-terroristic, democratic decline of freedom — the efficient, smooth, reasonable unfreedom which seems to have its roots in technological progress itself.[5]

According to Marcuse, our technological society is still an oppressive one. For example, we need only think about social status of women, racial minorities, and the poor. Further, there is still the class based dichotomy between the "haves" and the "have nots". Marcuse claims that although technological society is still oppressive, it nevertheless, contains the seeds of liberation. Indeed, in the technological society that seems to be the dialectical relationship between oppression and liberation.

In this essay, Marcuse examines the way in which the technological society can oppress without employing the obvious tools of oppression, i.e., sheer physical domination. It is this ability to oppress surreptitiously that Marcuse calls the non-terroristic or democratic decline of freedom. For example, through political rhetoric people can be duped into making decisions that are to their disadvantage. One only needs to think about how the use of fear of an external threat can persuade people to vote for a political candidate who cares nothing about the interest of the people. We have also seen political figures play on people's fear of sexual difference. Also, with respect to technology, many people are given just enough of the benefits of the technological society that they are afraid of rebelling for fear that they may lose what they have. Even the poorest homes have a TV set. There are two issues that must be raised here. First, Marcuse's analyzes the way in which technological society oppress and repel movements of social change. Secondly, Marcuse's view of technology is not totally pessimistic. He actually saw in technology the potential for liberation and the fulfillment of human life. Kellner writes in a footnote:

Marcuse's contribution, published here, analyzes social change in technological society, anticipating his theses of *One-Dimensional Man* that technological development was a threat to freedom, individualism, democracy and other positive values-but also created the pre-conditions for greater freedom, equality, justice, and so on that the organization of contemporary industrial societies were blocking.[6]

The issue then is not merely technology but the social organization of the technological society. Technology itself has the potential to free human beings from perpetual toil and the threat of scarcity. However, this liberating potential of technology can be actualized only under certain social conditions or organization. Oppression in a technological society reflects the social organization of that society.

Although the present social organization of American society leads to the oppressive use of technology, alternative uses are present in our society in the form of liberal, democratic values. However, these values are not "facts" and in a fact orientated society normative values are rarely taken seriously. Marcuse writes:

Prior to their realization, historical alternatives appear and disappear as "values", professed as preferential by certain groups or individuals. In social theory as well as in any other field, values are not facts; facts, as facts, are not values and are opposed to values.[7]

This is a very important passage and it reflects Marcuse's emphasis on dialectic. The point is that present social reality has not actualized its potential. Even the principle of freedom on which American society is based has not been fully actualized. Society as it now stands contains within itself its own contradictions and its liberating alternatives. However, this contradiction between facts and values must be mediated by historical, political practice. The values must become facts through social change.

Social change occurs when the "facts" (society as it is) are transcended. Society already

contains the seeds for its own transcendence. However, social change is prohibited when the "facts" are taken out of their historical context. Marcuse writes:

These facts are substantially incomplete, ambivalent: they are elements in a larger context of historical space and time. Insulation against this context falsifies the facts and their function in the society because it insulates the facts against their negation, i.e., against the forces which make for their transcendence toward modes of existence rendered possible and at the same time precluded by their given society.[8]

When the "facts" are viewed in their historical context they disclose their contingency. They also reveal their negation, i.e., other possible modes of existence for that society. These other modes of existence are important to the extent that they help society achieve its "optimal development."

One of the most interesting and challenging essays in volume 2 is "The Individual and the Great Society" which is a critique of President Lyndon Johnson's program of a "Great Society". This essay discloses the way in which social change is paralyzed by a refusal to critique the very social framework wherein change must occur. Those of us who have taught Business Ethics are all too familiar with this problem. That is, certain ethical problems cannot be reduced to the choices of individuals working within the capitalist framework, but rather, there are ethical problems that require a critique of the capitalist system. Marcuse agrees with Johnson's utopian vision but Johnson attempts to remain within the capitalist framework. The question for Marcuse is whether the present society is amenable to the "Great Society" or must the present society be transformed.

Marcuse contrasts the Great Society with the Capitalist Enterprise and takes issue with the first feature of Johnson's Great Society. That is, a society of "unbridled growth," creates a spirit of competition which undermines the Great Society. Further, Johnson stated that in the Great Society "the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor."[9] Marcuse wonders: "Shouldn't it be the other way around? In a free society, the meaning of life is determined by the free individuals, who determine the products of their labor accordingly."[10] With respect to "unbridled growth" Marcuse says:

The dynamic of endlessly propelled productivity is not that of a peaceful human society in which the individuals have come into their own and developed their humanity, the challenge they meet may be precisely that of protecting and preserving a "safe harbor," a "resting place" where life is no longer spent in the struggle for existence. And such a society may well reject the notion (and practice) of "unbridled growth"; it may well restrict its technical capabilities where they threaten to increase the dependence of man on his instruments and products.[11]

Marcuse's point is that Johnson's model of the Great Society is based on capitalist interests. The interests of capitalism is not necessarily amenable to the humanity and happiness of individuals. On Johnson's model, production and economic growth are primary. The meaning of human life is determined by the product of labor. This view is ultimately destructive of the

individual. The individual is used in the service of production and not for the individual.

Marcuse's concern here is first, our society is rapidly becoming one-dimensional. Secondly, what possibility is there for the development of autonomy and creativity for the individual in a one-dimensional society? Finally, how can a one-dimensional society become a Great Society? Marcuse argues that as advanced industrial society becomes one-dimensional the individual wanes in significance. With respect to the situation of the individuals who are suppose to build the Great Society Marcuse writes:

They live in a society where they are (for good or bad) subjected to an apparatus which, comprising production, distribution, and consumption, material and intellectual work and leisure, politics and fun, determines their daily existence, their needs and aspirations. And this life, private, social, and rational, is enclosed in a very specific historical universe. The individuals who make up the bulk of the population in the "affluent societies" live in a universe of permanent defense and aggression.[12]

It is in this critique of Johnson's speech that we encounter the significance and ongoing relevance of Marcuse's form of critical theory. First, Johnson's call for the development of the Great Society requires some degree of social change. However, it is not clear what type of change. In fact, as Johnson goes on to describe this Great Society we see that he is locked into a framework that is resistant to social change if change means liberation. Johnson invokes the abstract economic vocabulary of production and economic growth. No attention is paid to the quality of life of the individuals living in such a society. In this respect, Johnson simply reinvents the wheel. Therefore, real emancipatory social change is contained.

Changes in our society do not necessarily reflect progress. The careful observer may see in social transformation a perpetual re-birth of the old. Change is not equivalent to emancipation. Hence, cultural revolution is not necessarily political revolution. Political revolution is often absorbed by cultural revolution (rebellion). Marcuse argues that the cultural revolution has emancipatory potential but must extend itself to the political. The cultural revolution is not yet political because it is the reaction of a particular, marginalized, social group. Here we must see what is emancipatory and yet problematic in this movement. Marcuse writes:

Now in its striving for totality, the cultural revolution is discovering (or rather recapturing) a neglected or suppressed basis of revolution, namely, its roots in the individual-more specifically, in the sensibility of man. In truly dialectical fashion, it is in a new individual that a new totality of life is to emerge. The new society is to originate in the individuals themselves: not as the result of a fictitious consent or contract, not as the marketplace of competing interests and votes, but as an extension, natural as well as rational, of the needs and faculties of free men. This freedom begins with the emancipation of the human senses.[13]

Marcuse claims that the sensibility of man as the basis of social revolution goes back to Fourier and Marx. He argues that many social revolutions fail because because they tend to replace

one ruling class with another. They fail to transform the sensibility of persons. These movements are thus, immature. While these movements are immature in terms of productive forces, material and intellectual, Marcuse claims:

But one aspect of this immaturity is precisely the suppression, and atrophy, of the roots of liberation in the instinctual structures of the individuals, and consequently, in their sensibility.[14]

Marcuse was always aware of our instinctual needs and the ways in which these needs are repressed and altered by the organization of society. The failed revolutions discussed by Marcuse failed because they attempt change at a very superficial level. They attempted to change society without recognizing the need to change our distorted sensibility. In this respect, change often fails to break with the old society. Marcuse is critical of a continuum from the old society to the new, but, negation requires a break with the old which perpetuates unfreedom.

Marcuse warns us that as society changes the base for qualitative change itself changes. This is why dialectical theory must be committed to history. This is also why Marcuse always renewed his search for the revolutionary subject. The vicissitudes of critical theory lies in its attempt to remain committed to history rather than ossified, ahistorical, apriori concepts. Our "democracy" is based on a loose use of ossified, a priori, ahistorical concepts without a commitment to history and its vicissitudes. The base of human society is always a human creation and is therefore malleable.

Marcuse's attitude toward social change and democracy is very complex. There are several places in his work where he is very critical of democracy. For example, in the third volume of his unpublished works in a conversation with Hans Magnus Enzensberger Marcuse cites William Shirer who claimed that "American fascism will probably be the first which comes to power by democratic means and with democratic support."[15] In another essay entitled "The Historical Fate of Bourgeois Democracy" from volume 2 Marcuse is critical of democracy. In this essay Marcuse grapples with the victory of Nixon in the 1972 elections and Nixon's attitude toward Vietnam. The main focus is not Nixon per se but the willingness of the American people to follow such a leader. Marcuse claims that "this democracy has become the most powerful obstacle to change, except change for the worst."[16] He argues:

Bourgeois democracy is giving itself an enlarged popular base which supports the liquidation of remnants of the liberal period, the removal of government from popular control, and allows the pursuit of the imperialist policy. The shibboleth of democracy: government of the people and by the people (self-government) now assumes the form of a large-scale *identification* of the people with rulers, caricature of popular sovereignty.[17]

He continues:

In new ways: because the interplay between production and destruction, liberty and repression, power and submission (i.e., the unity of opposites which permeates the entire

capitalist society today) has, with the help of technological means not previously available, created, among the underlying populations, a mental structure which responds to, and reflects the requirements of the system. In this mental structure are the deep individual, instinctual roots of the identification of the conformist majority with the institutionalized brutality and aggression. An instinctual, nay, libidinal affinity binds, beneath all rational justification, the subjects to the rulers.[18]

Marcuse shows here that in an oppressive, repressive society the mental structure of individuals is affected in such a way that protest is mitigated. He argues:

In the American democracy today, the government is by definition (because it was elected by the people, and because it is the government) immune against subversion, and it is (by the same definition) safe from any other than verbal criticism and a congressional opposition which can easily be managed.[19]

Marcuse argues that the new left must defend democracy while attacking its capitalist foundations. He calls for what seems to be a Nietzschean transvaluation of values. Democracy requires a counter culture to the present system. Here Marcuse finds hope in liberation movements such as the Women's Liberation Movement. However, before addressing Marcuse's search for catalyst groups we must examine his criticism of American democracy a bit further.

Marcuse looked at American democracy through dialectical lenses, as he did all things. American democracy is at best an honorable experiment that is nowhere near completion. As Marcuse says in a panel discussion entitled "Democracy Has/Hasn't a Future… a Present" published in volume three "So I would say democracy certainly has a future. But in my view it certainly does not have a present."[20] He goes on to say:

Within the established society we no longer have a majority constituted on the basis of the completely free development of opinion and consciousness. We do not have a majority constituted on the basis of free and equal access to the facts and all the facts. We do not have a majority constituted on the basis of equal education for all.

However, we do have a majority which is standardized and manipulated and even constituted by standardized and administered information, communication and education. In other words, this majority is not free, but it belongs to the very essence of democracy that people who are sovereign are a free people.[21]

The above passage is an adequate description of our anti-democratic situation. American democracy is characterized by what Marcuse calls in *One-Dimensional Man* "a comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom."[22] It is ironic that in a country that has yet to actualize its democratic potential wars are waged for the purpose of making the world safe for democracy. Americans have bought into a very truncated view of democracy. That is, democratic freedom has been reduced to the power to vote for political leaders. However, Marcuse reminds us in*One-Dimensional Man* that the ability to chose one master over another

does not abolish slavery.

In the forties, fifties, and sixties Marcuse was well aware of many of the problems with American democracy that recent theorists have disclosed. Theorists from Iris Marion Young to Jane Mansbridge have pointed out the problems of aggregative democracy or democracy based solely on voting or the aggregation of opinions. The deeper issue is the process of opinion-formation. That is, we vote for candidates who seem best to reflect our own opinions. There are several problems here. Fisrt, we may be dupped by the candidate. Secondly, once in office the candidate may reveal his/her true opinion which is contrary to our reason for voting for this candidate. Third, we do not have adequate means for holding our candidates accountable for their decisions. Finally, and more importantly, our own opinions may be repressive, oppressive and dehumanizing for those outside of our own social group.

It is this last problem that I will focus on for the remainder of this essay. This problem also seems to be at the heart of Marcuse's works from beginning to end. One of the main goals of the Frankfurt School of Social Research was to understand why people who would benefit most from social change are not only the least likely to advocate social change but may very well become the greatest obstacles to social change. For this reason the Frankfurt School incorporated Freudian psychoanalysis as an essential part of their critical social theory. Psychoanalysis would help them understand the way in which people became victims of false consciousness. The synthesis of psychoanalysis with its focus on the development of the psyche of the individual and the problem of repressed desires with the Marxist analysis of oppressive social structures opens the door for a deeper understanding of the undemocratic, oppressive, and repressive process of opinion-formation.

Simply put, the process of opinion-formation is a social process and is affected by the formation of values, world views, political rhetoric, fear, social structures etc… It is very easy to manipulate the process of opinion-formation in individuals and groups by concealing certain facts while disclosing others. For example, one can reveal to white working class males that some women and racial minorities have benefited from the practice of affirmative action. However, what is concealed in the long history of oppression that put women and racial minorities at a great disadvantage. Further, the fact that the greatest enemy of the white working class male is not women and racial minorities but rather wealthy white males who are willing to exploit anyone in their path for greater wealth. Hence, those who are at the bottom of the socio/economic ladder are put at war against each other. Those at the top of the socio/economic ladder have every thing to gain from the present order of things and much to lose from social change.

We have seen this social and political manipulation on a large scale since 9/11. The threat from an external force has allowed the present administration to make light of our civil liberties and our freedom of speech. We are admonished to focus on the threat from outside while ignoring the threat from within. Before 9/11 millions of Americans lived in poverty without adequate education, food, housing, jobs, and other necessities. However, to be critical of a government that allows such poverty is to be "anti-American". To oppose the war with

Iraq is taken as a lack of support for our troops. The truth is that opposition to this war is perhaps the best way to support our troops who are viewed by our government as dispensable. This should seem obvious since most of our troops are from poor families. Those who are bold enough to wage war are rarely bold enough to send their own children to fight. It is as if the poor are condemned to protect the interest of the rich. The fact that our troops are predominately made up of poor working class people should be up for debate or questioning. This would be a sign of a true democracy.

Marcuse's theory of social change entails a vision of a new society that would not merely benefit those at the top of the socio/economic ladder but all persons in that society. All persons would have equal access to information for free opinion-formation. All persons would play a larger role in the decision making process.

It is to Marcuse's credit that he not only saw the impediments to social change in every epoch but he also saw potential for liberation. His engagement with and influence on the new left is important here. It is to Marcuse's credit that he remained flexible in his theorizing so as to avoid stale orthodoxy and to remain current. In the sixties Marcuse was a fresh voice for socially conscious youth who had a broader range of concerns than the Old Left. In the introduction to the third volume Kellner writes:

While the Old Left embraced Soviet Marxism and the Soviet Union, the New Left combined forms of critical Marxism with radical democracy and openness to a broad array of ideas and political alliances. Whereas the Old Left was doctrinaire and puritanical, the New Left was pluralistic and engaged emergent cultural forms and social movements. While the Old Left, with some exceptions, tended to impose doctrinal conformity and cut itself off from "liberal" groups, the New Left embraced a wide range of social movements around the issues of class, gender, race, sexuality, the environment, peace, and other issues.[23]

Volume Three *The New Left and the 1960s* contains essays and interviews by Marcuse at the height of his popularity and influence. The essays in this volume contain Marcuse's praise for and criticisms of the New Left. One of the most important aspects of Marcuse's relation to the New Left is his continuous search for what Kellner calls the revolutionary subject. The source of possible revolution was not only the working class but other groups as well.

The latter Marcuse saw potential for revolution or social change in what he referred to as catalyst groups. The social movements of the 60s were potential revolutionary moments wherein certain social groups had become very discontent with the present order of things. The Civil Rights Movement, student rebellions, and feminism all were responses to our repressive society.

Although there does not seem to be as much social unrest as there was in the 60s we still find ourselves in a similar situation. Many social groups still struggle for equality, recognition, and full democratic participation. While *dejure* racial segregation has been overcome we still suffer from *defacto* racial segregation. Gays, Lesbians, and transgendered people have not yet

been accepted as full citizens with the same rights and respect as their heterosexual counterparts. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow at an alarming rate. Women still struggle for first class citizenship, etc… I have catalogued only a few problems that we face in our present society. Marcuse's form of critical theory is still a necessary tool for examining the possibility for social change as well as the impediments to social change. Unfortunately, Marcuse has been put on the shelf too quickly. Our time calls for a revival of Marcusean critical theory. These new volumes make an important contribution to the revival of Marcuse's theory.

Notes

[1] "Theories of Social Change" In *Technology, War and Fascism*, page 130.

[2] Ibid, page 131.

[3] "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology" In *Technology, War and Fascism*, page 41.

[4] Ibid, page 42.

[5] Page. 37.

[6] *Towards a Critical Theory of Society*, page 36.

[7] "The Problem of Social Change in the Technological Society" In *Towards a Critical Theory of*

Society, page 38.

[8] Ibid, page, 39.

[9] Ibid, page 62.

[10] Ibid.,

[11] Ibid.,

[12] Ibid, page 65.

[13] "Cultural Revolution" In *Towards a Critical Theory of Society*, page 124.

[14] Ibid.,

[15] "USA: Question of Organization and the Revolutionary Subject" In *The New Left and the*

1960s, page 138.

[16] *Towards a Critical Theory of Society*, page 165.

[17] Ibid., page 167.

[18] Ibid., page 170.

[19] Ibid., page 176.

[20] In *The New Left and the 1960s*, page 88.

[21] Ibid., page 97.

[22] Marcuse, Herbert *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1966) page 1.

[23] Page 2.

Poetry: Excerpts from Countersong to Walt Whitman

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 3-4

Translated from the Spanish by Jonathan Cohen

Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!
Not to-day is to justify me and answer what I am for,
But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental, greater
than before known,
Arouse! for you must justify me.

* * *

Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son,
Turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding,
No sentimentalist, no stander above men and women or apart
from them,
No more modest than immodest.

Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

Whoever degrades another degrades me,
And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

Through me the afflatus surging and surging, through me the
current and index.

I speak the password primeval, I give the sign of democracy,
By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have their
counterpart of on the same terms.

–Walt Whitman in “Poets to Come” &
“Song of Myself”

I,
a son of the Caribbean,
Antillean to be exact.

The raw product of a simple
Puerto Rican girl
and a Cuban worker,
born precisely, and poor,
on Quisqueyan soil.
Overflowing with voices,
full of eyes
wide open throughout the islands,
I have come to speak to Walt Whitman,
a kosmos,
of Manhattan the son.
People will ask
Who are you?
I understand.
Nobody had better ask me
who Walt Whitman is.
I would go sob on his white beard.
And yet,
I am going to say again who Walt Whitman is,
a kosmos,
of Manhattan the son.

[Note: Quisqueya is the aboriginal name of Hispaniola, the island divided between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.-J.C.]

1

There once was a virgin wilderness.
Trees and land without deeds or fences.
There once was a perfect wilderness.
Many years ago. Long before the ancestors of our ancestors.
The plains would play with galloping buffalo.
The endless coastlines would play with pearls.
The rocks let loose diamonds from their wombs.
And the hills played with goats and gazelles . . .

The breeze would swirl through clearings in the woods
heavy with the bold play of deer and birch trees
filling the pores of evening with seed.
And it was a virgin land filled with surprises.
Wherever a clod of earth touched a seed
all of a sudden there grew a sweet-smelling forest.
At times it was assaulted by a frenzy of pollen
squeezing out the poplars, the pines, the fir trees,

and pouring out the night and landscapes in clusters.
And there were caverns and woods and prairies
teeming with brooks and clouds and animals.

6

O Walt Whitman, your sensitive beard
was a net in the wind!
It throbbed and filled with ardent figures
of sweethearts and youths, of brave souls and farmers,
of country boys walking to creeks,
of rowdies wearing spurs and maidens wearing smiles,
of the hurried marches of numberless beings,
of tresses or hats . . .
And you went on listening
road after road,
striking their heartstrings
word after word.
O Walt Whitman of guileless beard,
I have come through the years to your red blaze of fire!

9

For
what has a great undeniable poet been
but a crystal-clear pool
where a people discover their perfect
likeness?
What has he been
but a deep garden
where all men recognize themselves
through language?
And what
but the chord of a boundless guitar
where the fingers of the people play
their simple, their own, their strong and
true, innumerable song?
For that’s why you, numerous Walt Whitman, who saw and ranted
just the right word for singing your people,
who in the middle of the night said
I
and the fisherman understood himself in his slicker

and the hunter heard himself in the midst of his gunshot
and the woodcutter recognized himself in his axe
and the farmer in his freshly sown field and the gold
panner in his yellow reflection on the water
and the maiden in her future town
growing and maturing
under her skirt
and the prostitute in her fountain of gaiety
and the miner of darkness in his steps beneath his homeland . . .
When the tall preacher, bowing his head
between his two long hands, said
I
and found himself united with the foundryman and the salesman
with the obscure traveler in a soft cloud of dust
with the dreamer and the climber,
with the earthy mason resembling a stone slab,
with the farmer and the weaver,
with the sailor in white resembling a handkerchief . . .
And all the people saw themselves
when they heard the word
I
and all the people heard themselves in your song
when they heard the word
I, Walt Whitman, a kosmos,
of Manhattan the son . . . !
Because you were the people, you were I,
and I was Democracy, the people’s family name,
and I was also Walt Whitman, a kosmos,
of Manhattan the son . . . !

15

And now
it is no longer the word
I
the accomplished word
the password to begin the world.
And now
now it is the word
we.
And now,
now has come the hour of the countersong.
We the railroad workers,
we the students,

we the miners,
we the peasants,
we the wretched of the earth,
the populators of the world,
the heroes of everyday work,
with our love and our fists,
enamored of hope.
We the white-skinned,
the black-skinned, the yellow-skinned,
the Indians, the copper-skinned,
the Moors and dark-skinned,
the red-skinned and olive-skinned,
the blonds and platinum blonds,
united by work,
by misery, by silence,
by the cry of a solitary man
who in the middle of the night,
with a perfect whip,
with a meager wage,
with a gold dagger and an iron face,
wildly cries out
I
and hears the crystal-clear echo
of a shower of blood
that relentlessly feeds on us
ourselves
among the docks receding in the distance
ourselves
below the skyline of the factories
ourselves

in the flower, in the pictures, in the tunnels
ourselves
in the tall structure on the way to orbit
ourselves
on the way to marble halls
ourselves
on the way to prisons
ourselves . . .

17

Why did you want to listen to a poet?
I am speaking to one and all.

To those of you who came to isolate him from his people,
to separate him from his blood and his land,
to flood his road.
Those of you who drafted him into the army.
The ones who defiled his luminous beard and put a gun
on his shoulders that were loaded with maidens and pioneers.
Those of you who do not want Walt Whitman, the democrat,
but another Whitman, atomic and savage.
The ones who want to outfit him with boots
to crush the heads of nations.
To grind into blood the temples of little girls.
To smash into atoms the old man's flesh.
The ones who take the tongue of Walt Whitman
for a sign of spraying bullets,
for a flag of fire.
No, Walt Whitman, here are the poets of today
aroused to justify you!
"Poets to come! . . . Arouse! for you must justify me."
Here we are, Walt Whitman, to justify you.
Here we are
for your sake
demanding peace.
The peace you needed
to drive the world with your song.
Here we are
saving your hills of Vermont,
your woods of Maine, the sap and fragrance of your land,
your spurred rowdies, your smiling maidens,
your country boys walking to creeks.
Saving them, Walt Whitman, from the tycoons
who take your language for the language of war.
No, Walt Whitman, here are the poets of today,
the workers of today, the pioneers of today, the peasants
of today,
firm and roused to justify you!
O Walt Whitman of aroused beard!
Here we are without beards,
without arms, without ears,
without any strength in our lips,
spied on,
red and persecuted,
full of eyes
wide open throughout the islands,
full of courage, of knots of pride

untied through all the nations,
with your sign and your language, Walt Whitman,
here we are
standing up
to justify you
our constant companion
of Manhattan!

CONTRACANTO A WALT WHITMAN

by Pedro Mir

Yo,
un hijo del Caribe,
precisamente antillano.
Producto primitivo de una ingenua
criatura borinqueña
y un obrero cubano,
nacido justamente, y pobremente,
en suelo quisqueyano.
Recorrido de voces,
lleno de pupilas
que a través de las islas se dilatan,
vengo a hablarle a Walt Whitman
un cosmos,
un hijo de Manhattan.
Preguntarán
¿quién eres tú?
Comprendo.
Que nadie me pregunte
quién es Walt Whitman.
Iría a sollozar sobre su barba blanca.
Sin embargo,
voy a decir de nuevo quién es Walt Whitman,
un cosmos,
un hijo de Manhattan.

1

Hubo una vez un territorio puro.
Árboles y terrones sin rúbricas ni alambres.

Hubo una vez un territorio sin tacha.
Hace ya muchos años. Más allá de los padres de los padres
las llanuras jugaban a galopes de búfalos.
Las costas infinitas jugaban a las perlas.
Las rocas desceñían su vientre de diamantes.
Y las lomas jugaban a cabras y gacelas . . .

Por los claros del bosque la brisa regresaba
cargada de insolencias de ciervos y abedules
que henchían de simiente los poros de la tarde.
Y era una tierra pura poblada de sorpresas.
Donde un terrón tocaba la semilla
precipitaba un bosque de dulzura fragante.
Le acometía a veces un frenesí de polen
que exprimía los álamos, los pinos, los abetos,
y enfrascaba en racimos la noche y los paisajes.
Y eran minas y bosques y praderas
cundidos de arroyuelos y nubes y animales.

6

¡Oh, Walt Whitman, tu barba sensitiva
era una red al viento!
Vibraba y se llenaba de encendidas figuras
de novias y donceles, de bravos y labriegos,
de rudos mozalbetes camino del riachuelo,
de guapos con espuelas y mozas con sonrisas,
de marchas presurosas de seres infinitos,
de trenzas o sombreros . . .
Y tú fuiste escuchando
camino por camino
golpeándoles el pecho
palabra con palabra.
¡Oh, Walt Whitman de barba candorosa,
alcanzo por los años tu roja llamarada!

9

Porque
¿qué ha sido un gran poeta indeclinable
sino un estanque límpido
donde un pueblo descubre su perfecto

semblante?
¿Qué ha sido
sino un parque sumergido
donde todos los hombres se reconocen
por el lenguaje?
¿Y qué
sino una cuerda de infinita guitarra
donde pulsan los dedos de los pueblos
su sencilla, su propia, su fuerte y
verdadera canción innumerable?
Por eso tú, numeroso Walt Whitman, que viste y deliraste
la palabra precisa para cantar tu pueblo,
que en medio de la noche dijiste
yo
y el pescador se comprendió en su capa
y el cazador se oyó en mitad de su disparo
y el leñador se conoció en su hacha
y el labriego en su siembra y el lavador

de oro en su semblante amarillo sobre el agua
y la doncella en su ciudad futura
que crece y que madura
bajo la saya
y la meretriz en su fuente de alegría
y el minero de sombra en sus pasos debajo de la patria . . .
cuando el alto predicador, bajando la cabeza,
entre dos largas manos, decía,
yo
y se encontraba unido al fundidor y al vendedor
y al caminante oscuro de suave polvareda
y al soñador y al trepador
y al albañil terrestre parecido a una lápida
y al labrador y al tejedor
y al marinero blanco parecido a un pañuelo . . .
Y el pueblo entero se miraba a sí mismo
cuando escuchaba la palabra
yo

y el pueblo entero se escuchaba en ti mismo
cuando escuchaba la palabra
yo, Walt Whitman, un cosmos,
¡un hijo de Manhattan . . . !
Porque tú eras el pueblo, tú eras yo,
y yo era la Democracia, el apellido del pueblo,

y yo era también Walt Whitman, un cosmos,
¡un hijo de Manhattan . . . !

15

Y ahora
ya no es la palabra
yo
la palabra cumplida
la palabra de toque para empezar el mundo.
Y ahora
ahora es la palabra
nosotros.
Y ahora,
ahora es llegada la hora del contracanto.
Nosotros los ferroviarios,
nosotros los estudiantes,
nosotros los mineros,
nosotros los campesinos,
nosotros los pobres de la tierra,
los pobladores del mundo,
los héroes del trabajo cotidiano,
con nuestro amor y con nuestros puños,
enamorados de la esperanza.
Nosotros los blancos,
los negros, los amarillos,
los indios, los cobrizos,
los moros y morenos,
los rojos y aceitunados,
los rubios y los platinos,
unificados por el trabajo,
por la miseria, por el silencio,
por el grito de un hombre solitario
que en medio de la noche,
con un perfecto látigo,
con un salario oscuro,
con un puñal de oro y un semblante de hierro,
desenfrenadamente grita
yo
y siente el eco cristalino
de una ducha de sangre
que decididamente se alimenta en

nosotros
y en medio de los muelles alejándose
nosotros
y al pie del horizonte de las fábricas
nosotros
y en la flor y en los cuadros y en los túneles
nosotros
y en la alta estructura camino de las órbitas
nosotros
camino de los mármoles
nosotros
camino de las cárceles
nosotros . . .

17

¿Por qué queríais escuchar a un poeta?
Estoy hablando con unos y con otros.
Con aquellos que vinieron a apartarlo de su pueblo,
a separarlo de su sangre y de su tierra,
a inundarle su camino.
Aquellos que lo inscribieron en el ejército.
Los que violaron su barba luminosa y le pusieron un fusil
sobre sus hombros cargados de doncellas y pioneros.
Los que no quieren a Walt Whitman el demócrata,
sino a un tal Whitman atómico y salvaje.
Los que quieren ponerle zapatones
para aplastar la cabeza de los pueblos.
Moler en sangre las sienes de las niñas.
Desintegrar en átomos las fibras del abuelo.
Los que toman la lengua de Walt Whitman
por signo de metralla,
por bandera de fuego.
¡No, Walt Whitman, aquí están los poetas de hoy
levantados para justificarte!
"-¡Poetas venideros, levantaos, porque vosotros debéis justificarme!"
Aquí estamos, Walt Whitman, para justificarte.
Aquí estamos
por ti
pidiendo paz.
La paz que requerías
para empujar el mundo con tu canto.

Aquí estamos
salvando tus colinas de Vermont,
tus selvas de Maine, el zumo y la fragancia de tu tierra,
tus guapos con espuelas, tus mozas con sonrisas,
tus rudos mozalbetes camino del riachuelo.
Salvándolos, Walt Whitman, de los traficantes
que toman tu lenguaje por lenguaje de guerra.
¡No, Walt Whitman, aquí están los poetas de hoy,
los obreros de hoy, los pioneros de hoy, los campesinos
de hoy,
firmes y levantados para justificarte!
¡Oh, Walt Whitman de barba levantada!
Aquí estamos sin barba,
sin brazos, sin oídos,
sin fuerzas en los labios,
mirados de reojo,
rojos y perseguidos,
llenos de pupilas
que a través de las islas se dilatan,
llenos de coraje, de nudos de soberbia
que a través de los pueblos se desatan,
con tu signo y tu idioma de Walt Whitman
aquí estamos
en pie
para justificarte,
¡continuo compañero de Manhattan!

These excerpts from Pedro Mir's "Countersong to Walt Whitman" are reprinted from the new book, *Countersong to Walt Whitman*, translated by Jonathan Cohen (2006, Azul Editions, www.azuleditions.com), by permission of the translator and publisher.

Pedro Mir (1913-2000) is the Dominican Republic's foremost literary figure of the 20th century. Mir also produced considerable work in the fields of history, fiction, and art criticism. In 1947, the subject of mounting suspicions of the Trujillo dictatorship, Mir was forced to go into exile. When he returned fifteen years later, following the death of the dictator, the poet immediately won the hearts of the Dominican people, and his poetry recitals were mass public events attended by enthusiastic crowds of citizens from every walk of life. In 1982 the Dominican Congress conferred upon Mir the title of National Poet, and in January 1993 he received the National Prize for Literature. On the occasion of Mir's death, President Leonel Fernández declared three days of national mourning and said Mir would live on through his works.

Jonathan Cohen, a poet, translator, and independent scholar, has translated the work of several major Latin American poets, including Ernesto Cardenal, Enrique Lihn, Roque Dalton,

Octavio Paz, and Pedro Mir. His translation of Cardenal's *From Nicaragua, With Love: Poems, 1979-1986* (1987) won the Robert Payne Award of the Translation Center at Columbia University. He currently is preparing Cardenal's *Pluriverse: New and Selected Poems*, forthcoming from New Directions in 2008. His recent book, *A Pan-American Life: Selected Poetry and Prose of Muna Lee* (2004), recovers the work of Muna Lee, and presents the first biography of this prominent poet and social activist, who during the first half of the 20th century played a leading role as a poetry translator in the development of the Pan-American literary tradition.

V For Vendetta, Graphic Enough?

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 3-4

You say you wanna a revolution? Well, you know – or readers of a certain age will know – that even beloved old reactionary Walt Disney was a passionate fan of revolutionaries, if they were of the right lily white breed. Exhibit A is the stirring 1950s Disney TV series 'Johnny Tremain,' chronicling a handsome and dashing young minute man's adventures during the early days of the American Revolutionary War. Yet another Disneyfied Revolutionary War TV series, 'Swamp Fox,' celebrated Francis Marion's legendary hit-and-run exploits in South Carolina while the infinitely evil British Colonel Tarleton (a villain reprised with relish in Mel Gibson's The Patriot) stayed hot on his elusive heels. Even the TV theme lyrics, hum along – were, for the grim McCarthyite era, kind of kickass: "Swamp Fox, Swamp Fox, Tail on his hat, Nobody Knows where the Swamp Fox is at. Swamp Fox, Swamp Fox, Hides in the Glen. He runs away to fight again." Sensible guy.

'Hit and run' is what you do if you are sane and up against a vastly superior military force. Maybe the Viet Cong watched Disney reruns? So our autistic American pop culture really isn't ignorant of the concept of justified guerrilla resistance to a tyrannical government or foreign occupier. True, driving out the redcoats did not do much at the time for the status of Blacks, women, native Americans, or poor whites, as Howard Zinn and other glum historians remind us, but nothing's perfect. Again, at the pre-Contra height of Reagan's era an awesomely preposterous film Red Dawn (1985) portrayed a successful invasion of the USA by robotic Soviet airborne troops and sniveling Cuban sidekicks, and it imagined how a rag-tag band of angry teens responded to their oppressive occupation.

In a rip-snorting all-American fantasy fest, scripted by uber-rightwinger John Milius, our juvenile commandos commence putting to shame the comparatively pallid antics of Castro in the Sierra Madres, Tito in mountain fastnesses of Yugoslavia, Ho Chi Minh and General Giap in steaming Vietnam jungles, or Mao anywhere in China. What do the resourceful young Yanks get up to? Why they strike at enemy weak points, hit key vulnerable installations, assassinate enemy leaders, pick off stragglers, rub out informers (and anyone suspected of informing), and even plant a few concealed IEDs here and there. They play dirty simply because they have to. Had Red Dawn bothered to caricature standard TV newscasts audiences would have watched purse-lipped anchors primly proclaiming that outside agitators were inciting trouble among an otherwise contented American people. (V for Vendetta delightfully conjures a mad lapdog Bill O' Reilly clone.) So far as armed resistance goes, it's perfectly okay when Yanks do it. No one else – or not if they are not serving the interests of big US investors. Red Dawn swirled with more unintended incendiary ironies than the average White Hiouse press conference contains these days

But ironies are unusually scarce in the intriguing hit film V for Vendetta, a rancorous 'lefty'

graphic novel made cinematic flesh. A decade into our, what else? – dire future a Blade Runner Britain labors under the bleakest Orwellian conditions after a neofascist 'High Chancellor' (John Hurt, who brings eerie echoes of turnabout from his 1980s movie role as Winston Smith) and his henchmen exploit terrorist attacks of unknown origin so as to seize total power. It's resonant, all right. Everything that happens is merely grist for cynical power-seeekers, and always was, and always will be. The United States, by the way, is embroiled in ferocious civil war, though between whom exactly we don't know. The grim globe is afflicted as always by spreading plagues, poverty and violence. Ordinary decent Brits, puzzled and placid, comply with brutal police state codes for the sake of what is trumpeted to be the common good or the national interest, or some other mind-numbing deceitful abstraction. Step out of line and you either are snuffed straightaway or else wind up a quivering specimen in secret human experimental labs jointly run by the government and its even more vicious corporations who helped to create the foul regime, which is in their pockets, in the first place. Familiar?

Fear not. Into this cruel wasteland boldly strides a swashbuckling Guy Fawkes-masked champion in swirling black cape, a man dedicated to demolishing the Orwellian regime. The subversive saga mixmasters '1984', the Bionic Man series, Terry Gilliam's Brazil, and the treacly melodrama of The Count of Monte Cristo into a smart commercial blend. Guy Fawkes, incidentally, is a fascinatingly ambivalent character in British history – either a religious malcontent or a civic hero who in 1605 lent a hand to the bungled 'gunpowder plot' to blow up the House of Lords, which wasn't much of a democratic institution at the time. (The plotters weren't champions of democracy either.) Poor Fawkes, who wasn't even the mastermind, was nabbed, tortured and hideously executed, a la Braveheart. It's difficult today for an innocent observer to tell whether the annual Guy Fawkes Day celebrations on November 5th are cheering the rescue of the Crown or a damn nice try by Fawkes, who recently was named among the 100 greatest Britons in a BBC poll, alongside such benefactors of mankind as David Bowie and Princess Diana.

V, sporting a bulletproof rictus grin mask, is a biologically enhanced escapee from a punitive government detention center that is half Abu Graib and half Dachau medical atrocity camp. Somehow, the vengeful V has amassed apparently unlimited resources stored in an underground bat cave decked out with a screamingly hip blend of high and low art, a juke box chock full of syrupy 1940s crooner standbys, and a flashy armory capable of derailing the best-laid plans of conceited authorities. The regime cabal comes treacherously replete with an unmistakable slimy Dick Cheney stand-in who really pulls all the strings of the splenetic unstable supreme leader. A lecherous lout of a Bishop is pleased to lend the Church's clammy hand to the maniacal agenda of the authoritarian clique.

Plunked into this grand guignol narrative is a somber high level cop (Stephen Rea, deploying his signature hangdog features and a shabby Columbo demeanor to good effect)) just doing his job pursuing wicked outlaws, as arbitrarily designated by what he suspects are thoroughly unlawful bosses. The diligent cop, oddly, is one of very few characters who exhibit qualms or even smidgen of ethics. His quarry, apart from V, is Evey (Natalie Portman), the daughter of 'disappeared' dissident parents, who nonetheless contrives to remain implausibly naïve, not to

say, obtusely thick about the nature of the regime and its role in making her however fetching an orphan. Eleven out of ten such tragic offspring, one imagines, would more likely be utterly obsessed with tracking down the true culprits.

Evey is a four-star terminal slacker, just trying to scuffle along in as low key a life as possible. A young audience clearly is intended to be enticed by this annoying device of pseudo-humility so as to identify with a very pretty, if disappointingly dimwitted, heroine. One supposes this listless stance is what the wiseass filmmakers view as the default mode of the average citizen: a self-induced state of cluelessness. (One can't help recalling the post-2004 election bitterness of 'blue state" denizens toward 'red states' electing Bush's imbecilic administration – and, in doing so, discounting media propaganda, dirty tricks, and easily hacked electronic voting machines.) If so, then V's infantile adventurism might make an iota of sense, and blowing landmark buildings to colorful smithereen will come off as really cool. Finally, puffy middle-aged Stephen Fry plays a gay TV variety show host who is unwilling to endanger his high life style in order to blurt what he really thinks about the malevolent and petty rulers. Everybody just wants to fit in, sort of like in, you know, Vichy France.

The queasy screen universe depicted in V for Vendetta is one of a people utterly depleted in spirit and courage through a stringently state-engineered atmosphere of fear and loathing. How did society come to this pretty pass? Well, a band of Islamic zealots are held officially responsible for gruesome terrorist acts. The Koran consequently is banned as incendiary reading matter (and in the Britain today it is certainly no fun to be a young Muslim man). The United Kingdom regime wallows, almost smugly, in its permanent state of peril. A perpetual state of emergency awards conniving authorities and their corporate sponsors free reign. Terrorism is the answer to every authoritarian's prayer.

Shades of Halliburton, a very well-connected mega-business backs the Cheneyesque vice-chancellor and, whether by accident or intention, inflicts the first domestic fatalities, a sour circumstance reminiscent of the forgotten anthrax attacks after 9/11 whose source US authorities seem so unwilling to locate or disclose. Muslim are the patsies. Anyone raising so much as a peep about civil liberties is snared by riot-geared thought police, and whisked off into Japanese 'Unit 731'-style biological warfare experiment stations where, in a mishap the cop uncovers, all but one subject dies. (A single doctor – just one – feels guilty about it.) The escaped survivor turns out to have been a prodigious biological success, emerging as the stronger, fleeter, and – must be testosterone enhancement – romantic revolutionary known as V, a dazzling martial arts aficionado who disembowels bewildered police squads in seconds flat. Mercifully, he performs no flying trapeze tricks.

V's ripe first speech is, according to taste, either a dazzling tour de force or a tediously alliterative manifesto delivered just after he rescues little Evey from the lascivious clutches of the secret police. Evey is suitably grateful but also strangely reluctant, given that she's a marked woman anyway, to take up arms with him against malicious authorities. By contrast, the gay Stephen Fry character, and a beautiful pair of lesbian lovers, are, in a militantly anti-gay society provided with a gender preference-based motive for resistance. All that's missing is

pink triangles. Eventually, even the prudently pusillanimous Fry character, the broadcaster, pokes deeply barbed fun publicly at the High Chancellor, and pays dearly for it.

But Evey, alas, herself sorely needs consciousness-raising, an awakening -and V put her through an induced psychotic experience in order to achieve it. She clearly is a stand-in for the masses – a word I shudder at – who likewise need a miracle worker vanguard to show them the truth and the way. With the slightest of mental twists this haunted golden-tongued man V with shiny mask and billowing cape transmutes into the flinty taciturn hombre in dusty cowboy hat and poncho – a Clint Eastwood vigilante wraith smashing the rotten old order to restore justice, and to balance his personal account. This shadowy mirroring of modern Britain and America is, I suppose, the best that commercial film makers can get away with, so more power to the Matrix-generating Wachowskis for their calculated audacity.

The Wachowskis rabidly invest every action scene they concoct with slo-mo whirling stab marks – wispy laser trails hanging in the air so audiences can relish the trajectory of killing blows to each sniveling or sneering creep. That's the tiresome part. The sly message in a mass market film that the world is smothered in corrupt corporate bullshit abetted by faithful state underlings, with Jack Abramof-like middlemen sealing the deals, may be boring too but it is encouraging. As in Samuel Johnson's remark, it is not that the dog danced well, the remarkable thing is that the dog danced at all. V is for Vendetta, to give it credit, does play around with the notion of legitimacy, suggesting how terribly dependent elites really are upon willing compliance of the hoi polloi. Withdrawing compliance, as counseled from Aristophanes through Gandhi and Martin Luther King, is surely one way to undercut or even overthrow lunatic hubristic elites.

Is this any way to run a revolution? Judging by V For Vendetta's box office success, it's the half-assed thought that counts. Audiences 'get it' insofar as the film is a warning of the ugly places our leaders are dragging us into. The final sequence of a jamboree of thousands of Fawkes-attired citizens storming Parliament, Winter palace style, may well be a memorable pop culture visual moment, but the political awakening behind this frilly uprising isn't at all apparent. Ultimately, as the story line demands, the citizenry, cowed into acceptance of their monitored lot, require a catalytic spark from a maverick superhero to smash the tissue of lies which the state, like all states, assiduously wrapped around them. It's revolution, Jim, but not as we know it., graphic novel style.

The film's climactic swarming of the solemn, costumed crowd over heavily armed troops is as dangerously dubious a scene as the Wachowskis ever dreamed up. British troops – witness Bloody Sunday 1972, for one, always have been willing to kill UK citizens in Northern Ireland without hesitation or remorse. Our daring film makers most likely had the 1989 transitions, especially in Romania, in mind. While, say, Romanian troops in 1989 may have decided not to massacre crowds, Chinese soldiers at Tianneman square performed all too obediently. The film makers, going for surreal sensationalism at all costs, fall headlong into a standard narrative cinematic trap that works to extinguish any truly radical notions. Such as the historical inkling that perhaps people are able to organize themselves, and would be better off without any

distractingly charismatic leaders around to show them the way.

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Three Books On Terrorism

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 3-4

Terrorism is a low-cost tactic of coercion and fear that almost anyone anywhere can adopt. It takes only a few highly motivated individuals to shatter the security of millions. It is also a tactic that drives governments to extremes of paranoia and into morally repugnant terrain. So great is the fear of this method of political agitation that it seems to stir almost as much revulsion as genocide, bombardment of civilians, or the use of nuclear weapons – though it has killed far fewer people. In fact, the odds of dying in a terrorist attack on US soil are only about 80,000 to one – much less than the chance of dying in a car accident or getting shot in Washington D.C. Yet it is routine for political leaders and commentators to decry the evils of terrorism while many times more civilians are killed by sophisticated aerial bombs – as was the case during Israel's attack on Lebanon this summer where air raids killed over 900 Lebanese civilians, while Hezbollah rockets killed 43 innocent Israelis. Despite the Bush administration's recent election-time comparisons of the Al Qaeda to Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia, terrorism remains a very different sort of threat – one that Israel's bombing of Lebanon or America's invasion of Iraq have probably made worse. There is no military solution to the tactic of terrorism because it is a political weapon whose proponents tend to become stronger when governments overreact and innocent people get killed. In fact, tricking governments into overreacting or getting tied down in places like Iraq is part of their strategy.

The subject of terrorism tends to arouse emotional diatribes for or against the tactic, but not much in the way of dispassionate analysis. Among the exceptions are new books by Robert Pape, Mia Bloom, and Farhad Khosrokhavar. Pape and Bloom delve into the strategies of terrorists – a profoundly important subject that few American scholars since 911 have had the stomach or sense to address. Most writers – as if it were their duty – treat terrorist violence as senseless and random, when in fact it rarely is. It follows regular patterns which suggest a strategic logic that policy-makers ignore at their own peril, or at least at the peril of citizens less vulnerable than they are. Terrorism did not begin when Al-Qaeda operatives struck America in 2001. Terrorist tactics evolved over many decades in conflicts around the world as a strategy of guerilla warfare, and one that has succeeded as often as it has failed.

Both Pape and Bloom argue that suicide terrorist organizations are basically rational and strategic – that is, they do not kill as an end in itself, but as a means to other ends. They weigh the costs and benefits of different strategies and act accordingly. They adopt the tactic of suicide terrorism because they believe it works, because other tactics have failed, or, as Bloom argues, to "outbid" rival militias in the use of shocking tactics. This form of violence tends to be carefully calibrated to end unpopular foreign occupations. In a chapter entitled "Learning Terrorism Pays", Pape demonstrates that terrorists learn from the successes of others. For example, the Lebanese Hezbullah used suicide tactics to force American and French peace-keeping troops to leave Lebanon in 1983, and later the Israeli army. The Tamil Tigers in Sri

Lanka adopted suicide bombing after observing the Hezbullah's successful use of the tactic. Since 1983 the Tigers carried out more suicide attacks than any other group, including the Hamas. While suicide bombing may sometimes appear irrational or senseless, there are genuine strategic reasons for adopting the tactic. For example, suicide bombers can penetrate tight security cordons without the need for an escape route. They also die before they can be interrogated. Most importantly, the fact that young men and women are willing to embrace certain death in pursuit of the cause demonstrates great resolve and triggers intense emotions of shock and awe among friends and enemies alike. Whatever one might think about its legitimacy as a tactic, suicide terrorism can be a dangerous and effective tool.

Yet one should not overstate the strategic dimensions of suicide terrorism either. While leaders who adopt the tactic may be rational, the same cannot always be said of the young men and women who strap bombs to their chests. The act itself seems prima facie irrational, partly because it is incomprehensible to anyone living in more agreeable circumstances. Perhaps the bombers believe fervently in their cause or overvalue the compensation promised to loved ones. In either of those cases, the costs of certain death seem greater than any conceivable benefit. On the other hand, the bombers may calculate that suicide terrorism is the only significant way to strike back at deadly enemies of their community. Nonetheless, they will not survive to enjoy the potential benefits of their actions. Pape and Bloom fall short in their efforts to explain these apparently irrational acts.

Pape includes interesting personal histories and demographic profiles of suicide bombers. His data suggests that there is no consistent profile. Different people become suicide bombers for different reasons, and they rarely survive to explain why they did it. Pape profiles a woman named Dhanu, a member of Sri Lanka's LTTE who assassinated Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. She was gang-raped by Indian soldiers and her entire family was killed during India's brief peacekeeping mission in Sri Lanka during the 1980s. After that ordeal, she joined the "Black Tigers", the LTTE's special suicide squad. Her story suggests she experienced great personal trauma, desired revenge, and had nothing to lose. On the other hand, Mohammad Atta, the leader of the 911 attacks, had a supportive family, a graduate education, and a bright career. There is no evidence that he experienced personal trauma that might incline him toward revenge. It was an intellectual passion for Al Qaeda's brand of militant pan-Islamism that influenced him to lay down his life. It's possible that, while leaders are motivated by common strategic aims, individuals become suicide bombers for a host of reasons.

Khosrokhavar goes into greater depth on this question of what motivates these people. He does not believe the question can be answered with the usual rationalism of political science and economics. There is an irrational element to the decision to become a suicide bomber. It is a decision influenced primarily, he asserts, by alienation and unswerving belief in a cause. The "new martyrdom" reflects the despair of individuals in modern society seeking to lend meaning and dignity to their lives. The idea of becoming a martyr empowers those who feel they have no control over their lives, who feel oppressed by armies with seemingly unlimited resources. It is a form of "holy rage", a means to meet power with faith through a combination of self-assertion and resignation to death. Suicide bombers are praised as heroes of the faith, willing to make

the ultimate sacrifice to fight injustice. It is the act itself that matters – almost, but not quite, as an end in itself. Khosrokhavar argues that the "specific feature of Islam is that it legitimizes sacred death in the service of the community or *umma* by making it part of the fabric of a war that enjoys religious legitimacy, namely *jihad*." Faith and religious sanction help young fighters overcome their fear of death and justify violence in the name of God. Islam has no monopoly here. Khosrokhavar examines cultures of martyrdom in three religious traditions – Christianity, Sikhism, and Islam – and finds that all encourage a sense of empowerment, defiance, and blind faith which overrides material concerns.

Khosrokhavar's argument helps us to understand the recruitment of suicide bombers as well as the popular support they often enjoy. But the picture he paints is no more complete than that of the other two authors. While it is plausible that young men and women carry out attacks for personal reasons, Khosrokhavar does not account for the particular patterns of these attacks or their role in larger political campaigns. Some bombers may choose to kill as an end in itself, but they still are only a few individuals in a larger organization. For every suicide terrorist attack, there is not only the bomber but many others involved in recruitment, training, fund-raising, political activities, and leadership. For example, the largest practitioner of suicide bombing, the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, employ suicide tactics as only a small part of an organization that integrates carefully targeted suicide attacks with larger 'conventional' guerilla operations and political activities. Suicide bombing clearly is part of a broader politico-military strategy. No doubt, ideas and emotions are integral to recruiting young men and women to die for a cause, but they are not all or even most of the story.

Pape finds that suicide terrorist attacks reveal clear patterns in terms of timing, target-selection, and nationalist goals. Terrorist groups will go on the offensive at key political moments in order to force specific concessions. For example, the Hamas launched suicide terrorist attacks in May 1994 and December 1995 so as to improve Hamas' bargaining position and accelerate negotiations with Israel. Once their immediate objective was attained, Hamas leaders pulled back. As many commentators have noted, suicide bombers may also target democracies because doing so carries less risk and more chance of success than attacking less restrained authoritarian states, and because it seems easier to operate in a free society than one teeming with secret police (though the latter has not stopped them either). But this begs the question, why would they want to?

Terrorists don't target America because "they hate our values" but for more strategic reasons. Democratic states must consider the long-term health of their liberal values and institutions when fighting terrorism. They must be restrained – or indeed abstain – in their use of torture, strategic bombing, and collective punishment. Widespread use of torture or indiscriminate violence corrodes democracy itself, especially if these tactics are used against one's own people instead of civilians abroad. Using coercion to crush a terrorist group threatens the legitimacy of a democratic government – almost by definition – more than it does an autocratic regime with a long history of unrestrained repression. Perhaps this is one reason why there is a widespread insurgency in Iraq under the American occupation, but not under Saddam Hussein – even though he was no more popular among the majority of Iraqis. The US cannot use poison

gas against civilians in rebel-held areas (as Saddam Hussein did against the Kurds in the 1990s), or engage in mass executions (as Saddam did against the Shias when they rose up in 1991). Pictures of naked prisoners standing on boxes and being mauled by dogs caused a major crisis in the US government, while tens of thousands were tortured to death under Saddam, also to little consequence.

All three authors note that suicide bombing is a "weapon of the weak". Though it has been used by states – Japanese Kamikaze pilots, for example – it is militant organizations that adopt the tactic as a means to counteract the superior capabilities of governments with standing armies and high tech weaponry. The Hamas cannot hope to win militarily against a much stronger Israel, but it can force a hurting stalemate that denies Israel victory and makes refusal to negotiate costly and painful. Bloom notes that the dilemma for the Israeli army is that there are no targets to bomb in the Palestinian territories, and thus no opportunity for the world's most sophisticated army to use the world's most sophisticated weapons. The capabilities of the militias are in their members hidden among the population and their resolve to absorb whatever the Israelis throw at them. By firing rockets from crowded apartment buildings in dense neighborhoods, the Hezbullah is daring the Israeli military to kill civilians. If the Israelis do not react, they look helpless; if they do, innocent people get killed and they look like aggressors with no regard for human life. If so, the Israelis cannot win either way, morally speaking. As long as Lebanese blame the Israelis and not the Hezbullah for the destruction, Hezbullah will come out politically stronger. Bloom's answer is a common, if rarely availed, one: The Israelis must win hearts and minds. But that is easier said than done. The only way to win the hearts and minds of insurgents is to do precisely what the authorities usually don't want to do – withdraw permanently from the disputed lands. Bloom also does not fully appreciate the dilemmas that a government faces when threatened by numerous and competing militias. What should leaders do when concessions may be viewed as a sign of weakness and encourage further escalation? How is a leadership to balance the benefits of offering concessions with the costs of looking gullible?

Suicide terrorism is particularly dangerous because its practitioners cannot be deterred and because one's defenses cannot be hermetically sealed. Pape quotes Hamas leaders saying that in retaliation for Israeli attacks that kill civilians and make Palestinians insecure, Hamas will destroy the security of Israelis. He quotes Israeli leaders saying that there is no way to completely prevent suicide attacks. Nothing makes one's life appear more fragile than a sudden explosion in a crowded market. What makes terrorism appear more threatening than the targeting of civilian populations by states in war is that it takes only a small number of ardent individuals to accomplish the operation, and partly because mass media will downplay 'clean' high tech-inflicted deaths (via aerial bomb, smart or otherwise, or artillery) versus more primitive lethal mechanisms. When the ability to launch orchestrated campaigns of violence against innocent populations passes into the hands of shadowy organizations with no fixed address, the security of a settled society is severely undermined. No doubt, organizations like the Hamas, al Qaeda, and the Tamil Tigers are aware of this. Like other militant leaders involved in the killing of innocents – such as Israel's Menachim Begin, Ireland's Gerry Adams, and Algeria's Ahmed Ben Bella – Hamas leaders ironically have gone on to become elected

statesman. That's what happens to insurgents who win. The difference between terrorist groups and organized militaries is not so much their tactics – legitimate states deliberately killed tens of millions of innocent people during the 20th century, terrorists only thousands – but the fact that they employ violent means without the legitimacy conferred by diplomatic recognition.

The gnawing fear is that if everyone with a grievance uses terrorist tactics, there will be security for no one – and without security, there can be no development or civilization, only the law of the jungle. While violent resistance is too often the only real means to resist oppression, stable government is the only means to establish order and security and (if a representative one) to protect the weak from the strong according to established laws. Since the 911 attacks Americans discovered the dark side of armed resistance, but the dark side of military occupation continues for millions elsewhere. What goals and tactics are legitimate, and under what circumstances? Thomas Jefferson raised similar questions during the American Revolution. He went so far as to say that people should rise up against the government every twenty or so years – a notion that America's right-wing militias embrace. When, then, is it right and good to take up arms against the government, and with what means? The social scientists reviewed here do not raise these knotty questions, much less address them.

Pape argues that ordinary people living under foreign occupation by a nation of another religion especially tend to support violent resistance, including suicide terrorism. Nearly every suicide terrorist attack has occurred in conflicts involving a combination of military occupation and religious differences. When devout people believe their way of life is threatened by a foreign army, they accept whatever means promise results, not unlike cynical statesmen. As Franz Fanon observed about the Algerian War for Independence, people support the most extreme tactics when they feel their existence is threatened. Whether right or wrong – and the killing of innocents is always wrong – the situation nonetheless reappears with depressing regularity. In such situations, people may cultivate a culture of martyrdom.

Pape finds that nearly all suicide bombers volunteer, and that their families tend to be proud of their choices. They tend to be educated, politically involved individuals from middle class families. They share none of the characteristics of 'typical' suicidal young people. Indeed, ordinary suicide is least prevalent where suicide terrorism occurs. Cultures of martyrdom do not develop where local communities do not believe that the terrorists' cause is just and their methods justifiable. It matters little what outsiders think about the morality of the tactic. The fact is that those who support these operations will continue to do so as long as the conditions that make for conflict do not change. Saying the terrorists are evil may influence ordinary people in the US and Israel, but holds little sway among the militants' own constituencies in the Palestinian territories. As US and Israeli condemnations of the Hamas escalated in the 1990s, so did the popular support it enjoyed among Palestinians.

When an entire population rises up and supports the militias, violence cannot be stopped through coercive means alone, no matter what a government wants to believe. Khosrokhavar tells the story of the Iranian *Bassidj*, dedicated young Iranians willing to die in defense of the

Iranian Revolution. The organization grew to over 400,000 during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. They died in droves in "human wave attacks" that eventually repulsed the Iraqi army. The *Bassidj* were not conventional foot soldiers with a salary and pension; they were volunteers. If the US invaded Iran and the *Bassidj* grew to anywhere near its former strength, it would dwarf the insurgency in neighboring Iraq. If so many young Iranians were willing to die to defend Iran from Saddam's Iraq, there is little reason they would not do the same against the US. After the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 and the rise of a new generation less enamored of Khomeinism, the *Bassidj* mostly fell into crime and lost their luster. An armed struggle against America, however, might be just what the regime's hardliners require to recapture the sway they have gradually lost since the Revolution. Even people living under corrupt and oppressive regimes tend to support those governments against foreign invaders.

The public and the government in the US are only beginning to understand the insuperable difficulties of transforming the Middle East through military force. American leaders gave a blank check to Israel as it launched a disastrous campaign of air-raids on southern Lebanon this summer that killed over 900 Lebanese civilians but less than 100 Hezbullah militants – and all on the slim pretext of two kidnapped Israeli soldiers. The plain message is that an Israeli or American life is worth a hundred dead Lebanese or Iraqi civilians – just the sort of idea that makes such devalued people support armed resistance. Heavy-handed tactics may kill a few militants here and there, but the suffering it imposes can only make the militias stronger in the long run – especially when it is done by a foreign power that most ordinary people view with distrust, and that has no real interest in repairing the damage done by its bombs and blockades. These policies seem almost too naïve to be true. One looks back at the disastrous outcomes of the US invasion of Iraq and Israel's recent air-raids on Lebanon in much the same way: How could these leaders *not* have known this would happen? Shouldn't these policy-makers with all their classified information, professional experts, and political experience know better than to stake so many lives on such obviously suspect assumptions? Either US leaders are obtusely stupid, or they did not care what the outcome would be. Are policy-makers in Washington telling us the truth about the situation we face? They were not completely honest about what they did and did not know before the invasion, or their reasons for carrying it out.

The US invaded Iraq under the mistaken assumption that US forces would be embraced as liberators – so much so that the US government did not even formulate a plan for the post-war occupation. This inexplicable belief that the US could destroy every vestige of order in such a complex and fractious nation without any plan for its reconstruction was a serious error in thinking and leadership – one that cannot be attributed to bad information or the fog of war. It seems to run so contrary to common sense that it is difficult to believe, yet it is true – and by now well-documented in Thomas Ricks' new book about the invasion. It was the sort of failure of thinking that occurs in closed societies where debate is circumscribed – where important questions are not raised until it is too late. The systematic failure of the American government and the public to correctly perceive the threats they face and the proper means to deal with them suggests that academic writers like Pape, Bloom, and Khosrokhavar have an important illuminating role to play. The standard dismissive criticism of academic writers is that they do not understand the difficult realities of politics and war. But, debacles like Iraq demonstrate

that the political leadership can be even more out of touch.

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Fooled Again: How The Right Stole The 2004 Election & Why They'll Steal The Next One Too (unless We Stop Them), By Mark Crispin Miller

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Fooled Again? Hell, we were more than fooled, we were screwed. It is hard for me to review this book from the dispassionate stance of my day job as a social scientist. Perhaps such "objectivity" is not possible. Rather, I read the book as a vindication for a progressive activist who felt dumfounded on election eve when the Ohio "votes" came in. No, it couldn't be. Ohio had high unemployment, strong labor unions, large minority populations, college students, and large numbers of activists. I also thought that in Florida the Democrats would not let 2000 happen again, but it did, and they let it. Moreover, insofar as some of my own research is on the political use of Internet, I knew that most youth, eg 18-30 year olds, did not get much political info from print journalism, radio or TV of MSM (main stream media). Indeed, after Howard Stern was fined and started his constant diatribes against Dubya, it seemed to me a new voting bloc of millions, the 8 million horny adolescent males of the "Stern gang" was going to be a factor in the election. Even the hip-hop crowd was mobilized. Indeed, almost 60% of youth voted for Kerry.

On the basis of my reading cat entrails and tea leaves, as well as following the Gallup, Rasmussen, CBS and Newsweek polls, and then the exit polls, which are usually extremely accurate, Kerry on election night was ahead overall and seemed certain to win Ohio. I was planning to write a book on how the Internet helped Kerry win. But it was not to be. Soon came the reports of "irregularities" – from the purging of registered minority voters to changing locations of polling places to broken machines to unlikely counts. The only thing all these reports had in common was to depress the Kerry vote. Some cried foul.

The New York Times (NYT) dismissed vote fraud as a conspiracy theory, an obsession of the tin foil hat crowd, you know, the ones who thought 9/11 was pulled off by either CIA or Mossad or thealien abduction folks. Many of my comrades told me Kerry blew it (which is true but he still won the election). But now we know that, like Gore in 2000, Kerry did win, notwithstanding the seeming several million vote lead of Dubya. But, like Gore, Kerry caved in early. Now, Mark Crispin Miller offers a wonderful treatise exposing how the 2004 election was stolen – and not just in Ohio.Miller shows the national election was riddled with massive "irregularities," and provides in extraordinary detail enormous evidence of many kinds of vote fraud used across the US to re-empower Dubya and his ilk.

It wasn't just a matter of fiddling in the states with the most electoral votes. Even in cases where Kerry squeaked by, his vote was depressed, and where Bush was considerably ahead, the Kerry vote was trimmed anyhow. For example, in New Mexico, there were 17,000 or so undervotes, mostly in Spanish speaking areas (favoring Democrats). Bush won by 7,000 votes. Same thing in South Dakota where Native American votes were suppressed or "lost" as a right wing upstart, Thune "defeated" Tom Daschle. It seemed funny that wherever the actual "vote" differed significantly from the exit polls, the voting machines were provided by Diebold, Sequoia or ES&S. Funny too, it was always the Republican that emerged as the "surprise" winner.

Miller argues that unless folks realize how and why the 2000 and 2004 elections were stolen, it will happen again The 2004 election, like the WMDs, the Saddam conspiracy behind 9/11, and Powell's UN "show and tell-and lie," was based on lies. But even worse than mendacity, it was based on violations of electoral law by partisan and often theocratic forces, which a complicit mainstream media ignored. Just as culpable were the spineless castrati Democrats, starting with Gore and Kerry, who did not want to appear "sore losers." So, at the price of almost 3,000 dead troops, over 100,000 Iraqis corpses, a free reign of torture, the end of habeas corpus, unchecked domestic spying, and at least four hundred billion dollars, the poor timid things were afraid of being mocked the very people who perpetrated all these deeds.

In the Beginning…

The story begins in 2000, when the Busheviks stole Florida through 'normal' dirty tricks such as false voting information, excluding/suppressing minority votes, and "errors" in counting. (All these tactics, and more, reappear in 2004, especially in highly white Florida counties.) Recently, David Moore (2006) shows how when Fox News called the "election for Bush", even though he was not ahead, the result was preordained. Between voting machine "irregularities," and the tendentious call that W was ahead, our fate was sealed. As Robert F Kennedy Jr. put it:

The voting-machine companies bear heavy blame for the 2000 presidential-election disaster. Fox News' fateful decision to call Florida for Bush – followed minutes later by CBS and NBC – came after electronic machines in Volusia County erroneously subtracted more than 16,000 votes from Al Gore's total. Later, after an internal investigation, CBS described the mistake as "critical" in the network's decision…Gore conceded the election – then reversed his decision after a campaign staffer investigated and discovered that Gore was actually ahead in Volusia by 13,000 votes.

Further, during the recount, mobs of "ordinary voters", actually Republican Party operatives – intimidated counters. They slowed the recounts until the Supremes intervened just in time. W's lead shrank to 537 votes when the recount was halted. W "won" by a single vote in his dad's Supreme Court. The upshot is that Governor Jeb Bush and secretary of the state Katherine Harris controlled the machinery of the election while also having an immensely obvious vested interest in the outcome. There are a number of strategic places where carefully honed, well financed, albeit local operations can subvert the democratic process – even the minimal

“democracy” that exists in our country. Thus in 2004, Kerry was ahead of W in the polls before the election, way ahead among early voters, and on Election Day, he nonetheless “lost.”

While there was no nationally coordinated electoral theft directed from an identifiable headquarters, the 2000 election showed that rigging could be performed anyway. In 2002 Diebold added a secret patch to its voting machines.[2] A number of elections that year were highly questionable, Miller points out, with “upsets in Colorado, Minnesota and Georgia, all states using Diebold or ES&S machines, all states with a strong Christian right and/or a confederate legacy. The results were that Allard “beat” Strickland, Coleman “beat” Mondale, and Saxby “beat” McClelland. The right wing media, that is most of MSM, insist there was no evidence of fraud. And three right wingers enter the Senate.

The Bushies were emboldened. Who wouldn’t be? What made massive vote fraud so hard to detect was that there was no easily understood, one-size-fits-all form of cheating. There were many means, ranging from disinformation (providing false dates/addresses of polling places especially to poorer voters, purging of voters, arbitrary disqualification of voters) to a paucity of voting machines in poor areas, to hacking computerized machines. Except for political junkies, how many people were aware of the radical gerrymandering in Texas, thanks to Tom Delay, or the imposition of new forms of “poll taxes” in Georgia?

Ohio 2004- Deja Florida All Over Again

The most blatant abuses of 2004 occurred in Ohio, where secretary of State Ken Blackwell, played the Katherine Harris role. The theft took many forms. One was voting machines provided by Diebold, whose president Wally O’Dell, promised that “Bush would win.” Electronic voting machines, mostly without “paper trails,” were produced overwhelmingly by Diebold, Sequoia, Triad and ES&S – companies headed by staunch Republicans.[3] A number of studies as to how to hack voting machines, and even the confession of a former programmer called “Diebold Throat,” were ignored by media. The stories were widely carried on the blogosphere, indeed my own blog reprinted a number of them. Huffington.com had an entry titled, “The Staggeringly Impossible Results of Ohio’s ’05 Election. Indeed, this journal, Logos, was among the earliest publications to publish a major piece questioning the literally ‘electrifying’ result.[4] For political junkies, Brad Blog and Black Box Voting were the most important sources of investigation and information about the fraud.[5] Mass media, forget it.

In the Republican precincts, there were a surplus of machines, polling places were easy to get to and easy to find. In poorer areas (read Black and/or non-Cuban Spanish speaking nieghborhoods) where Kerry support was strongest, there were numerous obstacles: polling places were relocated and/or obscured, voters purged, disqualified, provisional voting was blocked, fewer voting machines, machines broke down, and many voters were challenged without basis. In many cases, tallies were done in secret. All in all, citizens were disenfranchised while reporters were barred from polling places. And often whatever recounts occurred were performed by the makers of the machines. Finally, it seems Blackwell diverted money from the HAVA (Help America Vote Act) to support this treachery. Much of this was

documented in the little publicized Conyers report, books by*Wasserman and Fitrakis* (2005), Freeman and Bleifuss (200), and two Mother Jones articles by Robert Kennedy Jr. (See below, p. xx).

Another interesting finding Miller reports is that overseas voters tend to be better educated, more cosmopolitan than the population as whole. Such voters, except for military officers, are overwhelmingly liberal. And indeed, massive numbers of absentee ballots of overseas voters, mostly destined for Kerry, were often not sent, often not received in time to cast the vote, and if received, often not counted. Miller estimated that this may have amounted to millions of "missing" Kerry votes. Oh, and it was the military's officer class who handled much of this vote.

Guns, Gays and Abortions

Miller, like this author, is from Chicago where graveyards give up their dead on election day and the zombies vote early and vote often. But the widespread extent of fraud in 2004 required a small army – and many of the foot soldiers of the Christian Right volunteered, as they saw it, to redeem America from sin and the evil, to stop the "baby killers," Sodomites and pornographers. But Christian soldiers are not the majority and could not change a "fair" election. Contrary to media reports, the 2004 election was not determined by so-called "values" questions. Despite the "commonsense understanding that new waves of evangelical Christians made the difference, "there is no evidence that the Christian right [voters] extended Bush's reign." Their numbers did not push Bush over top. What they did have were multitudes of people, often election officials, in strategic positions where they could change outcomes. It was these people that made the difference. Miller shows that there was no new "Great Awakening." The main change that gave Bush any more support, if only incremental was the increase in married women, supporting him. His support moved from 50% in 2000, to 55% in 2004. This was based largely on the bizarre perception that he was defending the US against terrorism – "if we didn't fight them in Baghdad", we would have to fight them in Peoria.

The notion that the "values" issues determined the outcome may be the most telling evidence of the success of Rove propaganda machine. If the masses of "good conservative Christian folks," and almost as good "conservative Jewish folks, supported Bush, then there was no disenfranchisement, no fraud in the counts.[6] Yet even many liberals and the progressive left readily swallowed the family values stuff. Indeed progressive religious leaders like Rev. Jim Wallis and Rabbi Michael Lerner, neither trained in survey research and/or electoral polling, believed it was the "values vote" and then aimed at mobilizing religious progressives rather than ballot integrity.

Miller demonstrates that the "election" was stolen, typically by electoral officials, many of whom are evangelical Christians following a "higher law." Miller argues that these paranoid zealots were determined to launch a pre-emptive strike to "fight evil." They had to steal the election before Democrats stole it first – as talking head media puppets like Sean Hannity, Pegy Noonan, Matalin, Bill Bennet, Rush Limbaugh etc warned about imputed Democratic treachery in 2002 and 2004.[7] When the Conyers report on irregularities was "debated" in the House,

Republican members routinely lamented the “sad day” it was when anyone suggested that a victory by “good” Christians was flawed.

The Busheviks insured that Dubya would lead their crusade. Never underplay the fact that these true believers, while not more than 20-25% of the population, sincerely believe that their life styles are the only acceptable ones, and that political opponents embody all perfidy. Miller notes that such voters, and indeed Bush, do not really desire political debate, especially with one’s enemies. How do you compromise with sheer evil? They abhor nuance and facts. So round up a the posse, load the guns, and zap the enemy. This “paranoid style” is, of course, long rooted in American history.[8]

While most of the Christo-Fascist base comes from the lower middle and working classes, the political leadership are well-heeled fanatics from Rove to Reed to DeLay to Ashcroft to Hatch.[9] They detest diversity, loath personal rights, abhor equality for women, and hate gays (except for closeted republicans who prey on young boys). They disdain subtlety, complexity and independent thought, especially any questioning of the literal Bible. Given this backwoods invasion into the Republican Party, Dubya lost support among some traditional Republicans, those for whom conservatism meant isolationism, keeping noses out of bedrooms, and balanced budgets.[10] But the current alliance of preacher and plutocrats may be splintering too.

Thousands of devoted Christian soldiers as election workers and poll watchers spread throughout the nation. Their passion was not based on getting jobs or stuffing pockets, but smiting Satan (as embodied in you and me) This “theocracy on the hill,” a fascism of salvation, much like classical Fascist anti-modernism, stands rigidly against the Enlightenment project of Science and Reason enabling freedom, democracy and self-fulfillment. Slightly more than half the US does not believe in evolution and would embrace “Intelligent Design”, a bizarre theology masked as science. Global warming is no problem, especially for those who believe the “end of days” are upon us and all the “good Christians” will ascend to heaven. It is not clear if they will be butt-naked or, as websites suggest, dressed for a celestial cocktail party.[11]

Moreover, the “enemy” is not the Jews, hell, Jews are “friends and allies” nowadays They will rebuild the temple and are needed to usher in the coveted Apocalypse. The enemy is the “secular humanist” conspiracy dedicated to crushing religion, if not screwing the daughters of the virtuous – though its seems from police rap sheets that many of the virtuous attend to that themselves. For the Christo-fascist, the enemy is a vile force corrupting the body politic. It is worth noting that this depravity reflects their own internal conflicts, externalized and projected to the evil “Other.” This gives the pursuit of the irrational a kick that no external reward can possibly match.

Thomas Frank in What’s Wrong with Kansas showed how the Republican Party played class politics not by assailing the rich but by attacking Eastern liberals. Those arrogant elites looked down their noses at “just plain hard working, church going, god fearing folks.” Yet even when conservative Republicans got into offices from the presidency to local school boards, the Republicans did little to forward the evangelical agenda. They launched an illegal war and

lined their pockets instead.[12] And by the way, Miller shows that not all vote fraud stemmed from Christian zeal, there was plenty of old fashioned American racism too.

But far worse than the Republican "true believers" controlling electoral machinery is the mainstream media. They refused to run stories of anti-Bush demonstrations. They explained away blatant electoral irregularities. Before the election, Greg Palast estimated that Kerry would face a million vote deficit, one factor being provisional ballots given to minorities and then discarded. Much of the management of corporatized mass media, while not sharing the life style values or authoritarian ideologies of the evangelicals, very much enjoy their company profits, personal bonuses and tax cuts. Nor are they inconvenienced by a war where only the sons and daughters of poor folks die.[13]

TheNYT stands as the premier "liberal" newspaper, boasting editorialists Paul Krugman, Maureen Down, Frank Rich, and Bob Herbert. But "liberal" columnists belie its economic conservatism and unswerving support for the administration. Remember Judy Miller's "Saddam's germ of the week" stories? But one of the decisive NYT non-stories was the wireless radio receiver hunched on Dubya's back during the first debate. Many noted that his answers in the debate were a bit "strange." Computer enhancement showed a bulge that matched a radio receiver. The Bushies dismissively said it was the cut of his expensive tailored suit. The story was all over the blogosphere but the NYT editor decided there was not enough "evidence." When Dubya faces a truly questioning press, he is easily flustered and falls apart. The NYT spared us this sight. An equally important omission was the NYT agreeing to postpone for a year the story of NSA domestic spying. Had NYT run these stories, many people would have seen that the emperor had no brains or scruples. [14]

The Silence of the Liberal Lambs

Perhaps the most important story of Miller's book is the non-story. Almost none of the main stream presses reviewed his book. But even worse, few folks on the left have shown concern. However flawed bourgeois democracy may be, there are differences between the parties and individuals. Yes, Gore would have been far better than Bush. But the issue here is that Enlightenment doctrines of "popular sovereignty" have been discarded. If voting does not impact "elections" what is the basis for the legitimacy? Voting becomes a simulation while the Republicans celebrate the death of the real democracy. After all, as Busheviks have said, they make their own reality (or is it hyperreality) and one of these new realities is electoral victory that has no relation to physical votes cast. Karl Rove meet Jean Baudrillard.

Since publication of Miller's book, there has been more coverage of the electoral fraud, especially in Ohio, especially the impossibility of the results, the Republican ownership/management of voting machines, voter purges and, in some cases, counting the vote. "Deep Diebold", a programmer from within, told how he was asked to program the "results". Recently, Princeton University computer scientists Ariel J. Feldman, J. Alex Halderman, and Edward W. Felten did a thorough testing of voting machines. They showed how easily the machines can be opened with a hotel minibar key, hacked, implanted with a

code to flip votes and leave no evidence. Their paper is available on line, as is the video demonstration, but let me quote their abstract:[15]

This paper presents a fully independent security study of a Diebold AccuVote-TS voting machine, including its hardware and software. We obtained the machine from a private party. Analysis of the machine, in light of real election procedures, shows that it is vulnerable to extremely serious attacks. For example, an attacker who gets physical access to a machine or its removable memory card for as little as one minute could install malicious code; malicious code on a machine could steal votes undetectably, modifying all records, logs, and counters to be consistent with the fraudulent vote count it creates. An attacker could also create malicious code that spreads automatically and silently from machine to machine during normal election activities – a voting-machine virus. We have constructed working demonstrations of these attacks in our lab. Mitigating these threats will require changes to the voting machine's hardware and software and the adoption of more rigorous election procedures.

In 2004 Clinton Curtis, a computer programmer, testified before the U.S. House Judiciary committee, that on October of 2000, at the request of Rep. Tom Feeney (R-FL), he developed a program to rig computerize voting machines, and in turn elections, in ways that were not detectable. (To see his actual live testimony, at the hearing seehttp://alternet.org/blogs/video/40755.) He further testified that in his opinion, the Ohio election was hacked. In his second article, Kennedy amassed a voluminous amount of evidence showing how easily the voting machines were hacked to flip votes. Wherever machines were used, especially Diebolds, the number of Bush votes was "unexpectedly" higher.[16] He notes:

studies have demonstrated that hackers can easily rig the technology to fix an election – and across the country this year, faulty equipment and lax security have repeatedly undermined election primaries. In Tarrant County, Texas, electronic machines counted some ballots as many as six times, recording 100,000 more votes than were actually cast. In San Diego, poll workers took machines home for unsupervised "sleepovers" before the vote, leaving the equipment vulnerable to tampering. And in Ohio…dirty tricks may have cost John Kerry the presidency – a government report uncovered large and unexplained discrepancies in vote totals recorded by machines in Cuyahoga County.

As Miller himself noted, while the Republican conservatives were delighted with the votes for W and the "surprises" in Diebold based senatorial races there was barely a ripple of notice in the main streams of the liberal community. Perhaps the biggest story was the lack of a story and nary a bit of collective outrage. Let us look a bit closer at the various other reports. Perhaps the Ron Baiman and Kathy Dopp analyis of the voting patterns should be noted.[17] They concluded:

Ohio's exit poll discrepancy pattern is consistent with a hypothesis of outcome-altering vote miscounts primarily favoring Bush. In other words, Ohio's exit poll discrepancies are consistent with the hypothesis that Kerry would have won Ohio's electoral votes if Ohio's official vote counts had accurately reflected voter intent. The patterns of Ohio's exit poll discrepancies are

similar to the patterns in the national exit poll sample shown in the January 19, 2005 Edison/Mitofsky (E/M) report and discussed in earlier USCV reports. Ohio's exit poll discrepancies vary with official precinct vote share in ways that cannot be fully explained by any "reluctant Bush responder" or exit poll error hypothesis offered to date.

One of the best investigative reporters, Greg Palast, showed huge numbers of African America votes in Ohio, were thrown out, cast into dumpsters.[18]

This is a fact: On November 2, 2004, in the State of Ohio, 239,127 votes for President of the United States were dumped, rejected, blocked, lost and left to rot uncounted. And not just anyone's vote. Dive into the electoral dumpster and these "spoiled" votes have a very dark color indeed… How many lost their chance to vote by scrubbing, purging and blocking? That's anyone's guess, but one million would not be an unfair estimate — and that's not included in the 3.6 million tally of ballots uncounted.[19]

The most widely read articles were RFK's Rolling Stone pieces.[20] His articles covered much the same ground as Miller:

But despite the media blackout, indications continued to emerge that something deeply troubling had taken place in 2004. Nearly half of the 6 million American voters living abroad never received their ballots – or received them too late to vote – after the Pentagon unaccountably shut down a state-of-the-art Web site used to file overseas registrations. A consulting firm called Sproul & Associates, which was hired by the Republican National Committee to register voters in six battleground states, was discovered shredding Democratic registrations. In New Mexico, which was decided by 5,988 votes, (8) malfunctioning machines mysteriously failed to properly register a presidential vote on more than 20,000 ballots.(9) Nationwide, according to the federal commission charged with implementing election reforms, as many as 1 million ballots were spoiled by faulty voting equipment – roughly one for every 100 cast.

The evidence of voter theft and fraud is too massive to ignore.

What Has To Be Done

While it has taken a while for Miller's work to have any impact, now others have joined in. Some legislators are convinced that something was rotten in the State of Ohio, as well as Texas, Georgia, South Dakota etc, so now we can see three different tracks. I would call the first the rise of 'the credibles,' by that, I mean well-known advocates. Robert Kennedy Jr, has been especially forceful. Lou Dobbs, never considered a liberal, has said that it was inconceivable not to have some kind of voting standards. Further, we have seen the growth of a cottage industry in skeptical analyses of the 2004, election. Consider onlyFreeman and Bleifuss (2006) reviewing much of the material Miller reported, but with academic expertise in polling, they asked:

That a journalistic examination of the exit-poll discrepancy is deemed 'not fit to print" by both

the corporate and the independent media indicates how far our standards have devolved. It seems undeniable to us that the very same set of facts applied to a foreign election anywhere in the world would have garnered front-page coverage in every American newspaper and would have been the lead story on every American news program. If election fraud in Ukraine or Haiti is news, why isn't election fraud in the United States?

I call the second moment, "politicos awakening." For example, Republican governor of Maryland, Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. indicated his skepticism over the electronic system. In an 11th hour effort: "Senator Barbara Boxer and Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) (D-CA, then joined by Senators John Kerry (D-MS) Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) introduced emergency legislation to amend the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) this afternoon to offer funding to states and counties who make 'contingency paper ballots' available to voters to be used at the voter's option instead of electronic voting systems".[21]

As Miller notes, the politicians are not going to do anything, it's up to the American people. And in recent polls, most people feel the election may not have been "honest." Almost ¾ do not trust electronic voting. But what is most important is that we are witnessing the birth of a widespread movement for ballot integrity (http://www.ballot-integrity.org). There are now hundreds, if not thousands, of such groups. And most often, they are bi-partisan. National groups like Voter Action and Common Cause work to secure paper trails. Suits involving to ballots paper-based voting systems have been filed in Pennsylvania, Arizona, Colorado and California.

The 2000 and 2004 elections were fundamentally flawed. There are a number of solutions to massive voter frauds. Above all, federal elections should be federalized, that is, run by a federal election bureau in which non-partisan civil service employees administer the election process. Miller advocates elimination computerized voting machines. If they are used, they must be tamper proof, leave paper trails and source codes must be available to election officials to insure against hacking, patches etc. Even the conservative magazine Forbes criticized the ease in which voting machines can be hacked, and called for paper ballots.

Greg Palast has warned us about spoiled ballots, rejection of provisional votes, ignoring absentee votes and the purging of registered voters. We do need to worry about the integrity of 2006 or 2008 elections since there been no major reform effort. Voter Action has initiated law suits against Diebold, Sequoia and ES&S. There have been suits filed over voting systems in Pennsylvania, Arizona, Colorado and California. And there are serious questions about the current voting in Florida, Montana, Missouri and Indiana. Until there are federally managed elections, states need to insure that voter registration, voting and counting are conducted in a non partisan way – not under the control of elected officials. Elections should be held on weekends, over two days, Saturday and Sundays. That would make it easier for people to get to polling places. And since that would enable lower income folks to get to the polls, it would also make the vote more democratic.

As long as running for office requires campaign contributions, mostly to support television

advertising, the pool for candidates will be narrow, policies and agendas will favor the rich, as do the RNC and DLC which now controls the DNC. Like in many other democracies, a public license to use the publicly owned airwaves should require the licensee to grant equal airtime to political candidates. Not only would this make elections more fair, but would enable a broader range of folks to seek office, and once elected, to devote time to legislation that to garnering campaign contributions.

Miller weaves together a highly nuanced tapestry of how the theft was done. For anyone concerned with the future of democracy, even the highly truncated version of bourgeois democracy that provides the best candidates money can buy, Miller's book is a must read. It enabled the wealth of information and analyses formerly limited to the blogosphere to move to a wider audience. Perhaps there is no more fitting way to close this review than with Millers own words. Responding to a smear in Salon, he wrote:

> If, as you say, you want to see the system fixed, you must admit that it needs fixing *now* — a great step forward that has just been taken by Bob Herbert of*The New York Times* as well as Robert Kennedy and other reputable people. It is past time to take that step, for there is every indication — as Salon should now be pointing out — that the Republicans are readier than ever to subvert the process once more on this next Election Day.
>
> While they gear up to strike again, the Democrats and media keep trying to "solve" the problem of election fraud by claiming endlessly, and groundlessly, that there's no problem, or by charging that the problem somehow lies with all those trouble-makers who insist on trying to talk about it, or that the problem is not partisan malfeasance but "incompetence." Salon must finally break away from that impossible consensus, which means no longer seconding the Democrats as they keep struggling to avoid the issue, but calling on them to behave, at last, like democrats — and, for that matter, like republicans — which is to say, at last, like good Americans.

Epilogue

Now that the 2006 election is over, and Virginia (Webb) and Montana (Tester) squeaked to the Democrats by the narrowest margins, does that mean that we had an honest election thanks to folks like Miller and the many others concerned with hacked voting machines, voter suppression etc. No, far from it. The fraud not only continued, but the fact that the Democrats won despite the fraud means that there will be less public clamor for more rigorous election standards from purging voter rolls to paper trails. Rather, there was a much greater outpouring of support for Democrats than was expected-so great that even with the various forms of suppression, fraud etc, they won in spite of all the efforts by the Republicans. After a careful analysis of the highly accurate exit polls, the Election Defense Alliance concluded:

Unfortunately the evidence forces us to a very different and disturbing conclusion: there was gross vote count manipulation and it had a great impact on the results of E2006, significantly

decreasing the magnitude of what would have been, accurately tabulated, a landslide of epic proportions. Because virtually all of this manipulation appears to have been computer-based, and therefore invisible to the legions of at-the-poll observers, the public was informed of "isolated incidents and glitches" but remains unaware of the far greater story: The electoral machinery and vote counting systems of the United States did not honestly and accurately translate the public will and certainly can not be counted on to do so in the future.

Where do we go from here? The first stage of solving a problem in recognizing it. As they say, the price of democracy, even its bourgeois versions, is constant vigilance.

Notes

[2] Diebold Added Secret Patch to Georgia E-Voting Systems in 2002, Whistleblowers Say http://www.atlantaprogressivenews.com/news/0091.html

[3] In face of mounting pressures, the president of Diebold since resigned. His successor, Thomas Swidarski, promised new levels of honesty-especially since that might mean millions of dollars of profits.

[4] See Kurt Jacobsen, "Tin Foil Hats, The MSM and Election Mischief." *Logos: A Journal of Modern Society & Culture* Winter 2005.

[5] Black Box Voting publicized the study of Finnish computer scientist Harri Hursti, who demonstrated the the "back door" to Diebold touch-screen systems in Emery County, Utah

[6] Miller notes that many of the voter purges where done by Sproul & Associates, headed by an evangelical Christian, a graduate of a Bible college.

[7] While most of the Republican Party is not anti-Semitic – indeed the party head is not only Jewish but gay – nevertheless, there are fierce anti-Semitic elements.

[8] Hofstadter (1964) showed how that mentality fueled McCarthyism and the cold war, while Krugman (http://select.nytimes.com/2006/10/09/opinion/09krugman.html), has seen that it describes the current Republican party, or at least many of its evangelicals and its leadership.

[9] DeLay was forced to resign in face of his scandals, especially tied to Jack Abramoff, while Reed, also so tainted, lost his bid for Lt. Governor.

[10] John Dean (2006) has argued that the Republican Party has been captured by authoritarians.

[11] It has been suggested that the ascent to heaven is a compensatory reaction to the downward mobility. This was the theme of Franks' analysis.

[12] Before DeLay was indicted, one of his aides was reported to have asked how that would play with his constituency. He said," fuck them, those fools believe anything Christian Radio

tells them to believe."

[13] Actually some of the MSM is not doing so well, for example, the music stations are losing listeners to the Ipod crowd, and the brain dead audiences for O'Reilly, Limbaugh etc are aging. More folks are going to the Internet

[14] In fairness, it should be noted that recently, fall of 2006, the NYT has started to call attention to the questions of honest elections that is had previously belittled.

[15]http://itpolicy.princeton.edu/voting/

[16] Kennedy, Robert, http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/11717105/robert_f_kennedy_jr__wil

[17] Baiman, Ron and Kathy Dopphttp://electionarchive.org/ucvAnalysis/OH/Ohio-Exit-Polls-2004.pdf

[18] Palast, Greg, seehttp://www.buzzflash.com/contributors/06/06/con06219.html

[19] Palast, Greg, seehttp://www.buzzflash.com/contributors/06/06/con06219.html

[20] Kennedy, Robert,http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/10432334/was_the_2004_election_stolen

[21] From Brad Blog, Sept 27th, 2006, See also NYThttp://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/26/washington/26cnd-ballots.html?_r=2&hp&ex=115932&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

A Man Without A Country, By Kurt Vonnegut

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 3-4

When Kurt Vonnegut finally finished *Timequake* one decade ago, the exasperated writer claimed that he would never write another book. Technically, he still hasn't. In 1999's *Bagombo Snuff Box,* Vonnegut merely collected several short stories he'd previously written and in 2001's *God Bless You, Dr. Kevorkian,* he simply published a few short pieces he'd performed on a New York City public radio station. Like its two most recent predecessors, *A Man Without A Country* is a collection of largely previously-published work, the vast majority of which appeared in the pages of the alternative newsmagazine *In These Times* between 2003 and 2005.

Vonnegut, currently a chain-smoking octogenarian, secured a place for himself in the canon of postmodern American literature by fearlessly tackling such subjects as aging, death, war, mental illness, existentialism, and humanism. From his concern with the dehumanizing mechanization of American society in *Player Piano* to his examination of war and mass destruction in *Slaughterhouse-Five,* Kurt Vonnegut has never failed to share his opinions on sensitive and important topics. With unflinching honesty, Vonnegut has swept away the fanciful illusions ("foma," to the adherents of the author's fictional Bokononist faith in *Cat's Cradle*) under whose umbrage we hide from the world's uncomfortable realities in an effort to show us the necessity of his own radically sane humanism. Not unlike Eliot Rosewater in *God Bless You Mr. Rosewater,* Vonnegut's voice has traditionally been a gentle one as he has guided us through worlds devoid of free will, full of violence, and populated by lunatics only to reveal to us, in the end, that these alien places are, in fact, just outside our living room windows.

Although his fictional output has always taken the spotlight, Vonnegut's essays have regularly appeared in the pages of magazines throughout his career. Characterized by the same bold thematic exploration as his novels and short stories, Vonnegut's non-fiction (largely collected in *Wampeters, Foma, and Granfalloons)* has always sought to examine the most pressing of contemporary issues from the perspective of a liberal freethinker. Not surprisingly, Vonnegut's tone throughout *A Man Without A Country* is consistent with that of the left-leaning publication in which many of the sketches originally appeared. Although he touches upon such diverse subjects as American history, science, the craft of fiction, and the paramount importance of creative work in maintaining what little happiness there is in the world, the topic around which *A Man Without A Country* seems to revolve is contemporary politics. Unfortunately, whereas Vonnegut's insights about humor, humanism, aging, and art are touchingly tender, his political ideas tend to fall flat and sound immature. Indeed, while Vonnegut devotes many pages to criticizing George W. Bush as President, he adds next to nothing to our collective perception of the current political milieu in the United States.

Vonnegut pulls the reader along as he tramps down all the well-trod liberal critiques of the contemporary American political stage: Fox News is a punch line, "the three most powerful men on the planet [are] named Bush, Dick, and Colon," Americans are addicted to oil, and the war in Iraq is not a just war (40). Offering nothing beyond the same jokes one might find in the monologues preceding late-night talk shows, Vonnegut's jokes almost elicit the same forced canned laughter used to disguise a studio audience's lackluster response to a gag which bombed during taping.

Of course, given the frequency of President Bush's political *faux pas*-his recent use of the term "Islamic fascist" in place of "militant Islamic fundamentalist" when describing the suspects in August's London airport scare, for instance, being only the latest in a long string of poorly-orchestrated public maneuvers-views such as Vonnegut's are anything but unjustified. This, however, is hardly the point. Kurt Vonnegut, for better or for worse, has established himself as one of America's most strikingly original novelists, one whose bravely rational voice sounds both zany and utterly fresh in today's loony world. As a result, Vonnegut's readers expect more from the author of *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Cat's Cradle* than the simple repetition of criticisms already made countless times before by commentators considerably less insightful than he. Had his language not been so similar to that of his critical predecessors and had his comments on George W. Bush been as thoughtfully-delivered as those he shares regarding Karl Marx's oft-quoted "religion is the opiate of the masses" as a casual truism rather than a strict dictum, for instance, there would be reason to praise Vonnegut's political message (12).

On the other hand, I suppose, one might effectively make a case for Vonnegut's use of potshots and Borscht-Belt zingers as evidence of George Bush's utter failure as a leader, a figurehead, and a spokesperson. The argument, I imagine, would be that even Kurt Vonnegut-a man never at a loss for words-cannot dignify the man with a more thoughtful critique. I am not, however, a Vonnegut apologist and cannot help but feel disappointed by the author's simple addition of his voice to an already dense chorus. For me, *A Man Without A Country* would be stronger if Vonnegut stuck to his otherwise successful mélange of endearingly sardonic one-liners, fascinating and fresh perspectives on historical events, and humorously sensitive autobiographical sketches without the shooting-fish-in-a-barrel Bush-bashing. It strikes me that, when one writes in a preaching-to-the-choir tone, he or she fails to communicate with those people most in need of proselytizing. Having already heard that George Bush, Jr. is a recovering alcoholic whose famous lineage enabled him to party his way through an Ivy League school and into government from innumerable sources, we do not need Kurt Vonnegut to tell us the same thing. We need Kurt Vonnegut to tell us the things that only Kurt Vonnegut can express.

Fortunately, *A Man Without A Country* is not limited to the author's trite-though impassioned-political commentary. The collection opens with Vonnegut's earliest memories of joke-telling. As the youngest child, he tells us, humor enabled him "to break into an adult conversation" (2). Humor, Vonnegut goes on to say, helped ease the heavy hearts suffering through the Great Depression just as it helped him and his fellow prisoners of war survive the firebombing of Dresden. Identifying laughter as the cathartic release humans need to overcome tragedy and

fear, Vonnegut differentiates between the safe, “superficial sort of laughter” Bob Hope induced and the deep belly-laughs inspired by Laurel and Hardy (4). Whereas the former made a living “never mentioning anything troubling,” the latter duo embodied terrible tragedy: they were “too sweet to survive in this world…[t]hey could so easily be killed” (4). Ultimately, it is the union of genuine laughter and terrible tragedy that interests Vonnegut most in *A Man Without A Country* and yields his most insightful writing.

In fact, by the time Vonnegut explicitly informs us that, for him, “humor doesn’t work anymore” as “a way of holding off how awful life can be,” we have already begun to sense that Vonnegut’s real message-what was behind the anti-Bush ranting, too-was simply to notice happiness on those rare occasions it crept through all the pollution, hatred, ignorance, and terror slowly killing our planet (128).

Once we recognize that Vonnegut’s bitterness is less the ranting of a cantankerous old man than the pleading of a kindly grandfather for his descendents to reconcile their feuds and build friendships before he takes his leave of them, we’re able to enjoy *A Man Without A Country*; the didactic, occasionally self-important tone retreats, belying Vonnegut’s empathy, compassion and concern. Kurt Vonnegut fears that he can no longer be funny because the world is just too horrible a place for humans to live. He laments the loss of his close friends who have passed away. He worries about humans destroying a life-supporting planet through war and the use of fossil fuels. He’s saddened by greedy psychopaths assuming more and more positions of power. He’s upset that creative and imaginative activity has been replaced by mass entertainment. In other words, Kurt Vonnegut feels bad for us; he simply wants us to live in and for a better world.

Yet, despite the brooding cynicism, acerbic criticism, and sense of entropy Vonnegut’s book exudes, the author still manages to make his readers smile. He may be preaching to the converted, but he does so to make those people he agrees with feel less alone in their convictions. Taking cues from humanist friends and family members, socialist leaders, and medical idealists, Vonnegut tries to show us how life *ought* to be lived to those of us likely to be living long after the author ceases to do so. In a series of miniature portraits appearing intermittently throughout the text, Vonnegut presents the many “saints” in whose footsteps the author wishes more people would follow. The first saint Vonnegut places before us, a Harvard-educated socialist named Powers Hapgood, gave up his inherited fortune to better the lives of the working poor. When a judge presiding over a minor picketing case in which Hapgood played a role asked the man why, given the advantages he’d had in life, he chose to live in poverty and among uneducated laborers, Hapgood responded: “Why, because of the Sermon on the Mount, sir” (14). Heeding Christ’s advice, for Vonnegut, amounts to sainthood and makes for a better world.

Elsewhere, Vonnegut describes the plight of his hero, a Hungarian obstetrician named Ignaz Semmelwies. Semmelweis, Vonnegut tells us, single-handedly changed the way doctors regarded personal hygiene when delivering babies. Despite rousing the ire of his colleagues, Semmelweis insisted that his fellow doctors wash their hands prior to delivering a child.

Immediately, the rate of women dying of childbed fever plummeted from one-in-ten to practically zero. For Vonnegut, the fact that Semmelweis persisted in implementing hygienic standards despite the fact that his colleagues ostracized him for doing so made the doctor a saint. The honorable self-sacrifice exhibited by Semmelweis, Vonnegut informs us, is necessary to combat the selfish avarice of those people running the world today.

Ultimately, Vonnegut cannot express precisely what he hopes to convey with *A Man Without A Country.* Instead, it is Vonnegut's son, a pediatrician, who puts into words the mentality Jesus Christ and Ignaz Semmelweis embody: "we are here to help each other get through this thing, whatever it is" (66). It is humanism, then, that Vonnegut advocates in the end.

The message may not be profound, but it need not be. What Vonnegut does with *A Man Without A Country* is simply reaffirm what he has been writing for years: wisdom lies in common sense and basic human decency, but human beings keep neglecting to pursue it. For the Vonnegut fan, then, *A Man Without A Country* is exactly what they have come to expect of the author: silly hand-drawn pictures, deceptively simple prose, and a whole lot of kindness guised in wit.

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Predatory States: Operation Condor And Covert War In Latin America, By J. Patrice Mcsherry

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It has taken almost thirty years for human rights activists, judges, historians, and social scientists to begin documenting the history of long-known abuses in Latin America, as well as to plumb the exact role played by the U.S. in these sordid events. It appears that a generation had to pass before key archives opened and any real progress could be made in this field, but now as a result we have seen in the last couple of years a plethora of excellent books dealing with human rights issues. J. Patrice McSherry's book occupies a central place in this new literature as it successfully analyzes the extent of the U.S. involvement in the region and the connections between the U.S. Cold War policies and some of the most egregious human rights abuses that took place in the region.

McSherry discusses the nature and actions of Operation Condor, placing it in the context of modern counterinsurgency warfare and U.S. foreign policy goals for Latin America. The origins of Condor can be traced back to the 1960s and the U.S. commitment to deter "another Cuba" and to protect political and economic interests in the hemisphere. The resulting National Security Doctrine assigned the Latin American military the mission of eliminating the so-called "internal enemy" and led to the creation of what McSherry aptly labels the National Security State – determined to obliterate every trace of leftist ideas and forces.

But fighting a supposedly sinister and elusive enemy could not be limited by mere geography, and so the Condor system soon became the vigilant transnational arm of this doctrine. Thus, "the Condor system linked together secret units within the military intelligence forces of member countries into one transnational group, focused on extraterritorial action" (p.4). The declared goal of counterinsurgency policies, as in South East Asia – was to transform the minds of recalcitrant members of society, or in the ambitious words of Argentina's general Villegas to win "the war in the terrain of the mind through the conquest of peoples' psyches"[1]

McSherry's analysis of Operation Condor is especially valuable because it is based on a trove of newly released documents. Her central argument is that the operation was part of what the author calls "the parallel state," that hidden part of the state which includes paramilitary and parapolice forces with ample access to secret budgets, secret detention camps and cemeteries, unmarked cars and aircraft, and secure communication systems. These hidden structures allowed the military and their allies to torture and kill while keeping an appearance of "certain legitimacy" (p.8). The concealed nature of these operations enabled the military rulers to enjoy the ideological bonus of blaming the deaths and disappearances on either the victims or "out of

control paramilitary groups." Condor gave them a license to roam throughout the world to exterminate their appointed enemies.

Although these aggressive policies were largely developed as a response to the Cuban Revolution, McSherry traces their actual origins to the later years of World War II and the immediate post war period. Her analysis of government documents reveals that the U.S. efforts to maintain and advance its hegemony in the region always were pursued through a number of different policies, including secret operations. McSherry's analysis certainly is not and cannot be limited to Latin America. Chapter 2 contains a very interesting discussion of U.S. clandestine commando operations in Europe right after World War II, including covert paramilitary networks such as Gladio in Italy, Operation Stay Behind in the United Kingdom, and Sheepskin in Germany.

In Germany the U.S. freely employed former Waffen S.S. members and reorganized a Nazi espionage network under the leadership of former Nazi spy chief General Reinhard Gehlen. As McSherry notes, Henry Kissinger served in the U.S. Army Counter-intelligence Corp (CIC) in Europe. The CIC rather more notoriously employed war criminal Klaus Barbie from 1946 to 1951 because of his expertise on French communists (a fetid link scrutinized in Marcel Ophuls' 1988 documentary Hotel Terminus). Moreover, Barbie was protected from the French judicial system and later moved to Bolivia in order to teach his repressive techniques in South America. The chapter also covers clandestine operations of similar character in Greece, Turkey and Portugal. Moreover, the author traces the connections between Condor and Gladio's Italian operations.

U.S. intervention in Latin America during the Cold War had two dimensions: the open training of military leaders through military missions and the School of the Americas (SOA), and the covert intelligence operations. While the actions and criticism of the SOA have been effectively documented, U.S. covert operations, such as the plot to overthrow Brazil's president Joao Goulart though widely suspected and speculated about, have until recently remained beyond the reach of most scholarly analysts. While McSherry's central goal is to analyze Condor, Predatory States also discusses a whole array of relevant operations carried out by different branches of the U.S. government in Latin America, including project Camelot – widely known after its exposure in the 1960s – sponsored by the U.S. Army's Office of Research and Development, which had vast implications in Chile.

Condor began in 1973 as a bilateral arrangement between the Argentine and Chilean military intelligence organizations with the encouragement of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officers in Uruguay. McSherry documents and discusses the role played by the CIA and DINA (Chile's Directorate of National Intelligence); the connections between DINA (known as Chile's Gestapo) and former Nazis harbored by the Chilean government; the role of the Argentine security agencies and their seamy connections with U.S. and French counterinsurgency doctrines; and the role played by the military government in Uruguay. Newly declassified documents allow the author to trace U.S. involvement in Condor's history back to a CIA National Intelligence document dated June 23, 1976 (p. 78). A 1976 cable from Henry Kissinger

to all Latin American and some European missions states, for example, that "two years ago security officials from Southern Cone countries except Brazil met in Buenos Aires to facilitate information exchanges and the movement of security officials on government business" (p. 79).

The declassification of a letter written by DINA's chief Manuel Contreras, a close associate of General Pinochet, helps us to understand the key role of this infamous organization. Among the most important functions of Condor were coordination of information through a centralized data bank, special communication channels, and permanent working meetings. Santiago was official headquarters, but the technical personnel came from all participating countries. Thus, Condor entailed mutual cooperation among military intelligence services, coordination of political surveillance of dissidents, and exchange of information. Condor operatives conducted covert operations across member countries in order to detain, disappear or kill targeted exiles.

The U.S. eagerly provided Condor with both intelligence data and access to state of the art communication systems. In June 1976, Henry Kissinger signaled warm U.S. approval for the operation in discussions with Condor officials. McSherry offers a detailed discussion of Kissinger's role in this process, and of his energetic efforts in later years to cover up U.S. involvement. But Secretary Kissinger's role in covert operations was not limited to Latin America. In fact, he also authorized U. S. intervention in Angola using Cuban meddling in Angolan affairs as a "post facto" excuse. He gave the green light to Indonesian dictator Suharto to invade east Timor, while denying doing so, and he used his power and influence to block access to information about U.S. activities in Latin America.

As has been argued elsewhere, Letelier and Moffitt's assassination, in the heart of Washington, D.C., during Ford's administration in 1976, could not have been carried out without CIA support, or a turning of a blind eye. We know that the CIA shielded General Pinochet during the subsequent trial. The Carter administration's loud emphasis on human rights issues did not end Condor's activities. Even as the actions of Condor were portrayed to the President and the Secretary of State in a very benign light, hundreds of people were kidnapped, detained and killed anyway. In fact, some of Condor's most villainous operations occurred under the watch of the Carter administration.

In the last two chapters McSherry discusses how ordinary people are molded into torturers, and Condor's Central American connections. While the discussion of the Central American connections helps readers to grasp the nature of Condor's operations, the chapter on the personnel of Condor provides personal profiles of operatives and their motivations. But to truly understand the motivations of torturers and killers requires an in-depth analysis of psychological and emotional issues that fall outside the scope of this kind of book. As a result, this is the weakest chapter.

From an analytical perspective, McSherrys book offers a critical new concept through which to understand the actions of the Latin American military: the parallel state. There is little doubt that all states have a hidden side characterized by secret, unlawful operations[2], but what happened in Latin America signals a particularly foul situation in which this parallel state

dominated the open state. In Latin America, the parallel state was structured to protect the interests of the military and those sectors of civil society and the international economic system concerned foremost with serving economic interests of the upper class and of US investors. Despite all the recent literature, a lot more needs to be accomplished in order to uncover the full extent of these parallel operations, and their baleful effects on society. From a political standpoint, it is clear that the guarantee of impunity best explains the reckless actions of the Latin America military, the policies of the U.S. in the region, and the behavior of many political leaders in the U.S. and Latin America. Impunity will end only by uncovering the truth of what took place. McSherry makes a critical contribution to our knowledge of those issues and as a result contributes to ending impunity by revealing identities of those responsible for atrocious acts performed all over South America. To the degree that repressive policies were associated with the adoption of neoliberal economic policies and the protection of U.S. interests it helps us comprehend current anti-U.S. sentiment in the region.

In brief, McSherry's careful analysis of newly declassified documents allows her to unveil the role that the U.S. played in aiding and abetting criminal regimes to conduct extraterritorial operations to kill their "enemies" throughout the globe. What this book, as well as others on this subject,[3] also reveals is that the actions of the military, and many politicians, in the U.S. and Latin America were geared to protect the criminals and ignore the depth of the crimes. Why did the U.S have to prevent Latin America from rule by freely elected leftist regimes? What can one expect of policies toward Latin America in the future? We know that the U.S had questionable political and economic motives that justified support for these criminal regimes. The end of the Soviet Union provided a ray of hope and an expectation that U.S. policies would be more inclined toward the protection of human rights, but there is little doubt that today the U.S. is using the war against terrorism as the new overarching foreign policy principle, and there is little doubt also that these policies undermine democracy.

Notes

[1] Cited by Antonius C.G.M. Robben, *Political Trauma and Violence in Argentina, Philadelphia*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005, p 189

[2] Revelations about secret spying and detention centers shows that the US is no exception to this rule

[3] See my forthcoming "Politics of Impunity" *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 42, No 1, 2007

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The Missing Peace: The Inside Story Of The Fight For Middle East Peace, By Dennis Ross

By | 2006: Vol. 5, No. 3-4

Dennis Ross served as a key architect of US policy in the Middle East in his capacities as the head of Policy Planning in the State Department under James Baker III in the administration of George H.W. Bush (1989 – January 1993) and then as chief negotiator for Arab-Israeli issues under Bill Clinton's two Secretaries of State, Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright (1993 – January 2001). Those were dramatic years that encompassed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the US-orchestrated Arab-Israeli conference in Madrid, and the Oslo Accord of September 1993. In the ensuing years Washington made continual, though unsuccessful, efforts to achieve peace agreements between Syria and Israel, and only partly successful efforts to extend the initial Israeli-Palestinian agreements into more comprehensive arrangements. Those efforts ended abruptly with Syrian President Hafez al-Asad's death in June 2000 and the acute violence that erupted on the West Bank and Gaza Strip following the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian summit at Camp David in July 2000. Ross's own diplomatic career ended a few months later, when the second Bush administration took office and he left government to join the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a well-connected pro-Israeli think tank.

Ross's memoirs provide a day-by-day account of the American effort to promote negotiations among Israelis, Palestinians, and Syrians. The high point of Ross's description of the G. H.W. Bush era involves the maneuvering that led up to the multilateral Madrid talks in October 1991, a rapidly successful set of moves that contrasted sharply with the stalemated period before the Iraq war, when little momentum was possible despite the major Palestinian initiatives at the time of the *intifada* — initiatives that were rejected by hard-line Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. For the Clinton era, Ross shifts his attention back and forth between the increasingly frustrating Syrian and Palestinian fronts. He concedes that he did not take seriously the back-channel Israeli-Palestinian talks in Norway that led to the successful Oslo Accords. Subsequently, he was at the center of efforts to deepen those accords, which led to the Oslo II (September 1995), Hebron (January 1997), and Wye Plantation (October 1998) agreements. Ross details the negotiations before, during, and after those accords in excruciating detail, a level of detail that highlights the extreme mistrust between the two sides and the difficulty that the US had in attaining even these very limited changes, much less getting Israel to implement their terms. The details also make clear that every US position was discussed with the Israeli government prior to presenting it to the Arab side, in

acknowledgement of the special relationship between the US and Israel, a bias that not only heightened Palestinian and Syrian mistrust of Washington as an honest broker but also weakened Washington's ability to perceive and address the core needs of the Arab parties.

The narrative culminates in Clinton's failed summit with Syrian President Hafez al-Asad in spring 2000 and the dismal Camp David summit that July. Ross gives little attention to Jordan, because (to his disappointment) the Israeli and Jordanian governments negotiated their agreements with little need for US (read: Ross's) involvement (p. 183). Ironically, despite the centrality of the US to the negotiating process, the only really successful agreements turned out to be those in which Washingon was minimally involved.

Ross's exceptionally detailed reportage is possible because, as he explains (p. 813), he made a written record every night of that day's conversations and events. He also wrote memoranda before embarking on each trip and each set of negotiations. Afterwards, he recorded his reflections on whether or not the negotiations had met his expectations. This level of detail is rewarding for the specialist and the policy-wonk, in that it provides the reader with every-bit-of-nuance in face-to-face conversations (including each instance in which he, the secretary of state, or the president lost their temper at their Israeli or Arab counterparts) and every shift in negotiating positions. However, it is so detailed that the wider context is often lost in the barrage of micro-events.

Moreover, by relying almost exclusively on his own notes, Ross ignores the perspectives of other participants in these negotiations. This comes across as breathtaking egotism. Only his own opinions and recollections count; there is no need to double check or cross-check them against the memoirs of others. Thus, although he cites in passing James Baker's *The Politics of Diplomacy*, Clinton's press secretary George Stephanopoulos' *All Too Human*, and Israeli ambassador cum Syria specialist Itamar Rabinovich's *The Brink of Peace*, he fails to comment on or assess their viewpoints. Moreover, one searches in vain for mention of and critiques of the discussion of Middle East issues in George H.W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft's *A World Transformed*, Bill Clinton's *My Life*, Warren Christopher's *Choices of a Lifetime*, and Madeleine Albright's *Madam Secretary: A Memoir*, much less articles by his fellow diplomats Martin Indyk, Daniel Kurtzer, Rob Malley, Aaron David Miller, and Edward (Ned) Walker. The result is a version of history that privileges not only an American perspective but one specific perspective: his own.

The Missing Peace became famous because of Ross's denunciation of Palestinian President Yasir Arafat for rejecting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's offer at Camp David in July 2000 and especially for "equivocating" (p. 3) about Clinton's follow up offers. The book opens with Ross's dramatic reenactment of Arafat's visit to the White House on January 2, 2001, framed by

Ross's stark question: "Could Yasir Arafat end this conflict?" (p. 4) Arafat responded that he "accepted [Clinton's] ideas" but had "reservations" (p. 11), which meant to Ross that Arafat could never make "a comprehensive deal… He could live with a process, but not with a conclusion" (p. 13). Ross concludes with an even more sweeping assertion: "Only one leader was unable or unwilling to confront history and mythology: Yasir Arafat" (p. 758).

That brusque dismissal ignores the reality that, in January 2001, Arafat was talking to a US president who would be out of office in two weeks concerning an agreement with an Israeli prime minister who was about to be crushingly defeated by Arafat's arch-enemy, Ariel Sharon. Clinton even (rather bizarrely at that point) tried to appeal to Arafat to sign the accord in order to help prevent Ehud Barak's defeat, even though Ross concedes that Barak's defeat was "near certain" (p. 5). Moreover, whereas Clinton and Ross had discussed their ideas with Israeli negotiators on a let's-talk-further basis, they confronted Arafat with a final deal, whose terms had to be accepted *in toto*. Even if Arafat had initialed an accord at that moment, it could have been renounced in less than a month by the new US President and the new Israeli prime minister, leaving Arafat exposed and isolated.

Ross's dismissal of Arafat's intentions also ignores Ross's own admission that Arafat had entered reluctantly into the Camp David peace process the previous summer, fearing that Barak was setting a trap. Ross himself feared that the parties were not ready for a permanent status accord: Ross speaks of his "dread" in anticipation of the negotiations (p. 649). Furthermore, Ross ignores his earlier statement that Arafat had reason to be wary of both Clinton and Barak. In early July, Clinton had assured Arafat that he would not be blamed should the summit fail (p. 633), an assurance that Clinton violated as soon as the summit ended. And Barak had promised in the spring of 2000 to withdraw from three villages adjoining East Jerusalem, to release a substantial number of Palestinian prisoners, and to transfer to the Palestinian Authority some of the taxes Israel collected on goods going to the West Bank and Gaza, only to backtrack a month later when his governing coalition began to fray (p. 625). Barak had also delayed making the third interim withdrawal, scheduled for June 23. This backtracking contrasted with Barak's bold unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon in late May. Ross expressed concern at the time that Arafat felt "beleaguered" and betrayed (p. 627) and he worried that Barak was ignoring the negative "effects of his failure to fulfill his promises" (p. 628). Indeed, Ross seemed to share Arafat's concern that, "if Barak could not do the little issues, how could he do the big ones?" (p. 630) In sum, while Arafat's actions should certainly be subject to a rigorous critique, as should the actions of his Israeli and American counterparts — his hesitation or negativism at critical moments should be placed in context, rather than essentialized.

Despite the propagandistic tone of Ross's critique of Arafat (after all, Arafat-bashing has been a

popular sport in the United States), *The Missing Peace* contains acute and fine-tuned observations about leading political figures, notably Yitzhak Rabin (especially pp. 90-94, who tends to be lionized following his shocking assassination), Shimon Peres (pp. 235-236), Bibi Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, Hafez al-Asad (notably pp. 141-144), and numerous Palestinian negotiators. Ross has a well honed understanding of the rivalries and different viewpoints among those Palestinian politicians and of how Arafat manipulated them and maneuvered in the limited political (and physical) space available to the Palestinians.

His portraits of Netanyahu and Barak are particularly pointed. He has no patience for Netanyahu's "hubris" and his "insufferable" lecturing of the US negotiators on "how to deal with the Arabs" (p. 260) or for the haggling over minute percentages of West Bank land that would be turned over to Palestinian control, haggling that went on for three years with painfully few tangible results. Barak's election gives Ross "a renewed sense of hope." Although "an unknown quantity as a negotiator and a peacemaker," Barak seemed to be "everything Bibi was not" (p. 495). That hope was short lived. Barak delayed making promised redeployments on the West Bank (as noted above) and proved to be a singularly inept negotiator in relation to both Asad and Arafat. Ross comments that Barak's "instinct for the ambitious or grandiose move" often took on an "urgent, even manic, quality" (p. 521) and was contradicted by his penchant for irritating his US counterparts by trying to micromanaging negotiations. He also, Ross argues, always "wanted us to be focused on his needs, not trying to find ways to accommodate the concerns of the Arab party to the negotiations" (p. 550). In other words, Barak wanted Washington to be Israel's surrogate in talking to Arab rulers, not the mediator between the two parties. Unfortunately, Clinton 'in particular' fell into that trap, especially with Asad but also with Arafat.

The worst aspect of Barak's personality, from Ross's viewpoint, was that "he inevitably wavered" (p. 544) when he realized what he had to make major territorial withdrawals in order to achieve historic breakthroughs on the Syrian and Palestinian fronts. He even placed Clinton in highly embarrassing positions. He pressured Clinton to meet with Asad in Geneva in spring 2000, without agreeing to Asad's bottom line, a meeting that was a "high-visibility failure" (p. 587) for US diplomacy. He pressured Clinton to host the Camp David negotiations, without preparing the ground through off-the-record preparatory meetings with Palestinian counterparts and while refusing to reveal his bottom-line position to the US negotiators even as he expected them to act as his emissary (see Ross's meeting with Barak in late June 2000, pp. 639-642). In other words, many of Ross's criticisms of Barak's behavior, behavior that can be partly attributed to his mercurial personality and partly to his fear of making a final deal, are identical to Ross's criticisms of Arafat's behavior. In the end, however, Ross gives the benefit of the doubt to Barak (crediting him with finally biting the bullet at Camp David) but not to Arafat.

Each reader will find different aspects of *The Missing Peace* compelling or disturbing. Read as a primary source, it displays the inner workings of negotiations at a unique level of detail from one highly privileged perspective. Read as a secondary source, it provides a valuable case study of the complexities of international diplomacy and negotiating processes. Read as a treatise on the Arab-Israeli conflict, it displays the limitations in the author's historical understanding of the conflict, of the political trends in the region, and of the profound asymmetries in power between Israelis and Palestinians. Regrettably, that also makes it possible to read it as a propaganda tract. Nonetheless, *The Missing Peace* is far more than just a bombastic attack on Arafat and well worth reading for its insights into the thinking of a well-placed negotiator during a critical decade in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970 By David Edgerton

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Rethinking and reexamining the history of the vital relations between science, technology and the state is an increasingly urgent task. Any serious endeavor to do so must bring back into the policy equation the military connection, spotlighting what Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* bluntly call the War Machine. Since Eisenhower's 1961 farewell address the 'military-industrial complex' has come to be recognized as a key influence on state decisions in the US, though much less so in Britain. Today, these state elites all too plainly appropriate science and technology so as to extend their power over society in order to wage a perpetual and self-serving 'war on terror'. In the US and UK we now witness barely veiled, long-existing 'warfare states,' each accompanied by a seductive ideology of 'liberal militarism,' which is only a new guise of *mission civilisatrice*

A dominant neoconservative critique at the same time tirelessly decries the decadent 'welfare state' for its alleged inability to promote economic and, more importantly, military power. Decline clearly is the favorite bogeyman of neoconservatives who wield it as a polemical sledgehammer against whomever dares to questions the insatiable appetite of the War Machine, as if the health of the state was identical with weapons expenditure. Today's Europe, hence, is portrayed in US mass media as militarily 'weak,' as only able to engage in effeminate peace-keeping operations, if that. What Donald Rumsfeld derides as 'Old Europe' must be an economically 'sclerotic' realm suffering high unemployment and anemic growth rates, whether or not it is true. According to this moralizing narrative, Europe, through self-imposed weakness, finds that its foreign policy choices shrink to a preposterous faith in flimsy 'liberal' rules and norms, and therefore resorts readily to appeasement even of deadly enemies. The neoconservative movement (and its ideological cousins in Western Europe) have propagated what Edgerton dubs technocratic and militaristic 'anti-histories' so as to buttress their own beliefs and to serve their designs on power. Needless to say, these reigning smug narratives are sorely in need of sustained and in-depth critiques themselves.

David Edgerton's Warfare State is a very welcome and successful revising of the history of the Britain from 1920 to 1970. His foremost accomplishment is to demolish the conventional narrative of the 20th century British state, one supposedly of a pathetic nonstop long-term decline since the First World War, and for which sad fate many historians blame the 'welfare' social model. Professor Edgerton, by reasserting the importance of the 'military-science complex,' and demonstrating the robust design and production of first class armaments during this supposedly slack period, establishes a far more nuanced historiography that illuminates the strong relationships between the state, intellectuals, technocrats and scientists. Edgerton is not interested in dichotomous views of the state in terms of welfare/warfare or

decline/growth. Rather, his Warfare State "subverts" these dichotomies and reveals them as problematic conceptualizations that work to obstruct our comprehension of what really happened.

In Part One Edgerton investigates the armaments industry in the inter-war period and run-up to the Second World War and, in doing so, debunks the still widespread scholarly notion that a weak-kneed Britain full of appeasers foolishly failed to produce enough armaments in response to obvious rising threats. Edgerton identifies and dissects severe methodological problems in the traditional explanation as expressed in the work of Paul Kennedy and innumerable other scholars who claim that Britain's sinfully lackadaisical rearmament in the interwar years was the source of a reprehensible policy of appeasement.

Edgerton conclusively shows, regarding a state-of-the-art equipped Royal Air Force and Royal Navy, that Britain's pre-war military budget and production was by far greater than that of Japan, Italy and Germany. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, for example, Britain launched seven aircraft carriers while the Germans and Italians, though spoiling for a fight, built none. Edgerton's thoroughgoing reinterpretation of statistical sources shows that British armament production in no way slackened at the time and, quite the contrary, that its material capabilities really were as strong as any power of the era.

Edgerton also delves into and reinterprets the inter-war liberal literature on global political-economy as promoting a fairly vigorous militaristic approach, not a pacificist one, as E.H. Carr famously accused at the time. Carr's canonical text *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, published in 1939, was a polemic against what he saw as dangerous 'utopian' or 'idealist' thinking that downplayed the supreme variable of power. But Carr's analysis rested on his inadvisedly amalgamating under the heading 'idealism' a complex and varied set of perspectives, derived from classical 19th century liberalism, on the proper relationships between international law, norms and trade. This unworldly brand of liberalism emphasized a harmony of interests as well as Wilsonian democratic values. But a careful reexamination of the texts of the time reveals that inter-war liberals, far from being pacifists with a blind faith in the power of international law, were acutely aware of the need of the use of force in the service of Britains's global capitalist aims. Indeed, they were keen apologists for the use of force for the maintenance of empire. As Edgerton convincingly shows, the mood in Britain in the decade up to the Second World War was not one of pessimism or defeatism, as is regularly attributed to it in seminar rooms and periodicals up to this day.

Edgherton explains that Carr's assault on inter-war liberals concerned their depiction of Britain as a 'welfare state' versus that of Germany's 'power state.' So the term 'welfare state' first arose not within socio-economic literature but rather within the nascent international relations debates of the era. As Edgerton shows, Britain was defined as a 'welfare state' only insofar as it represented "a state governed by law, rather than power…an image of a classical liberal democracy." There was no hint anywhere in this analytical approach that the principal concern of the state must be understood as managing the material welfare of its citizens (at the expense, by implication, of military needs or ambitions). So although the Second World War

accentuated the British state's role in defense procurement, R & D, and industrial capacity, postwar historiography mischaracterized the nature of the state as rooted in a vibrant commitment to "Keynesian" welfarism. As Edgerton shows, the reality is that the proportion of welfare spending to warfare spending would not reach its 1932 peak again until 1970.

The Second World War, of course, undeniably changed the socio-economic landscape of Britain. The role of the British state increased dramatically, even compared to previous wars, because the sheer necessity of massive logistics and supply required such centralization. The upshot was a greater willingness by British governments to take "a greater direct role in the R&D, design and production of weapons than before the war." The way in which this was accomplished, however, was a good deal more complicated than mere nationalization of armament industries or outright government ownership. Even the Labour government under Clement Atlee (1945-51) engaged in forms of privatization within the arms industry, despite their own discourse of nationalization. Edgerton shows how the concept of ownership, and its portrayal in the historiography of the British state, has been so consistently misleading. A key revelation he uncovers is a virtually "invisible industry, comprising 1.6 million workers and 1 billion in assets does not figure in standard accounts of public ownership…" because historians registered changes in ownership only via nationalization rather than also account for significant indirect investments in production and research & design.

Contrary to textbook wisdoms, the British state progressively extended its control over essential productive assets by creating separate supply ministries, and by combining the Ministry of Aircraft Production with the Ministry of Supply to run a formidable aircraft industry. The historiography usually focuses on ministers such as Sir Stafford Cripps or Lord Beaverbrook's initiatives in transforming particular industries, so that scant attention has been paid to the phalanxes of technocrats and technicians who gained greatly in importance in this period. Edgerton makes his greatest contribution by refuting the 'decline' critique that Britain neglected its latent technological talent and so plummeted into long-term economic decline. As Edgerton writes:

This technocratic critique is a central common feature of declinism, which some historians have associated with other proximate causes. For declinism, the view that the relative decline of Britain was due to British failings, almost always took those failings to be ones which more, and more powerful, technocrats would have avoided.

But, in contrast to a thriving research core of experts who supposedly were undervalued and underutilized, civil service and other top state administrators were portrayed afterward as clueless dilettantes from Oxford or Cambridge, shackled to their classical arts educations. A fundamental disconnect between the two classes is then posited and made to account for a continuous friction and for inefficient state economic management. Edgerton takes to be the principal propagators of this British 'anti-history' such writers such as C.P. Snow, P.M.S. Blackett and Perry Anderson.

Snow's description of 'the two cultures,' the literary and technocratic, is taken by Edgerton as

emblematic of the constructed anti-historical narrative that rests on highly dubious or, indeed, disproven assumptions, methodology and conclusions. However, as Edgerton makes clear, robust and plentiful technocrats exerted a potent influence in policy-making throughout the 1960s. Scientists, beginning with the Second World War, became very prominent in every ministry that had a strong research and design component. The Fulton commission, set up to inquire into the lack of "expertise" at within the civil service in the 1960s, failed to note the deep level of integration between "specialists" and "generalists" at Ministry of Technology. The management of the nuclear submarine project, Polaris, like most other such projects, liberally "mingled administrators with professionals." Yet, such 'anti-history,' Edgerton complains, have been too lazily accepted by writers across the political spectrum. Thus, for example, right-wing nationalists prominent in the British aircraft industries, such as Sir Roy Fedden and Sir Barnes Wallis, would write "alarmist" and "pro-technology" tracts. On the left, Perry Anderson came down hard, as Edgerton notes, on a "British state [that] needed to be interventionist, technocratic, but all it offered was [quoting Anderson] 'universal dilettantism and anachronistic economic liberalism', while the British educational system was only belatedly and weakly scientific." One result, upon the advent of Harold Wilson's Labour government in 1964, was the creation of a Ministry of Technology (Minitech) to directly inject governmental resources and technocratic expertise into the industrial sector — only for the facts to dawn on them that research and design was not at all deficient and also that there was a startling lack of evidence correlating research & design with economic growth. Wilson's policy was a way of going nowhere faster and more expensively. Towards the end of Wilson's touting of the "white heat of technology," and its disappointing results, there predictably emerged the neo-liberal criticism of state intervention with the Thatcherite call, "No more Concorde's."

Edgerton provides us with a remarkable scholarly work deconstructing the prevalent conventional narrative which, as he points out, instead of offering a detached historical inquiry into the formation of the British state wound up reflecting partisan aims in "particular contests about reforming the state" at the time. His book is a major contribution to a growing revisionist literature on the inter-war period which corrects muddled histories that have been put too easily into the service of militarist agendas. The *Warfare State* powerfully undermines a host of accounts that seek to justify expanding the War Machine without bound.