2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Table of Contents

French Republican Ideals And Immigration 1
The Discourse On Immigration: Myths And Principles 13
About Saving Darfur: Reflections On The Carrot And The Stick 21
Why Is Washington Holding Back On Darfur? 30
Is It Too Late For Darfur? 33
Afterlife Of An Atheist 37
Israel's Palestine: It's Apartheid And Not Peace 45
The Mystique Of Genetic Correctness 55
A Conversation With Raul Hilberg 68
Martin Espada And Anne Waldman Poetry 75
Jonathan Shahn Sculpture 80
Chalmers Johnson 's War On The 'war On Terror', The Sorrows Of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, And The End Of The Republic, Blowback: The Causes And Consequences Of American Empire 91
Talking India: Ashis Nandy In Conversation With Ramin Jahanbegloo (delhi: Oxford Up, 2006) 101
Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics & Harriet Mcbride Johnson, Too Late To Die Young: Nearly True Tales From A Life 105
Murambi, The Book Of Bones 109
The Second Horseman by Kyle Mills 114
The History Of Human Rights: From Ancient Times To The Globalization Era (berkeley: University Of California Press, 2004), By Micheline Ishay 117

French Republican Ideals And Immigration

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

As disparate historical figures as Marc Bloch, an historian, scholar, and a Jew, and Toussaint L'Ouverture, a black and a slave until he was forty-five years old, subscribed to the principles of the French Republic-liberty, equality, fraternity – until the end of their lives. In his written commentary about the capitulation of France to the Nazis, Bloch laments the fact that civilized France allowed the Vichy government and Hitler's Germany to lead it into slavery. Marc Bloch's great-grandfather fought in the revolutionary army in 1793, and his father fought in 1870. He fought in the First World War. By World War II, Bloch was the father of six children and fifty-three years old. He joined the Resistance in Lyon, was hunted by the Petain police, the Militia, and the Gestapo. Bloch was captured, tortured, and executed by the Gestapo. Comforting a sixteen year-old boy by telling him that it wouldn't hurt much as they both stood before a Nazi firing squad, Bloch's last words were "Vive la France!" Toussaint L'Ouverture, a slave in the French colony of Saint Domingue inspired by tales of the French Revolution, led a revolt in 1791.

France abolished slavery in 1794. When Napoleon moved (unsuccessfully) to reestablish slavery on the island in 1802, L'Ouverture again led the blacks in revolt, singing the Marseillaise from the bush as they prepared to battle republican troops. L'Ouverture was eventually captured by Napoleon and incarcerated in a prison in the Jura. He died of starvation and cold as Napoleon continually ordered the guards to reduce his allowances for food and firewood. Inspired by the French Revolution, Toussaint L'Ouverture commanded the only triumphant slave insurrection in history, followed in 1803 by the creation of the first independent black state in the Americas. To the end, he dictated letters to Napoleon, declaring his loyalty to the French Republic and his total commitment to the principles of 1789: liberty, equality, and fraternity. It is these universalist concepts that inspired both Bloch and Toussaint as they coped with betrayal, persecution, and death at the hands of citizens of the nation in which these beliefs were born. These principles made these men more than just members each of a pariah people; this Revolution made all men believe they were members of the human race.

The ambivalence of France towards immigrants and particularly towards recent immigrants and citizens who are non-white and non-Christian has its origins in the Revolution itself. The contradiction between universality and particularism is at the heart of the tension between the universalist principles of the French Revolution and a nationalism that promotes ethno-cultural

exclusivity in French society. Although national policy for integrating immigrants has been historically grounded in the French Revolution and republican ideals, economic trends, and political movements, a major function of immigration in France is also to fulfill a labor need without threatening the jobs of French workers. Inherent in this immigration were recurring conflicts involving foreign labor and the conditions under which it might be allowed to remain in the country. What determined the need for a consistent policy was the realization by 1925 that foreign labor had become a necessary feature of the French economy.

Historical Perceptions of Immigrants

France has the distinction in Europe of having the greatest number of immigrants over the last two hundred years. It is estimated that of the fifty-seven million inhabitants, fourteen million have either parents or grandparents who were of immigrant origin. France's low birth rate during the nineteenth century, substantial casualties during World War I, and the expanding post-war industrial economy made it necessary to recruit economic migrants who came for work and a higher standard of living. Approximately 100,000 foreign agricultural workers entered each year from about 1850 until after the Second World War. Foreign workers, mostly Belgian and Italian, numbered almost 380,000 in 1851, and over one million by 1881. These migrants worked in textile factories, in mining, in building trades, and in agriculture in Lille, Lyon, Rouen, and Paris. In the early twentieth century, Italians and Belgians came for work in industries such as coal, steel, and textiles. Poles came during the inter-war period to work in the mines. Italians migrated to escape the dictatorship of Mussolini, Spanish Republicans came to escape retribution, and during the twenties, thirties, and forties, Armenians, Russians, and Jews came to France. Between the world wars some 500,000 single Algerian males came to work on a rotation system whereby they would be periodically replaced by fellow villagers or relatives. After the Second World War, immigrants from Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco were the most numerous. By 1982, the Algerian population in France had increased to 805,000.

Claims by French politicians that there was an almost seamless integration of Spanish, Italians, Belgians, and Poles into French society as compared with the integration of late twentieth century immigrants from the Third World are based on a reinterpretation of the history of European immigrants in France. Between the 1880s and 90s, French workers attacked Belgian miners in the Pas-de-Calais. Italians were pursued by an angry mob in Marseilles in the summer of 1881 who demanded that they shout "Vive la Republique!" During the 1920s, Italians and Poles were seen as "ethnically distinct," along with Arabs. Culturally different, they were viewed as difficult to assimilate. Italians were said to be a danger to the French people because they spread disease, were over-sexed and morally deviant. Poles in Paris in 1922 were said to be filthy and criminally oriented. Twenty-three thousand steel and mine workers were laid off and deported as redundant labor in 1931 from Longwy mines. More than 120,000 Polish coal miners of Pas-de-Calais were forcibly repatriated with a luggage limit of thirty kilos because they were redundant labor. In 1927, French medical students demonstrated against 4,000 foreign medical students because of the possibility that they would apply to be naturalized. In 1933, in order to minimize competition with French doctors, propaganda against "incompetent" foreign doctors precipitated a law that prevented them from

practicing in the public sector for five years after naturalization. By 1934, quotas had been established denying work permits to foreigners in 533 categories in order to eliminate competition with Frenchmen. In 1934, “redundant labor” could be deported and one-third of the foreign male workers were repatriated during this decade. During the 1936 Popular Front government, the extreme right characterized foreign workers from Russia, Spain, and Germany as socialists and Jews, as dregs, mold, and dung. In 1939, 200,000 members of the Spanish Republican militia were held for fifteen months in concentration camps after entering France. Many died of exposure. During the Paris summer of 1942, the Vichy regime oversaw the deportation of 42,500 Jews, 6,000 of whom were children, to Auschwitz and, overall, one-fourth of the Jewish population, approximately 76,000, was deported to Nazi death camps.

From Cosmopolitans to Frenchmen

During the 1970s, the centrist right President Valerie Giscard d’Estaing promoted the official view of France as egalitarian, welcoming, and diverse. President Giscard was concerned about the levels of racial prejudice but was confident that this would improve once the French population was made sensitive to the issues and needs of immigrants. The assumption was that the government elite was not racist, and in its official capacity as upholders of the principles of the French Republic, it was responsible for guiding common Frenchmen and popular opinion away from feelings of racial hostility.

The perspective of the French political and cultural elite is that France is a society of openness and universalism in which the ideas of individualism, liberty, and opportunity define the French nation. Jean-Marie Le Pen’s efforts to represent a segment of the population through the agitation of restrictive immigration and citizenship policies eventually prompted a strong counter response on the left and among the internationalist-minded elite in support of traditional policies of assimilation and integration. Many in the French elite, those who run the institutions, do not perceive France as exclusionary with a national identity based on a particular ethnicity and culture in spite of some government policies that support a more narrow view. This exclusionary perspective, if believed, would limit France’s influence in the world and jeopardize the integrity of its institutions. The elite believe that the grandeur of France is based on its political, cultural, and intellectual expansiveness. This perspective continues to prevail among the majority of the elite in spite of persistent opposition from elements of the popular culture.

The Revolution is the reference point for the philosophy and organization of the French nation. It is the key to comprehending the depth of the universalist goals the nation has set for itself in terms of the political and social incorporation of newcomers. It is also the reference point for understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. But the Revolution also established expectations and loyalties that would, as it progressed, undermine cosmopolitan principles and lead to the exclusion of people who were not French or accepted as French.

During the Revolution, France developed a national consciousness of its particular position in the world as the leader of the struggle for liberty for all humanity. However, the potential for

counter-revolution, civil unrest, and economic crisis began to undermine cosmopolitanism and restrict the unity of man to a position of citizenship and human rights within national boundaries. The source of the contradiction is the declaration of universal rights within a particular nation. Human rights become national rights and national rights imply the exclusion of non-citizens. The revolutionaries believed in universal principles but they achieved political prominence by promoting the idea of the French nation within territorial boundaries. By 1793, participation in revolutionary politics by foreigners was restricted and the revolutionary government was harassing foreigners by way of surveillance, requiring visas and passports, interrogation, incarceration, and expulsion. By 1795, as the Revolution progressed and the fight to sustain the Republic intensified against domestic and foreign enemies, the rhetoric transformed from universal rights to the rights and responsibilities of a citizen within the nation.

The execution on August 10, 1792, of King Louis XVI, the strain of diplomatic relations with Europe, the economic crisis and civil unrest continuing through the Terror generated a heightened level of paranoia, producing the institutionalization of xenophobia in the harassment of foreigners. The continuity of the treatment of foreigners under Napoleon was greatly influenced by methods from the Old Regime. The refinement of the system of police controls and surveillance of foreigners that firmly established the almost autocratic right of the French government to decide on expulsion, mass arrests, passports, and registers, is part of the Napoleonic legacy. Bonaparte institutionalized the separation of French citizens from foreigners in the Civil Code. The universal community of citizens became the exclusive community of French nationals, and those outside the national community were foreigners.

General Profiles of Recent Immigrants

The second half of the twentieth century saw the darkening of major French cities and their suburbs, particularly Paris, Lyon, and Marseilles, with the increased immigration of non-white, Third World people, both citizens and non-citizens. Immigration, race, ethnicity, religion, and the inability of non-whites to assimilate into French society became increasingly explosive issues that were exploited by elements of the extremist right. Slowed economic growth, unemployment, and intense competition for work exacerbated ethnic segregation and political exclusion.

Metropolitan France is now home to one-quarter of those who were born in Martinique and Guadeloupe. The DOM-TOM (Departements d’Outre Mer et Territoires d’Outre-Mer) population is all French citizens, primarily from the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean and Reunion in the Indian Ocean. The French government encouraged migration in the wake of a post-war labor shortage in Metropolitan France. Recruitment was also intended to continue the process of assimilation, especially in Guadeloupe and Martinique, to avert possible political unrest in response to unemployment and underemployment and also to circumvent U.S. economic incursions into the islands. During the sixties, these black migrants were seen as posing less of a threat than those from North Africa because of the “frenchness” of the Afro-Caribbeans. The government attempted to offset any xenophobia by promoting this

migration as Caribbean nationals freely moving within French territory. Before this effort, there were approximately 40,000 DOM-TOMiens already residing in France employed as domestics, in maintenance, in civil service, and in industry. Aside from these occupations, the government recruited workers in the building trades, in customs, and conscripted recruits for the military. At the time, this migration was perceived by the government as permanent because family migration and unification were encouraged and subsidized. As French nationals, they are allowed to work in the public sector, unlike foreign immigrants. But, like foreign immigrants, they occupy low-level positions. The rate of employment is slightly lower than the national average but unemployment for the children of those originating from the DOM-TOMs is double the national average. Discrimination is considered the primary reason that unemployment for children of migrants from the DOM-TOM parallels that of non-citizen immigrants. These Caribbean French nationals live largely in the Paris region -the center of state employment-in La Goutte d'Or, Seine-Saint-Denis (where the Paris riots of October 2005 began), or Belleville.

The sluggish economy during the seventies preceded a change in policy to replace foreign immigrants with nationals from the DOM-TOM. But, by the end of the seventies, there was less need for workers in the public sector and a rise in discrimination towards DOM-TOMiens. By the beginning of the Mitterrand government in 1982, policy focused on assimilating and integrating the DOM-TOM population that had already settled in France. And, by 1983, government policy began to focus on developing employment opportunities and increasing social benefits in the DOM-TOM in order to limit the in-migration of DOM-TOMiens to France.

Immigrants from the DOM-TOM are French by cultural affiliation and nationality and to a great extent embrace French cultural practices and values. But, darker complexions tend to be equated with immigration/foreigner and the "immigration problem," and are thought of as non-European. Europeans from Spain, Italy, or Portugal are more often than not assumed to be French nationals, an assumption that is also based primarily on skin color. Thus, the negative emphasis on the darker races tends often to render irrelevant the country or territory of origin and citizenship status. An individual or group can experience discrimination and exclusion whether or not they originate from any former colony or from an overseas territory or department considered part of greater France and whether or not they are citizens, legal residents, or undocumented immigrants.

Sub-Saharan Africans in France numbered 240,000 in 1990, up from 82,000 in 1975. Most were from former French colonies as well as from Zaire (former Belgian colony) and Mauritius (former colony of Britain). Ninety percent of the women and two-thirds of the men work largely in low-grade, low-paid urban service sector jobs such as street vending and cleaning. They are two-thirds of the total number of vendors and street cleaners. A considerable number of them are undocumented because of the practice of polygamy, which makes it difficult to collect accurate figures of exactly how many live in France. An average family numbers eight, making it difficult to locate housing that is large enough and families can afford. Thus, ethnic enclaves of sub-Saharan Africans develop as word spreads among them of neighborhoods where housing a large family is possible. Most of them live in Saint-Denis and Paris.

Of the three countries that represent the Maghreb–Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria,immigrants from Algeria constitute the largest and oldest group. They came as manual laborers after the Second World War, settling in urban industrial cities such as Marseilles, Lyon, and Paris. Algerians have experienced economic exclusion and social marginalization as the result of the loss of jobs requiring manual skills in an increasingly technology-driven labor market.

The harkis, those Algerians who fought on the side of France during the Algerian War (1954-1962), fare as poorly as other migrants from Algeria. After escaping execution in Algeria and arriving in France, the *harkis*, who are French nationals, were housed largely in dilapidated army barracks and then subsequently relocated into better housing. Notwithstanding their support of France against other Algerians, the *harkis* and their descendants, who number about 500,000, are still not accepted in France as French and are severely marginalized. They continue to live in “micro-concentrations” and, at times, experience an unemployment rate of up to 80 percent among young adults age 18-25.

In the 1960s, Moroccan immigration coincided with the need for manual labor in the automobile industry. Moroccans also outnumber other national groups in their participation in agricultural labor. Following their labor patterns, there are concentrations of Moroccans in western suburbs of Paris, the rural southwest, and Corsica, where they compose about fifty percent of the population. The most recent Maghrebis immigrants are the Tunisians. Similar to their predecessors, they are manual workers and they reside in Paris, Lyon, and in the Marseilles area, where their labor concentration is in the building industry.

Living Conditions – Housing

The majority of immigrant workers until the 1970s lived in hostels for single men, shanty-towns on the outskirts of major cities, or in deteriorating apartment buildings located in declining neighborhoods. By the mid-seventies workers began to rent apartments in government housing, Habitations à Loyer Modéré (HLMs), intended for immigrants and families of low and moderate income. These were built largely on the outskirts of large cities such as Paris, Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Lyon, some distance away from markets, cafés, and shops. The HLMs were built in suburbs (*banlieues*) which were subsequently designated Zones à Urbaniser en Priorité (ZUPS). The apartments were to be allocated in such a way as to avoid ethnic concentrations. Often poorly constructed near railroad tracks and highways, this housing was noisy and inconvenient to public transportation. In order to avoid an over-concentration of immigrant families, the government established a quota system whereby it paid a special allotment to an HLM authority to disperse its immigrant population among buildings in a development. Instead, immigrants and foreigners have been concentrated in certain older and degenerating HLM high rise buildings, giving the impression that HLMs in *banlieues* are occupied by poor or unemployed immigrants who cause the decline of their own housing. The poor locations and deplorable conditions of some of the developments discouraged many Europeans from accepting apartments in them. The HLMs became associated with downward mobility and HLM authorities rented their quota to immigrant families and left the remaining apartments empty. The empty apartments began to be used by

jobless youth to store stolen merchandise and to engage in other criminal behavior.

Foreigners, who are six percent of the overall population, comprise eighty-one percent of the inhabitants of economic priority zones. *Banlieues* (suburbs) have come to indicate, in U.S. terms, an inner-city neighborhood complete with the lowest socio-economic groups, the unemployed, poor school performance, and crime. HLMs are “mono-ethnic” concentrations and have, since the seventies, been areas of violent confrontations between unemployed youth and police. Segregation in racially constructed communities contributes to the social isolation of immigrants. These economically and socially disadvantaged districts are examples of exclusion in French society.

Assimilation has, as we have seen earlier, not been an easy and seamless process for Europeans, even of Catholic background, nor has it been easy for those who are non-white from the Third World. Throughout the history of immigration in France, there has been conflict of varying degrees between French workers and labor migrants. Low demographic growth and the ebbs and flows of industry determined the pace for the in-migration of workers to France. But, it was also the ebbs and flows of industry that determined solidarity or conflict between French workers and foreign workers. The “sub-class of foreign workers” who were once necessary for the economy has, to a considerable degree, become the sub-class of physically distinct citizen workers who as redundant labor are often unemployed and sharing public welfare benefits with the majority population.

Citizenship Status

Until 1993, children of foreign parents automatically attained citizenship at the age of eighteen (age of majority), if they were born in France or if they had lived in France for five years before reaching eighteen. And, each year about 24,000 youth became citizens in this fashion. If one parent became naturalized then the children automatically became French nationals. This allowed an additional 12,000 children annually to become French nationals. Children born in France were legally French if one parent was born on French territory. Children whose parents were from former French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa or Algeria automatically possessed French nationality.

As part of the 1993 reforms, Article 23 of the French nationality laws was amended to exclude sub-Saharan Africans from former French colonies and their children from automatic French nationality. This law also required that children of Algerian descent would have to have at least one parent living in France for five years prior to their birth in order to have automatic French nationality. Any child born in France can acquire French nationality by completing the proper documentation when they are between the ages of 16 and 18.

The Racialization of Immigration

By the end of the 1960s, the term “immigration” itself began to be a euphemism for the social integration of the post-war population from Africa. By the mid-1970s, the concept of culture had replaced race and racism in the language of differences based on ethnicity. According to

this view, culture replaced instinctive hereditary behavior and it was culture, not biology, which also modified inherited instincts. If culture and not race establishes the foundation for ethnic difference, then it is possible to be opposed to people who are different based on their culture and not their race. This distinction was important in order to promote the political goals of the National Front. Eliminating the fear of being labeled racist opened the possibility of attracting right-leaning voters from other parties, particularly those who were unhappy about issues involving immigrants and immigration. Disliking what was foreign could then be based on a natural avoidance of cultures different from one's own. Exclusion could be justified, not on race or racism, but on the natural selection of individual cultures and survival of the fittest among them. One could avoid being openly racist, and yet subscribe to doctrines of racial superiority and suggest the elimination or expulsion of some supposed inferior group based on differences of ethnicity and culture. The current Minister of the Interior, Nicholas Sarkozy has also suggested that those of "immigrant" backgrounds who participated in the riots of Fall 2005, be deported. The reference to second generation immigrants is generally a reference to French citizens — children born in France or its territories and educated in its school system. The persistence in alluding to them as "immigrants" is based on the fact that they can be identified as non-white.

In the early 1980s, Jean Marie Le Pen exploited and intensified anti-immigrant sentiment in a more openly hostile fashion. Substantial support for the National Front comes from relatively affluent areas of Paris and Lorraine where workers are skilled, self-employed, upwardly mobile shop-keepers and business and home owners. National Front supporters are not "destitute and despairing," but tend to be the "dissatisfied" middle classes. Voters come from the established parties on the right, are former abstainers and young voters as well as defectors from both the socialist and communist parties. Significant to Le Pen's success has been the ability of the National Front to attract the traditional constituency of young working class males away from the parties of the left. The racialization of immigrants was precipitated by economic contractions, the perceptions of alien cultures, and the unassimilability of non-European labor. One of the primary beliefs of the Front is the denial of the universalist tenet that all humans share a common origin and that all men are created equal, but are separated by the communities and cultures in which they were nurtured. As part of its political agenda, the National Front advances a social inequality that would give "national preference" in jobs, housing, and education. Rising unemployment, crime and delinquency, suburban poverty and riots, and decreased expenditure on social programs were and are still all blamed on immigrants and immigration. Social and economic problems in French society tend to focus on the density of the immigrant population and away from the globalized economy, the lack of social programs, and the reduced ability of the state to solve economic and social problems.

2005 – 2006 Civil Unrest in France

Between October 27, 2005 and March 28, 2006, France experienced intermittent political and labor unrest among its youth. In the Fall, the demonstrations and riots were initiated primarily by underprivileged immigrant-origin black and Arab youth in the "banlieues" or ghettos. In the Spring, protests and labor strikes were led by university students, laborers, and union leaders,

basically middle/upper middle class, angry about the possibility of employees having to relinquish established guarantees against abusive treatment and firing without legal recourse.

2005 Fall riots

On October 27, 2005, two “immigrant-origin” youths were electrocuted climbing a fence of an electric substation as they were running from police. Both youths, one of Malian heritage and the other of Arab Tunisian background, lived in the economically depressed Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois. Random searches and identification checks by police are frequent and there is widespread perception in the banlieues that the police are racist, abusive, and operate with impunity. These deaths and perceptions sparked 20 nights of rioting, fighting with police, and the torching of some official buildings and thousands of cars by mostly immigrant-origin youth in banlieues throughout France. As earlier noted, the banlieues are suburbs of French cities where the majority of “immigrants” reside, isolated from the shops and municipal services of central cities and where the rate of unemployment at 20 percent is more than double the French national average. Economic and social exclusion based on race and national origin of ancestry (ie. surnames), and lack of prospects for upward mobility plague this population, even those who may be well educated. Government response ranged from punitive to conciliatory. After the twelfth night of rioting, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin announced curfews as an option for town officials. The next day a national state of emergency was announced and Nicholas Sarkozy, Minister of the Interior, declared that foreigners convicted of rioting would be deported. On the fifteenth day of unrest French president Jacques Chirac admitted to social problems including unemployment, crime, poor housing, and the bigotry faced by non-white and Muslim background French, and promised that his government would develop new programs and opportunities for these youth.

Azouz Begag, Minister of Equal Opportunities (a position created in response to previous social disturbances in the banlieues) urged that statistics on religion and ethnicity begin to be collected in order that accurate data can be kept on the French population at large and particularly the economic and social progress of immigrants in the banlieues. The collection of data that defines French people in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, etcetera, is in opposition to the French Republican ideal of “citizen” of the Republic, equal and without distinction. The irony is that economic and social exclusion is obscured by the definition of “citizen” established by the Revolution, as simultaneously many citizens are being excluded from exercising their rights in the French Republic.

2006 Labor protest

The Contrat première embauche (CPE – First Employment Contract or Beginning Workers Contract) requires a two-year probation period for employees under the age of 26 and gives employers the right to terminate employment without notification and with no requirement to offer a reason or explanation. Currently, employers must give notice with justification and are subject to litigation. The bill would allow lowering the age for youth working at night from 16 to 15, fourteen year old adolescents to become apprentices, and the revocation of family

welfare benefits if a child fails to attend school. Part of the rationale behind the formulation of the CPE in the winter of 2006, was the alleviation of the high unemployment rate among the young, and particularly among “banlieue” youth after the Fall riots forced the government to once again look at the discrimination and economic exclusion often faced by this population. Unemployment in the banlieues is typically twice the national average and is seen as the primary cause for lawlessness in these neighborhoods. Proponents of the bill claim that the employers’ unencumbered ability to fire will be an incentive to hire more young people. In turn, an increased number of youth with no previous job experience would acquire training and skills that would allow them to gain future employment. Opponents allege that replacing the traditional three-to-six month probation period with one that lasts for two years after which an employee can be let go without justification invites abusive behavior on the part of employers including sexual harassment, reduction of wages, and job insecurity. Some opponents have suggested that banks would be less willing to give mortgages and landlords would be reluctant to rent to persons working under CPE contracts. Inherent in these demonstrations was the expectation that the government was not supposed to design multi-tiered job systems which at the outset designate some jobs as less secure thereby encouraging systemic inequalities. The massive demonstrations prompted the Chirac government to withdraw the CPE law on April 10th in order to develop a compromise plan to reduce unemployment among the young.

The Debate Continues

The political basis for the development of the French modern nation-state was the desire for political equality and the passion for the elimination of social distinctions based on birth. There was also an objective economic and historical incentive for the French to centralize government operations and form a state. Thus, the prolonged revolutionary struggle that made it necessary for the state to eliminate all feudal representatives between itself and the population. The Revolution underscored the class nature of French society, setting the foundation for the modern awareness of economic and social class structures in Western societies. Although this shift from feudalism to a modern centralized nation-state widened the political base, it did not adequately address strategies for a more equitable distribution of material wealth. Deprivation and penury, therefore, persisted among the French working classes and were the source of future political and economic struggles.

Particularism camouflages racism in dominating an economically subordinate group. The application of this perspective to transcontinental labor is an effective means socially to differentiate elements of the working class in order to reinforce the structure of dominance. “Racialization,” as Maxim Silverman defines it, serves to entrench the position of the majority group so that their social and economic condition remains unchallenged. This phenomenon of exclusion illustrates the continuation of former colonial relations of power through the economic and social exclusion of migrant workers and people from former colonies. And although these most recent working class immigrants are non-white, every group of immigrant workers for the past 100 years has, to varying degrees, been perceived to be culturally alien and economically marginalized. Third World immigrants who are non-white, even though many of them are citizens, are cast as incompatible parts of a unified whole, based on supposed

cultural differences, actual differences in ethnic appearance, and their status as chronically unemployed. One of the major challenges currently confronting French society is a recasting and redefinition of those who compose the “whole” of its national community, especially in hard economic times.

Since the Revolution there have been intermittent adjustments as to who would have access to citizenship and nationality and who would be excluded based directly on one’s economic function and usefulness. Universalism means that all humans have certain inalienable rights, but particularism means that not all people have the right of citizenship. One could be a French national and not have the right to participate in the political process: slaves in the colonies, colonial subjects, poor Frenchman, servants, and women. The conflict between universalism and particularism is an enduring historical process for both the nation’s populace and its elites as they continue to confront issues involving new immigrant populations, changing economies, and altered perceptions of nationhood in a global context.

It was the ideals of sovereignty, democracy, freedom of religion and speech, and equal justice before the law, as counters to the actual behavior of men, that awakened revolutions which produced radical change throughout the Continent and the Americas. These ideals electrified the peasants of Europe, Toussaint L’Ouverture and the slaves and colored men throughout the Antilles, as well as Marc Bloch and the Resistance. But the development of ideal democracies requires more than universal principles. It is necessary to consider everyday economic and social conditions to determine who is able to profit from democratic rule and who is left out. It proved easier during the French Revolution to codify political justice than pass legislation to eliminate wide disparities of wealth. The Revolution did not go far enough. As a bourgeois revolution it guaranteed political rights but stopped short of guaranteeing economic equality. And universal principles, paradoxically, make economic inequality more difficult to address because they emphasize political equality and ignore real material differences that impact on the ability of an individual to integrate fully into the society.

The social unrest experienced in France during 2005-2006 begins to address the precarious nature of political equality when material differences are engendered and sustained by economic exclusion. The common strain between the disadvantaged protesters from the banlieues who rioted in the Fall and the students and workers who went on strike and protested in the Spring is the belief that liberty, equality, and fraternity are based on economic opportunity and the right to work. These protests were grounded in fear of economic insecurity and frustration over the lack of employment opportunities. For many of the Fall 2005 protesters the values of the French Republic are ignored and sabotaged by economic exclusion and racism. For the Spring protesters advocating its repeal, the CPE represents the disintegration of the sense of solidarity, the disruption of the idea of a shared destiny, and the corruption of the ideals of the French Republic. In spite of the dissimilar backgrounds of the protesters, there seemed to be a common expectation that it is the government’s responsibility to create the economic and social conditions that sustain these values.

Notes

Altman, G. (1968). Foreword to Marc Bloch, Strange defeat: A statement of evidence written in 1940. (G. Hopkins, Trans.). London: W.W. Norton & Company.

Castles, S. (1999). Challenges to national identity and citizenship: A comparative study of immigration and society in Germany, France and Australia. (CAPSTRANS-CEDA Policy Papers Series No. 1). Sydney, Australia: Committee for Economic Development of Australia.

Castles, S. and Kosack, G. (1973). Immigrant workers and class structure in Europe. London: Oxford University Press.

Condon, S.A., and Ogden, P.E. (1991). Emigration from the French Caribbean: The origins of an organized migration. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 15(4), 505-523.

Cross, G. S. (1983). Immigrant workers in industrial France: The making of a new laboring class. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Ehrenberg, J. (1999). Civil society: The critical history of an idea. New York: New York University Press.

Ehrenberg, J. (1992). The dictatorship of the proletariat: Marxism's theory of socialist democracy. New York: Routledge.

Fysh, P. and Wolfreys, J. (1998). The politics of racism in France. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
Grillo, R.D. (1985). Ideologies and institutions in urban France: The representation of immigrants. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hargreaves, A.G. (1995). Immigration,'race' and ethnicity in contemporary France. London: Routledge

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005_civil_unrest_in_France 8/6/2006 (for an updated summary)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Employment_Contract 8/7/2006 (for an updated summary)

James, C. L. R. (1989). The black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo revolution. (2nd ed.). New York: Vintage Books.

Rapport, M. (2000). Nationality and citizenship in revolutionary France: The treatment of foreigners 1789-1799. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Schain, M.A. (1996). The immigration debate and the National Front. In J.T.S. Keeler & M.A. Schain (Eds.), Chirac's challenge: Liberalization, Europeanization, and malaise in France (pp. 169-197). New York: St Martin's Press.

Silverman, M. (1992). Deconstructing the nation: Immigration, racism and citizenship in modern France. London: Routledge.

The Discourse On Immigration: Myths And Principles

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

To discuss any issue of social rights seriously, we have to begin not only with the "practical possibilities," or the contending policy proposals on national legislative agendas, but also with governing ethical principles, whatever they may be and wherever that discussion may take us. This is not to say that principles ought to govern policies, as, of course, they cannot and probably should not; but that principles ought to inform policies-ought to be where we start out from before we get wherever we are going. Otherwise we are in the value-less world of might makes right. Even if "the right" is held, in a democracy, to be the desire of the majority, this marks a numerical extension of the realm of might, but makes no ethical improvement on it. In any event, with respect to the contemporary mass migration of peoples, it turns out to be not only undesirable but also impossible to discuss policy without quickly adverting to the more general realm of principle.

The policy issues here seem to be diverse, as varying concrete socioeconomic conditions push different needs and desires to the forefront of elite and popular discourse. In the United States, for example, the potential impact of increased immigration on the condition of domestic labor and an allegedly consequent worsening of an already gross state of economic inequality draws the most attention.1 In Sweden, conversely, it is the potential impact of immigration on the maintenance of a generous welfare state that is the most salient issue; in France, the creation of a new, alienated, underclass; in Britain, fears of terror and crime; in Canada, pressure on an under-populated society with a tight labor market; in the Netherlands, a threat to the ideal of multicultural balance. These varying situations produce the roster of "practical possibilities," but discussion of them usually proceeds without approaching the underlying realities. Yet at the same time, one over-arching and inescapable rubric describes what is happening in all the nations that play host to or provide the new form of mass population movements. This is the world-wide existence of two kinds of societies: one, a thriving core of advanced capitalist economies and white-dominated social structures; the other, the less-productive economies and often weak or predatory states of the mostly non-white periphery.2

Just as there is in the international economy a global market for capital, commodities, and cultural products, in which the law of supply and demand is an underlying law of motion, so

there is and has to be a global market for labor-for a new proletariat, though not perhaps as Marx envisioned it. Of course, like capitalist employers everywhere, the political and economic elites of the wealthy states want to eliminate any potential bargaining power of this international proletariat, and to control totally the terms of exchange for its labor: to eliminate one side of the supply/demand equation. At the level of popular politics, though, elites must proffer one or another variant of nationalism as a way to negotiate the gap between their power and the demands of domestic classes. However, viewed from either perspective, this longing for control is clearly chimerical in the long run. The idea that the centripetal and centrifugal forces at work can be contained by the arbitrary obstacle course of national boundaries-often nothing but lines drawn in the sand,is absurd on its face.

To sustain general ignorance of the obvious, it is always necessary to have recourse to the realm of generally accepted myths.3 In this context, then, stating governing principles means not so much setting out a controlling ethic of discourse but rather uncovering and exposing the conventional myths that prevent serious ethical discussion from ever taking place. Three myths in particular dominate the nationalist-inflected discourse on immigration, and the beginning of serious discussion requires that their rhetorical sway be dispelled.
The first myth that sustains the immigration debate everywhere is the primary myth of national identity that, among its other uses, always undergirds the oppression of “others.” This is the fabulous realm of “culture”-a supposedly real world of national solidarity whose virtues immigrants would subvert, if admitted. Exactly what this national identity consists of, however, is rarely specified in full. On the contemporary scene, though, “culture” as a justification for restraining immigration appears to consist mainly of the allegedly equal treatment of women, religious tolerance, linguistic uniformity, and unsullied national allegiance. The first pair on this list are primarily used as an anti-Islam weapon by Europeans who have belatedly discovered their virtue. The latter two receive particular emphasis in the more pluralist United States, where nativists are always angrily on the counter-attack. But this collection of supposed virtues is not a culture: it is an ideology-the ideology of either liberal or reactionary nationalism.

Like all ideologies of unity, this one, in either of its guises, conceals the reality of dissensus, difference, conflict, and repression, under the soothing rhetorical cover of a national community that exists virtually nowhere. The “identity” of a place is the people who live there. Understood in this light, a national identity cannot be diluted (though Adolf Hitler would have disagreed); it can only be expanded, as the number of people who call themselves “Americans” or “Frenchmen” or “Germans” grows. Subcultures can die out through intermarriage, or declining birth rates, but neither nations nor the subcultures within them can be weakened, whatever that might mean, merely by the immigration of persons with different social identities. Of course if national solidarity were the overriding virtue that its propagandists assert, the case might be different. But it is really useful only for fighting wars, few of which should have been fought in the first place. Otherwise, unless pursued with relentlessly oppressive force and violence the search for it is capable of leading only to what Justice Robert Jackson called “the unanimity of the graveyard.”

For example, one has only to look at Civic Ideals, Rogers Smith's intensive history of immigration legislation in the United States, to see not only how volatile the "American" response to immigration has been, but also how strikingly difficult it is to encapsulate an adequate description of the host "culture" over time.4 As for Europe, to take an instance that could be repeated in one version or another in most of the wealthy capitalist states, in the wake of the hijab controversy it has become evident that French pride in a supposedly liberal version of nationalism conceals at the same time a faux secularism, an implicit racism, an exclusionary morality, and a sometimes hysterical narrowness and intolerance.5 If official France pursued, say, domestic abuse in all its variants with the same zeal it has dedicated to the hijab, the latter might be more impressive; but nationalism, even liberal nationalism, always turns a blind eye to its own defects. Is the United States a society in which gender equality has become so entrenched that the President's wife can passionately defend the rights of Afghan women; or is it a society in which hundreds of American women are imprisoned in the name of fetal rights that are endorsed by that same President, so that American women, as one activist puts it, are no longer striving for equality with men but now are falling behind in their attempt to achieve equality with the fetus?

It is, actually, neither and both.6 Thus the supposedly more "liberal" West's criticism of the Muslim world for its patriarchalism conceals the existence, most notably of course in the United States, of angrily defensive opponents of change. This is inevitable. The observable characteristics of a supposedly national character or culture both remain constant, and change; and the more crucial they are, often the more drastically they change.7 Since every great change produces beneficiaries and victims, winners and losers, progressives and traditionalists, fundamental conflict is written into the history of nations. Furthermore, every culture, even and especially every subculture, is riddled with closets, some of them quite capacious, within which much of the real life of the community takes place, again giving the lie to any notions of cultural unity. The insular tribal societies where the pioneering anthropologists of the early 20th Century originally discovered "culture"-the Trobriand Islands, for example-may indeed have been unitary communities (though in many cases later doubt has been cast on that early assumption); but even the indigenous tribes of say Canada or the United States were constantly in conflict not only with each other but also among themselves. In any event, with the only partially arguable exception of Scandinavia, "cultural unity" is certainly not a term that could be used to describe those societies that bear the burden of contemporary immigration. For nations such as the United States, Great Britain (whatever that is), France, Italy (with its would-be secessionist North), Germany, the Netherlands, or bi-national Canada, "culture" as a description, rather than as a putative norm with which some people bully other people, is nothing more than a metaphor, and a bad one at that. Its implicit suggestion of an organic whole is a simple distortion (and this is equally as true, e.g., of the potentially separate nation of, say, Quebec, as of Canada as a supposedly integral unit). Almost everywhere we look we find the remnants of indigenous peoples, or the descendants of ex-colonized peoples, as well as some other demarcation of "inferior" subgroups: Jews, male and female gays, Gypsies (the Rom) South Asians, "uppity" women, wanderers and vagrants-all of whom are actually as much a part of the "culture" as anyone else. "Deviance" is an attribute not of cultural identities but of repressive social orders.8

In addition, at the most basic level the myth of national identity in the wealthy Western (or "Northern") societies has the very peculiar effect of taking the historically idiosyncratic (even if momentarily triumphant) institution of capitalism for granted. That is, the language of identity and culture, unless broadened so extensively that it loses its specific salience, treats class and gender differences and the political ideologies based on them, as though they are epiphenomenal, merely derivative from such "real" characteristics as religion, or language, or ethnicity. But if this were so, all elections in capitalist democracies would be by acclamation, or else would be charades marking the permanent domination of the White Party in a one-party state. But this is clearly not the case. Socialism may be moribund; profound class, occupational, and life-world divisions based in the world of material gain and loss, however they express themselves in the contemporary world, are anything but. But then are they not part of "culture"? Do women belong to the same "culture" as men?

In the U.S., therefore, to take a locus of one of the fiercest contemporary debates about immigration, Mexican immigrants, "legal" or "illegal," cannot subvert, distort, or adulterate "our culture," because there is nothing concrete to be subverted, distorted, or adulterated: not to mention that in any event their forebears were here long before my own or those of most of my readers. There is no "American culture." There are many American subcultures, as well as occupational and income classes, that relate to each other sometimes easily but often very uneasily, and that in many cases cross and re-cross geographical borders as well. There are certainly dominant ways of thought that, once internalized, make many (but hardly all) "Americans" feel ill at ease in other nations if they have the income to travel abroad (and this is equally true of the inhabitants of other nations when here). But dominant is not universal, and it is doubtful that most Chinese-Americans feel ill at ease in Taiwan or Hong Kong or Shanghai, or Irish-Americans in Ireland, or Jewish-Americans in Israel. In any case, the dominant attitudes or habits of everyday behavior are always surrounded by exceptions and divergences; to adopt them is to pass a ritual of inclusion, but to ignore them often costs little or nothing. To have no interest in baseball or football, to root for foreign underdogs during the Olympic Games, or to think that Thanksgiving is chiefly a painful celebration of Continental conquest during which family members who detest each other have to pretend to get along, may mark one as eccentric, but not as any less "American." In the same way, to prefer milk to wine in France, or to be uninterested in the accomplishments of Zidane or Mauresmo, may be odd, but the oddity has nothing to do with being more or less "French." All these preferences, no matter how widespread, are not more than minor quirks of character.

At any rate such hazily recognizable national characteristics, which again are found everywhere, as well as the general popularization of certain commercial commodities and rituals that come to substitute for "national character," are often all there is to "national identity." Thus Mexican immigrants to the U.S. who inflame sensibilities because they prefer to go on speaking their first language could have an interesting discussion-were they able to find a capable translator,with the shades of my Jewish immigrant grandparents, who never learned how to speak any English whatsoever. If they feel uneasy about waving Mexican flags (along with American flags) in protest marches, they might feel better after watching a St. Patrick's Day parade in New York or Boston; or discussing "loyalty" with some of the many Jews who

talk wistfully about “making Aliyah” in Israel, not to mention identifying its national travails as their own; or talking politics with the Italian-Americans who once overwhelmingly supported the Fascist dictator Mussolini. Moreover, these partial identities are in many cases violently opposed to each other within the American national setting (or any other), and in other cases their bearers find more in common with non-Americans thousands of miles away than with a majority of fellow citizens at home (the “home” itself being a virtual continent of antagonisms and difference). An American academic feminist visiting at the University of Stockholm would certainly find herself more “at home” there than she would at Bob Jones University, and her hosts would probably be much happier spending time with her than with the inhabitants of a rural farming community, or with Lapps (or Sami as they now prefer to call themselves) in the North of their much more socially homogeneous nation.

This myth of culture is closely allied with a second myth, the myth of the democratic people. Who exactly are these “people” for whom a given set of appropriately realized laws etc. is authoritative? The standard answer to that question makes “democracy” into an off-shoot of the modern nation-state, but other than as reference to an historical past that may already be outmoded, there’s no obvious reason why that answer is appropriate. Most readers of Logos, for example, are probably American citizens. According to the standard version, therefore, we should feel at one with all the other persons who meet that description, both juridically and-to some ill-defined extent-emotionally. All together and equally, we make up “the American democracy.” But many of us (myself included) do not in fact feel that way. There are legitimately authorized laws, policies, and decisions that we accede to only, as Bentham put it, out of fear of the costs we might incur if we did not accede; or because our connection to the polity and its economic base is so attenuated that we have no meaningful way of registering our opposition. (Not our dissent, which is easy and meaningless to register, but our profound opposition). At the same time, there are millions of our fellow citizens whom we think of much more as enemies than as fellows, and there are residents of other polities with whom we have (or feel we have) much more in common. Moreover, there are certainly many Americans who feel that way about us: that we are traitors, “socialists,” doers of Satanic works, etc. What, other than sheer force (as Weber remarked), makes this collection of persons a “people” let alone a “democratic people,” is opaque.

Conversely, those of us who belong to the professional class and live in a large, “first-world” city sometimes directly employ and regularly (as when eating out) make indirect use of, the labor of persons who are legal outcasts in our society, or are treated as juridical inferiors. These differentiations are essentially arbitrary by any standard of judgment or value we can imagine. Furthermore, these persons, such as the Latina nannies who are a constant presence in my New York City neighborhood, often serve our interests considerably better, and with infinitely less harm to the common weal, than do, say, some CEO’s of global or national corporations. Yet the received version of democracy moves on with its grand narrative of human agency, all the while unable to give a coherent account of who the agents of this narrative are or ought to be; of why they can only be one class of persons rather than another.

Immigration, in other words, is not primarily a story of “peoples,” though it can be read that

way for purposes of sociological analysis and the writing of discriminatory laws. Primarily, it is a story of persons from poor countries looking for work in rich countries, persons who are marked fundamentally by their diversity (as are those who are willing to employ them as well). In the end, the only truthful, non-ideological, generalization that can be uttered about immigrants in this or any other context is that they will bring change to their host nation: always have and always will. But fear of change is not an ethic. It's more properly described as a neurosis, and in the case of the verbal bomb-throwers of today's Right, a pathology: the same pathology that disfigured so much of the 20th Century. The words of hate uttered by John Kyl, Ann Coulter, and the rest of the Right-wing entourage, have more in common with the vocabulary of Adolph Hitler than with that of Franklin D. Roosevelt; just as for a great many white Americans of European descent, the Latin- and Asian-inflected demonstrations of April 10 were certainly more in their "national" tradition than the occasional manifestations of the K.K.K. Who in these pairs best represents the "American culture?" The question is unanswerable, because it implies an objective factual account of a concept that is wholly and controversially normative. When the demagogues of the United States, or even the somewhat more ethnically homogeneous France or the Netherlands, start conjuring up the terrors of linguistic, religious or ethnic diversity, we have to take note that they are in every case obliterating large quantities of the "national" past. In all these cases, that national past includes the obliteration of actual peoples, and thousands or millions of persons, as well: including especially the forebears of the people they are now perceiving as a "cultural" problem.

The third great myth of the immigration debate is in a sense the master myth, to which the myths of national culture and the democratic people are subsidiary. This is the uninterrogated notion of the sovereign national state as an ethical entity, legitimately constituted by "rights" of exclusion as well as by sovereign powers over those whom it includes.

That it can be conceived of as a criminal offense that a law-abiding, hard-working, person can be the object of authorized violence for wanting to work or live in one place rather than another, is actually an astonishing proposition. Nothing in the realm of ethics or right or duty can possibly uphold it. Hidden from view, but apparent on close inspection, the awareness of that truth will be evident to any dispassionate observer. Consider, for example, the following statements from the decision in the case of Edwards v. California (314 U.S. 160) enshrined in American constitutional law since 1941:

". . . [T]his does not mean to imply that there are no boundaries to the permissible area of State legislative activity. There are. And none is more certain than the prohibition against attempts on the part of any single State to isolate itself from difficulties common to all of them by restraining the transportation of person and property across its borders." (From the opinion of the Court by Justice Byrnes, perhaps the most conservative member of the "Roosevelt Court").

". . . I am of the opinion that the right of persons to move freely from State to State occupies a more protected position in our constitutional system than does the movement of cattle, fruit, steel and coal across state lines." (Justice Douglas, concurring).

“Thus it is plain that the right of free ingress and egress rises to a higher constitutional dignity than that afforded by state citizenship.” (Ibid.).

These statements all rest, as under the circumstances they must, on the peculiarly American Constitutional distinction between states and nation. The State is sovereign; the states are not. Yet none of those statements would have to be changed by so much as a word if the distinction were instead being made between one nation-state and a world of nation-states. It would still be the case, after all, that as Chief Justice Fuller held in the case of Williams v. Fears (179 U.S. 270, 274; quoted by Justice Jackson in his concurring opinion in Edwards): “Undoubtedly the right of locomotion, the right to remove from one place to another according to inclination, is an attribute of personal liberty. . . .” To this he of course added that “. . . the right, ordinarily, of free transit from or through the territory of any State is a right secured by the Fourteenth Amendment and other provisions of the Constitution.” However, it is crystal clear from Fuller’s wording that the right, the attribute, is “secured” by the Constitution-not created by it. It is surely, if there be any such at all, a natural right-as much so as any could be, with the exception of the right of self-defense. Or if we prefer to avoid the anachronistic language of natural rights, we can simply make use of the latter part of Fuller’s holding: we are speaking of a basic attribute of being a free human being.

The Edwards case held, in fact, that Americans were free to travel from any state in the Union to any other without being prevented entry, or deported, on the grounds that they were “indigent,” one of the hobgoblins that used to be periodically trotted out to keep Okies, or Arkies, or African-Americans, or Puerto Ricans, from being treated as equal citizens wherever in the U.S. they might wind up. This freedom was to be upheld regardless of whatever “drain” a person or group of persons might be alleged to constitute on available resources or public funds. For the U.S., it rested on the relatively generous Constitutional notion of American citizenship. We must remember however that citizenship is strictly a legal and not at all an ethical condition. Constitutionally or legislatively, it is granted on arbitrary grounds by sovereign states, and that is all. Moreover, as Joe Carens has pointed out, the unitary conception of citizenship implicit in the American Constitutional system (and most others) is fast disappearing from the international social order.9 Viewed in this light the principle of Williams and Edwards is quite clearly not merely a constitutional principle, but is also a general principle about human society. How then did this basic right of free movement come to be so constrained? How did the laisser passer, the original passport that promised citizens protection while abroad, come to be reconstituted as a weapon against unofficial border crossing in either direction? This is indeed a recent innovation, and it came about not as part of the flowering of individual rights attendant on the rise of the democratic state, but as part of the assertion of powers attendant on its hypostasis. In historical fact, all the rhetoric about the right of states “to control their own borders” obscures the truth that finally this is yet another instance of the strong exercising a “right” against the weak; it is not a right but a privilege of the ones who have the power to do it. Mexico can’t prevent the entrance of Americans to own portions of its economy, or to provide it with needed tourist income-this would be known as autarchy, or worse yet socialism, and condemned to history’s graveyard.

States do not have rights, just powers; only persons have rights. Particular states may protect those rights-sometimes. The U.S. has the power to keep troops in various nations which do not have troops stationed in the U.S. In this respect the whole discourse about immigration has implicitly assumed the coincidence of law and justice, but they could only conceivably be coincident if one universally agreed-on law covered the entire world. As it is, the arrest and imprisonment or deportation of harmless persons for being in one place rather than another is more lawful and less harmful, but no more just than torturing them. Guantanamo and a Corrections Corporation "detention center" are the same kind of facility-a facility in which naked state power, unsupported by anything but its own public opinion, is exercised. As for the demagogic cry that there should be "no amnesty for lawbreakers," its reasoning is as tortured as the treatment of persons that it so often justifies. The only "law" broken by illegal immigrants is the law that they shouldn't be illegal immigrants. There is no moral rule or reasonable behavioral constraint that they have violated. To the contrary, the only thing they've ever done is work hard. That's what immigrants, legal or illegal, male or female, come to other countries to do.10 If they commit crimes, here or there, of course they can be treated as criminals,but that is true of all persons wherever they live or come from. Geography conveys positive legal rights, but not rights of exclusion-or if it does, they can't be defended morally.

In this respect, a final word about the contemporary American debate is in order. Given elites' constant resort to the "work ethic" to criticize the behavior of lesser breeds among the domestic population, one of the most ironic spectacles of the early 21st Century is the sight of white politicians and journalists, not to mention the gun-loving, Armageddon-welcoming white residents of states such as Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California, stepping forward to defend the job security of low-wage black workers in the underbelly of the American economy. As it stands, about the only "help" offered to low-wage workers of any kind by the governing elites and majority population of those states is building more prisons, thus keeping those wages up by getting a few hundred thousand more black men out of the job market. Of course it can be argued in defense of restrictions on immigration that the free market for labor is the most anti-human of all free markets. That, however, would be an inversion of Marx. The authentic critique of the free market is that it prevents people from protecting themselves against exploitation, hazard, insecurity, obsolescence, etc., as well as against organized strikebreaking. And as Marx argued and history has borne out, only the collective action of workers themselves can establish those protections. As for immigrants, if welcomed into existing workers' movements anywhere, and in possession of both the power to organize and the right to vote, they would provide more impetus to that action and more bodies for its manifestations. Using the critique of the free market to protect jobs against other people who want them at lower wages (i.e, who are willing to endure a higher rate of exploitation) is thus a mis-use. If this is a genuine concern, then the obvious course of action is to raise minimum wages, preserve the right to strike, and increase the scope and depth of public welfare services via the solidarity of workers, and thus to reduce the general rate of exploitation; not to set workers against each other. The myths of nation, culture, and "the people," however, have always been intended to do exactly that.

About Saving Darfur: Reflections On The Carrot And The Stick

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

He who wills the end wills the means thereto.

—Immanuel Kant

Revulsion has gripped the world over the continuing tragedy in Darfur. Terrible civil wars between Northern and Southern Sudan have been taking place since independence was achieved more than fifty years ago. Nearly 300,000 people have died due to illness, violence, and starvation while 2.5 million have been driven from their homes over the last four years, and the UN Integrated Regional Information Network reported on March 19, 2007 that 4.5 million are "conflict affected" and in need of humanitarian relief. The ongoing conflict ravaging the Sudan has produced more than 80,000 new refugees in the six months since February 2007 even while the government in Khartoum has shut down 52 humanitarian relief agencies that have been caring for the "internally displaced people" living in 153 camps. As the crisis of the Sudan spills over into Chad and the Central African Republic, where more than 450,000 hapless refugees linger without adequate sustenance or health care, international resolutions are greeted with indifference, and peace agreements already reached between the national government in Khartoum and the Southern rebels seem near collapse.

Governments throughout the world led by Britain and the United States have inveighed against the Khartoum government led by Omar al-Bashir calling for various punitive measures including travel bans, freezing assets, economic sanctions, a "no-fly zone," and perhaps even military intervention. Letters of protest have been signed by leading progressive intellectuals, celebrities have entered the fray, divestment campaigns have begun at various campuses and state legislatures in the United States, and progressive organizations like "Save Darfur" and "Enough" have sprung into existence. Frustration has become ever more palpable and, everywhere, the cry is heard: "Let's do something."

No less than representatives of the political mainstream, however, Western progressives apparently lack any innovative ideas concerning what is to be done. Most of their proposals blend calls for cooperation with threats of coercion and, usually, the contradictions are glaring. The idea is to provide a sliding scale of options or, in more sophisticated terms, a "Rubik's Cube" of responses in which it is assumed that no single policy will work but that hope resides in the prospect of having these disparate ideas lined up correctly.[1] Little is articulated in the way of material incentives for cooperation, however, and too much reliance is placed on the use of sanctions and the type of military bluster favored by the Right. Thus, the integrity of the Left has been compromised along with its ability to frame the issues of war and refugees in its

own terms.

Western military intervention in the Sudan is simply not a viable option. It will confront almost unimaginable obstacles, divide those seeking to save Darfur, generate international opposition, and create even greater animus against the West in the Arab world. Economic sanctions have rarely had much success and, other than the military option, they constitute the next to last resort: leverage and influence diminish once sanctions are instituted and divestment can only prove a minor irritant in the Sudan. To insist that the Sudanese government does not "want" to cooperate is to miss the point. Genuine diplomacy will articulate proposals that focus on the economic, political, and symbolic incentives – rather than the threats – that might bring about cooperation.

Clear commitments and promises of sustained western investment in the Sudan can be linked to the repatriation of refugees in Darfur. A genuinely national investment plan would offer economic and political incentives for all parties engaged in the old civil war between North and South to adhere to the peace agreements already signed. Such an approach would also fit logically with the call made by many progressive organizations for heightened diplomatic engagement between the Western states and the Khartoum regime. China has material interests in the stability of Africa. That country might be enticed actually to develop positive policies for the Sudan –rather than simply exert "pressure" — if given a leading role in efforts to deal with what is rapidly becoming a transnational refugee problem and growing conditions of regional instability. Thinking about the Sudan and China in this way would give the grassroots actions favored by the Left — concerts, conferences, demonstrations, and the like — a clearer focus and sense of purpose. Especially because military intervention is unrealistic, and sanctions won't work, current ways of thinking need to be reversed. It is time to privilege the carrot over the stick.

None of the plans currently on the table will "save" Darfur because none of them, either alone or in combination, establishes a plausible connection between ends and means. Seeking cooperation while calling for punitive measures can only produce a contradictory enterprise. But that this embrace of mutually exclusive policy options is precisely what has been offered by organizations ranging from the International Human Rights Council to grassroots groups like "Save Darfur" and "Enough." All of them either explicitly or implicitly call for extending the sanctions placed by the United States upon the Sudan into a multi-national enterprise. Few of these organizations are willing to rule out force against the Sudan in spite of the ominous risks. Mixed with all this is a legitimate call for grassroots organizations throughout the world to express their outrage against the Sudan, (as well as China), for the United States to engage the Sudan diplomatically, for the rebels in the South to unify their efforts against the North, and for the completion of the peace process. Calling for increased diplomatic recognition of the Sudan by the West—i. e., the installation of an ambassador by the United States–while pushing for punitive economic and military measures makes no sense and how symbolic protest will translate into policy remains unclear. There is no reason why the Sudan should believe, let alone seriously engage, those wielding the weapons of economic and military coercion while calling for peace.

Wrangling between the Sudan and the international community is currently taking place over the implementation of a policy that would introduce a force of 22,000 troops under the "hybrid" command of the United Nations and the African Union to patrol the IDP camps. Three thousand troops are already in place but the last phase of the operation is proceeding at a snail's pace. Various neo-conservatives like Robert Kagan as well as important US State Department Officials like Susan Rice and President Bill Clinton's former National Security Advisor, Tony Lake, have already called for unilateral military action by the United States against the Sudan. Some voices on the left are now echoing these suggestions. Others are calling for a "quartet" of outside nations to mediate the crisis in Darfur. In order to make sure that its "bark" will not prove bigger than its "bite," however, many progressives seem willing to entertain the dangerous suggestion that mediation by such a quartet "must be prepared to push ideas based on their assessment of what is required, not only what the parties state that they are willing to accept."[2]

How this is to be accomplished, of course, is another matter. It is ludicrous to believe that 22,000 troops will produce stability for the 153 IDP camps in Dafur, which is as large as France, or prove capable of dealing with the complexities of the Sudan whose size is roughly that of Western Europe. Or, to put it in slightly different terms, this nation is 30 times the size of Rwanda and 100 times the size of Sierra Leone. Aside from its own military force, moreover, the Sudan has eighty different tribal militias and its peoples speak hundreds of different languages. Indeed, tragically, it is as if interventionist liberals have learned nothing from Iraq. They are, once again, ignoring obvious constraints on effective military action. They are, again, underestimating the potential for resistance. And, again, hardly a whisper can be heard about an "exit strategy." Nor has much time been spent worrying about how military intervention might destabilize any or all of the nine states bordering the Sudan or that "regime change" in Khartoum could generate a new set of civil wars from which the refugees would undoubtedly suffer the most. Interesting is how the assumptions regarding military intervention, as surely as the demands by Tony Blair for the introduction of "no-fly zones,"[3] have been carried over from those that spawned the disaster in Iraq.

On the European Union's 50th Birthday (March 25 2007) Bob Geldof — the singer/songwriter/mogul/activist and organizer of the fabulous Live-Aid Concert in 1985 that raised more than $100 million for famine relief in Africa — brought together a remarkable set of progressive artists and intellectuals to protest the murderous events taking place in Darfur. Dario Fo, Umberto Eco, Jurgen Habermas, Vaclav Havel, Seamus Heaney, Bernard Henri-Levy, Harold Pinter, Franca Rame and Tom Stoppard signed a letter calling for international economic sanctions against the Sudan that would also include travel bans and the freezing of individual assets in western banks. "Forbid them our shores and our health service and luxury goods," according to Geldof, and the crisis can be ended in three weeks. Unfortunately, however, he and his friends didn't bother to consider that international economic sanctions are virtually impossible to coordinate, Arab nations will never agree to restrictions on travel, banks and health services exist outside the West, and conversion of currency is a simple maneuver.

The intentions of these signatories were surely honorable. But their stance was neither brave

nor innovative. It was instead thoroughly establishmentarian and totally conformist. There has been enthusiastic praise for the use of economic sanctions against the Sudan not only from Republicans, but all across the American political spectrum. But the fact is that sanctions are already in place. More than 130 firms currently trading with the Sudan, including the two leading oil companies, are already prevented from doing business with the United States, using its financial institutions, or employing the dollar as currency for their transactions. The impact of these sanctions on the policy decisions made in Khartoum has been negligible. And that only makes sense. The Sudan is among the top 20 least trade dependent states in the world and, of particular importance insofar as sanctions impact mostly on the poor, it ranks 139th – or among the lowest nations — on the UN Human Misery Index.

Embracing right-wing foreign policy assumptions has created a situation for Western progressives in which their completely legitimate moral outrage has been combined with – as in Iraq — a completely naïve and hence illegitimate pseudo-realism. Liberal foreign policy analysts and organizations of the Left have thus been unable to develop any diplomatic alternatives, or initiatives of their own. The media has given enormous attention to the United Nations Children's Fund goodwill ambassador, actress Mia Farrow, for condemning the "genocide Olympics" planned for Beijing in 2008 and getting Steven Spielberg (who is currently serving as an artistic advisor for the televised event) to write a letter to President of China, Hu Jintao, expressing his dismay for China's support of the Sudan. "Credit goes to Hollywood," wrote Helene Cooper, on April 13, 2007 in The New York Times. And, in a way, that is fair enough. But, then, Spielberg's letter never received a response. China did dispatch Mr. Zhai Jun, a senior foreign policy advisor, to the Sudan – he visited three refugee camps, discussed the crisis, and then returned home. On May 9, 2007 The Daily Telegraph in London reported that China and Russia would sell new helicopters and military equipment to the Sudanese.

There is nothing wrong with attempting to mobilize world opinion and express outrage at what is taking place in Darfur. But such celebrity diplomacy is ultimately based on little more than an opportunity for the Sudanese government – or its allies–to avoid being shamed. If these nations were so concerned about being shamed, however, they would not have pursued the policies that they pursued in the first place. The idea that the shame wrought by a group of celebrities and the western media will somehow outweigh the massive material interests that China derives from buying more than 60% of the Sudan's oil, while serving as a prime supplier of its military needs, is simply ludicrous. Attempts by Hollywood celebrities to exert Western media pressure on the Sudan, a nation concerned with very different priorities, is similarly no substitute for meaningful policies. As things now stand: Western intellectuals and celebrities make their demands, the Sudanese should accept, and if they don't …better not to think about it. Their idea of diplomacy essentially rests on the belief that either Khartoum will capitulate to their demands or it will face more drastic alternatives. This approach has not only proven unsuccessful, but counter-productive. It has helped drive the Sudan into the arms of Russia and, especially, China.

Striking is the lack of reflection, the mixture of desperation and incoherence, and the inability

on the part of both the mainstream and most of its progressive critics to specify the end that the tactics they propose should realize in Dafur and the Sudan. Some are content to emphasize the need to "patrol" the IDP camps and guarantee security for humanitarian relief efforts. But this view is short sighted. Closing these nightmare IDP camps and repatriating the refugees is the only goal worth talking about and this means keeping the eyes on the prize. Unless repatriation is understood as the end that progressive policy should serve, its framers will be culpable for the creation of a new refugee population in Darfur and neighboring states that will make the lingering tragedy of the Palestinian or Iraqi refugees seem minor in comparison.

Repatriation policies will require over the long haul not only a great deal of money, which the United Nations lacks, but security and access to the villages in which the refugees used to live. This latter concern requires — as a prerequisite –peace between the rebels in Darfur and the government in Khartoum. Negotiation between the parties makes some form of meaningful cooperation between Khartoum and concerned parties in the rest of the world indispensable. For that negotiation to be successful, however, incentives must be articulated that speak to the interests not merely of those languishing in the camps but, ironically, the politicians sitting in their offices in Khartoum. If punitive measures can only prove reckless, divisive, and ineffective – so that the "bite" of interventionists will inevitably be weaker than the "bark"—talking about them as serious policy options will undermine the trust necessary to create the kind of cooperation that is sought by other policy options.

The reality is that the Sudan simply does not know what to do with the refugees in Darfur: it has become the prisoner of its own policies. The costs of relocating them are higher than leaving them to rot in this western part of the Sudan, or terrorizing them through the use of nomadic tribesmen known as the Janjaweed. More refugees are thereby generated and more violence. Regional insecurity is also heightened and tent communities have been created – comprising tens of thousands of IDPs – that now encircle Khartoum. It is a vicious cycle that is draining the resources of the Sudan even as it seemingly allows for no exit. Complicating matters further is the possibility of a new civil war between the government in Khartoum and the provinces of the South. An election is coming up in 2009 – agreed upon in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January 2006– that will allow the Southern provinces, which retain most of the country's oil and resources, to decide whether their citizens wish to secede from the Sudan. This prospect provides a possible incentive for the Khartoum government to resume the old civil war, prevent unity among the rebels, and maintain the numerous tribal militias. Should that take place, of course, more refugees will spill over into Darfur.

Amid this mess, then, a real issue of sovereignty is at stake for the government of Omar Bashir and dealing with the situation requires more than calls for unity among the rebels and support for their cause. It is also not as if the rebels were all angels committed to democratic government. Fifteen rebel factions from rival tribes with very different customs and languages are currently fighting the government in Khartoum under the rubric of the Sudanese Liberation Movement. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement is near collapse and only one faction has signed the Darfur Peace Agreement of May 2006. Tribal and religious loyalties still outweigh

commitments to democracy and nationalism, and even rebel leaders in Darfur are more concerned about shares from oil revenues and investment for their clienteles than solving the problems of the IDPs in Darfur. The Los Angeles Times reported on April 14, in fact, that humanitarian organizations as well as refugees have been subject to violence and atrocities by the rebels. Therefore, it is not merely a matter of calling upon the Sudan to bring about "peace." Even while insisting that China and Russia diminish their arms sales to the Sudan, which would still leave the North with a strong military advantage, western progressives must also highlight in their propaganda, and mobilizing efforts, the importance of having all rebel factions sign and adhere to –whatever their flaws — the peace agreements on the table.

Given the likelihood of a vote in favor of secession by the Southern provinces, or what shape the rebel opposition will have in two or three years, it makes little sense to speak about what a genuinely representative government would look like for the Sudan. Even were a temporary alliance achieved between previously hostile Arab and non-Arab factions in Darfur, (and the South), the stage might be set for a new round of civil wars. The real issue involves bringing together these rebel factions in hope of having them sign the Darfur Peace Agreement. Conscience International put forward a plan for regional conflict resolution conferences in El-Fasher, El-Geneina, and Nyjala during a visit by its members to Khartoum in March 2007. If followed, the glare of national and international politics would be dimmed; more people might become involved in the process; and perhaps even a bit of pressure could be brought to bear on leaders of the factions from below. Attempts at conflict resolution in the provinces might thus prove useful. Nevertheless, national policies must supplement such local initiatives.

To be sure, the Sudanese government must be convinced of the need for implementing its three-stage agreement with the UN. The completed first phase introduced hundreds of UN police advisors and civilian staff into Darfur while the second, which is basically in place, calls for a heavier support package comprising six helicopters and 3,000 troops; the third phase, which will bring in another 20,000 troops, is what remains the bone of contention. Amenable to a force under the control of the African Union,[4] which would then coordinate efforts by the UN and the Sudan, Khartoum has a legitimate point in demanding that senior officers for this "hybrid" operation should come from its own continent. This would allow for an African solution to an African problem, which is important given the memories of colonialism, and provide further recognition for both regional and Sudanese interests in conjunction with those of the IDPs.

Virtually nothing has been said either by mainstream politicians or progressives, however, about the need for a new economic strategy. Such an approach would need to transcend the current reliance on economic sanctions and instead address the tripartite interests of Khartoum, the Southern rebels, and the IDPs. Whether implemented through institutions associated with the nation-state, or an international economic consortium, such a strategy would basically rest upon lifting sanctions while using a certain fixed amount from every dollar invested in the Sudan for sustaining and repatriating the IDPs. It would be tied to "benchmarks," or demonstrable evidence, concerning the disarming of the Janjaweed. Western corporations and states might argue that investment first requires security and that projects

would be subject to the ebbs and flows associated with shifting tactics by the participants to the crisis in Darfur and the conflict in the Sudan. Such an objection is legitimate. Investment under unstable conditions is, indeed, a gamble. Western corporations and states would have to decide whether, in the case of the Sudan and the crisis in Darfur, humanitarian convictions might trump the risks involved.

There are also dangers to be considered. Investment tied to repatriating the refugees would benefit the government of Omar al-Bashir as well as Darfur and the South. There is nothing imprudent about such an investment plan, however, and there are legitimate reasons to hope for positive outcomes. Khartoum might, first of all, recognize that securing new investment is worth abandoning the Janjaweed. The Sudanese leaders of the North might also take the opportunity to lessen the costs generated by their disastrous policy in Darfur. They surely intuit that, unless investment becomes more diverse, the Sudan will increasingly become an economic colony of China. The prospect of Western investment might suggest to the Khartoum government that its Darfur policy is undermining its geo-political interests, Sustained investment in the North, even should the South secede, would still allow it to act as a dominant player in the region and in Africa. That human rights organizations –currently so suspect by the government in Khartoum – would probably have to administer the funds should not prove decisive. Were Western corporations and states to offer a new bold and innovative investment plan there would be a real incentive for the Khartoum government to adjust their policies appropriately. Or, putting it another way, an intelligent political investment strategy could conceivably aid the refugees in Darfur by offering an economic incentive for peace that would appeal to both parties to the old civil war that is in danger of being resumed.

But it is also crucial to understand that the plight of the IDPs has become a transnational problem that reaches beyond Darfur and into the Central African Republic, Chad, and other nations bordering the Sudan. Seeking aid for humanitarian agencies and catering to the needs of the refugees is essential. But it is a stopgap measure. Far larger funds are required to resuscitate not merely the African Union, which would play an important role in dealing with this problem, but the virtually bankrupt Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHRC) that has already successfully repatriated 12,000 IDPs in Darfur. Here a "quartet" — or a "quintet" — could actually do something useful. Important participants would have to include the Arab League, the European Union, Russia, and the United States. Any transnational undertaking in Africa, however, must also include China: it has accounted for nearly 20% of economic growth in Africa, written off more than $1billion in debts, provided loans of nearly $1 billion for 55 projects in two dozen African nations, and increased its trade with Africa from $6 billion in 2000 to what will probably amount to $100 billion by 2010.

Many are suggesting that the western economic dominance of Africa is at an end. Whether that claim is overstated or not, (requirements for building the infrastructure of Africa by 2010 are put at $17 billion), even a moderately successful resolution of the refugee problem will depend upon the degree of cooperation achieved between the China and the West. China has consistently called for a diplomatic solution to the crisis, and it has recently created a new cabinet-level position for African diplomacy centering on the Sudan. But it has also contributed

300 troops to the hybrid undertaking of the UN and the African Union. China is increasingly becoming a world actor, not merely a world power, and perhaps this nation should finally be accorded some responsibility by the West for implementing a concrete policy rather than for exercising the inherently elusive “influence” that intoxicates so many progressives.

Perhaps it might even be appropriate to raise the possibility of a joint effort undertaken by China and the rest of the quartet to complement a political investment strategy with direct financing of humanitarian organizations capable of sustaining and repatriating the refugees across boundaries. This would obviously benefit Khartoum by giving a genuinely important role to its most important ally. Western nations and organizations could share the burdens associated with resolving the crisis while China could garner some positive publicity for a humanitarian undertaking without compromising its economic interests in the Sudan and the region. In any case, there is no sensible option for progressives than to develop proposals for peaceful intervention that can coordinate the interests of the refugees with those of the region and the Sudanese.

As pundits speak about the growth of “compassion fatigue” concerning Darfur, usually without mentioning the devastating lack of positive proposals offered by the political mainstream, now is the time — echoing an old slogan — to give up the cant and return to Kant. He was, after all, the greatest advocate of linking ends and means. The new strategies advocated here have a speculative character. They would undoubtedly prove difficult to implement and there are myriad details to be resolved. But they speak to the need for an authentic policy of the Left. These proposals also dovetail nicely with progressive calls for increasing diplomatic contacts, seeking civil peace in the Sudan, and generating grassroots enthusiasm for dealing with the IDPs. They offer humane, cosmopolitan, and coherent alternatives to the more traditional reliance on economic sanctions and military threats that has failed so miserably in the past. None of them, moreover, is set in stone. Each is intended merely to spark discussion and provoke use of the critical intellect. If nothing else, when taken together, these proposals project a way of thinking about the seemingly intractable crisis in Darfur that refuses to accept the parameters of the given. Thus, perhaps, they might just inspire the hard work associated with imagining the possible.

Notes

[1]John Prendergast, “The Answer to Darfur: How to Resolve the World’s Hottest War” for the International Crisis Group and the Center for American Progress, (2007) pg. 7 www.enoughproject.org

[2] Ibid., pg. 10

[3] In response to information that Sudan has been flying arms and heavy military “With Sudan’s limited number of fixed wing aircraft it would be a logistical nightmare maintaining a no-fly zone in an area the size of Texas.” www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/Africa/03/29/Ussanctions.Sudan.reut/index.html. Attesting to the

desperation felt by many students of the Sudan, though he offers a non-fly zone as an option, Eric Reeves also knows that it won't work; see, www.sudanreeves.org/Article157.html

[4] Note the discussion in Stephen Eric Bronner, Peace Out of Reach: Middle Eastern Travels and the Search for Reconciliation (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007).

Stephen Eric Bronner is the Senior Editor of Logos. Currently Distinguished Professor (Professor II) of Political Science at Rutgers University, his most recent book is Peace Out of Reach: Middle Eastern Travels and the Search for Reconciliation (University Press of Kentucky).

Why Is Washington Holding Back On Darfur?

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

In 1984, when the Sudan's civil war was just beginning, I testified before the House Sub-Committee on African Affairs, urging Congress not to see the Sudanese conflict through a Cold War lens. The fighting in the Southern Sudan was a product of internal political grievances, I argued, and not the meddling of Sudan's enemies-at that time also the US's enemies-Qaddafi's Libya and Mengistu's Ethiopia. At the same hearing the Defence Department took the opposite line, and while the State Department was reluctant to go as far as the Pentagon in attributing the civil war to external subversion, it still saw Libya and Mengistu as major causes of the war, and the removal of their influence would help to restore peace to the Sudan.

It is important to remember that when the Sudan's civil war began in 1983 both the United States and Israel were on Khartoum's side. Under Nimeiri the Sudan was one of the few Middle Eastern states to support the Camp David Agreement. Washington saw him as an important regional ally and gave him the weapons, and the financial credit, he needed ostensibly to protect himself from his external enemies, but which he used to wage war against his own people. Without America's unconditional support Nimeiri could not have fought his civil war. And denied Israel's support (previously given to Southern rebels in the first civil war) Nimeiri's opposition had to look elsewhere for its own sources of funds and military hardware.

The United States held to this line right throughout the 1980s. But both the Pentagon and the State Department were wrong. Qaddafi changed sides and withdrew his support from the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army as soon as Nimeiri was overthrown in 1985. The war continued long after the collapse of Mengistu's communist regime in Ethiopia in 1991. And while the external actors switched sides (the U.S. abandoning Khartoum in the 1990s to support the Sudanese opposition, the new Ethiopian government at first expelling the SPLA from their bases, but then re-allying with them against Khartoum's expansionist Islamist policies) the political objectives of the SPLA remained remarkably consistent, aiming for a transformation of political and economic power within the Sudan, with Southern Sudanese secession only as a last option.

Washington's Sudan policy in the 1980s was guided by its prevailing strategic vision, then dominated by Cold War calculations. The US did not use the economic and political leverage it had over the Sudan at the beginning of the war, and by not doing so it willingly contributed to Khartoum's war aims, while publicly distancing itself from them. This is one reason why the war did not end with the fall of Nimeiri, and the U.S. continued to support all Khartoum regimes up through the fall of Mengistu. It was during this period that Washington formed a working alliance with the Sudan's state security agencies and with some of the country's

leading Islamists, then also working for the overthrow of the Mengistu regime.

Washington appears to have changed sides yet again, and is waging war on Islamic terrorism and has denounced genocide in Darfur. But how much is the U.S. inhibited from real action in Darfur by its current strategic vision of the 'war against terror'? What deals have been struck with its old allies in Khartoum's security hierarchy?

An opportunity was lost in 2002 when the U.S. re-engaged in the Sudan peace process, a re-engagement that started only a few days before 9/11 with the appointment of former Senator John Danforth as the President's Special Envoy on the Sudan. Just as it had in the 1980s, the U.S. misread the nature of the civil conflict in the Sudan, and did not realize that the civil war had become larger than the North-South split by which it was usually described. The U.S. also made the mistake of assuming the Islamic state imposed by military coup in 1989 represented the will of the Muslim majority in the country. The Danforth Report was tailored to Khartoum's outlook, and proposed the restarting of peace negotiations very largely on Khartoum's terms: the retention of the Islamic state, no self-determination for the South, and no wider engagement with the other, mainly Muslim, opposition forces in the Sudan.

In early 2002 Khartoum was frightened of being bombed by the U.S. It had been bombed once before, and with its past support for Osama bin Laden, world opinion was against it. So why did such concessions have to be made to get Khartoum to the negotiating table? What sort of deal was made over the intelligence Sudanese security could offer about its former political bedfellows? It is reported that Abdallah Saleh Gosh, the chief of Sudan's state security, handed over to the U.S. the names of Al-Qaeda operatives in Saudi Arabia. This would have cost him little, but it brought him and Khartoum some protection. The Sudan peace process became subordinated to the 'war against terror' from the start.

Had the U.S. used this opportunity to better effect, they would have been in a position to get negotiations going on a broader basis, bringing more of the political opposition to the negotiating table, trying to achieve a real constitutional change in the country. This might have prevented the escalation of fighting in Darfur. Contrary to what most Western commentators claim, the war in Darfur did not start in 2003. Violence had been growing throughout the 1990s, and increasingly the Khartoum regime was mobilizing it around the twin ideologies of Arabism and Islamism, to the extent that even before 2003 government militias (many drawing on the veterans of Qaddafi's old Islamic Legion in Chad) were espousing an ideology that equated being Muslim with being Arab (in the Sudan always more a state of mind than a matter of genetics). The war in Darfur escalated to a new level in 2003, in part because the peace talks then taking place in Kenya had excluded the Sudan's other opposition forces and 'marginalised' groups.

The diplomatic consensus at the time was to focus on the North-South peace talks at the expense of the war in Darfur. It was felt that pressing Khartoum on two fronts would jeopardize the talks. Unfortunately the same diplomatic consensus was to not press Khartoum too hard on violations of the cessation to hostilities agreements it had signed with the South. While a

Civilian Protection Monitoring Team was set up and reported directly to the State Department it did little more than report. Using the same tactics later deployed in Darfur, of using air power to support militia attacks on the ground, Khartoum devastated the southern oil fields and other areas of the South with no sanctions imposed on them by the same governments facilitating the peace talks. Khartoum learned from this, and from the lack of international action over Darfur, it learned that it could, quite literally, get away with murder.

With the North-South peace agreement signed in January 2005 the international community turned its attention to Darfur. But peace in Darfur as a separate deal, as opposed to being part of a comprehensive peace in the Sudan, was undermined by the precedents of impunity already established. The Darfur rebels were understandably skeptical about the 'guarantees' offered them by the U.S. and U.K. governments; for while the international community is now focusing on Darfur, it has taken its eye off the ball in the implementation of the North-South peace. Khartoum has refused outright to implement one protocol of that peace agreement, and is delaying implementing other protocols in full. In the meantime it is exerting military pressure on various parts of the borders of the Southern Sudan, including sending janjaweed to occupy that part of Southern Darfur that is supposed to be re-transferred to the South. No international sanctions have been put in place to ensure Khartoum's compliance with an agreement it has already signed.

And in all of this the U.S. and the U.K. have continued to consult with Abdallah Saleh Gosh about 'international terror', have exerted pressure to remove his name from the original list of those to be sanctioned by the UN for their role in the Darfur, and have similarly protected others complicit in Khartoum's Darfur strategy. The party line in Washington is that Sudan's intelligence is valuable. Those within the U.S. intelligence community who doubt this are keeping quiet. So, as in the 1980s, action on the Sudan is subordinated to and inhibited by Washington's prevailing foreign policy ideology, this time the 'war on terror' rather than the Cold War. And, as in the 1980s, such subordination is contributing to the growing violence and repression in the Sudan.

Focusing exclusively on Darfur will not bring peace to the Sudan. War in Darfur could have been avoided if it had been included as part of a comprehensive peace plan in the Sudan from the start. Achieving peace in Darfur has to be connected to implementing the peace agreement in the South. The breakdown of the North-South peace agreement will not only contribute to further violence in Darfur, but it will also spread violence throughout the country. Darfur peace activists must broaden the scope of their activities. And they should ask themselves-and their governments-what price must be paid in Sudanese lives to maintain their own security in the 'war on terror'?

Is It Too Late For Darfur?

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Darfur is a typical north-east African civil war. Local disputes were exacerbated by the breakdown of local governance and combined with the ambitions of a frustrated provincial elite to fuel an insurgency, which escalated more quickly and bloodily than its proponents ever imagined. The government response was characteristically ham-fisted and ruthless. The result was massacre, displacement, and famine, and the deepening of distrust between Darfurians and the political leaders in Khartoum to the point of bitter hatred.

Darfur is a complex Sudanic society that straddles the desert and savanna. Its peoples were Islamized in the later middle ages and about 1600 the last and most powerful of the states in the region arose, based on the Fur of the region's central mountain range. The Fur sultanate was, in its early days, a tribal kingdom whose ruler had adopted Islam as a state cult. In the late 18th and 19th centuries Darfur-the word means "land of the Fur"-expanded to become a multiethnic empire, whose rulers presided over a feudal administration with local potentates from the Fur, Zaghawa, Arab and a host of other ethnic groups. Darfur was militarily defeated by Egyptian mercenary armies in 1874, and then overrun by Sudan's Mahdist revolution, before the sultanate was briefly restored from 1898-1916. The last big piece of territory to be absorbed into the British empire, Darfur became a neglected appendage to Sudan for a brief 40-year colonial interlude. The next 40 years of independent rule saw few developments in Darfurians' way of life-the region was desperately poor and under-serviced. Worse, the civil war in neighboring Chad spilled over into Darfur in the 1980s, and the government in Khartoum turned a blind eye as militias drawn from Darfur's Arab tribes armed themselves with the support of their Chadian brethren and tried to seize land from their Fur and Masalit neighbors. Throughout the 1990s, large parts of Darfur intermittently burst into flames due to a combination of the depredations of land-hungry Chadian Arab groups and Khartoum's penchant for addressing local conflicts by distributing arms to one side to suppress the other-a policy that almost always came down in favor of the Arabs.

While Darfur's wars flickered and smoldered, Sudan was engaged in a full-scale civil war between the central government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Commonly characterized as a war between North and South, this is better described as a connected set of wars between a dominant central elite claiming Islamic and Arab identity, and the peoples most marginalized by that elite, including Southerners, the Nuba people of southern Kordofan, and a number of groups in eastern Sudan, all of them non-Arab, many of them non-Muslim. The basic pattern of grievances is shared by all the marginalized peoples: they were denied their

share in political power and national wealth, and the government used divide-and-rule tactics to allow local militia to run amok and destroy their meager livelihoods. In retrospect, the mystery is not why the war in Darfur broke out, but why it took so long to do so.

Three reasons stand out for Darfur's political quiescence. One was that the boldest attempt at insurrection, led by the SPLA in 1991, failed badly and left the region's militant elite divided and demoralized. A second reason was that the Chadian president, Idriss Deby, refused to let rebels use its territory as a rear base. Chad had a security pact with Sudan, in return for which Khartoum also stopped supporting Chadian rebels. Last and most importantly, many Darfurians were beguiled by the ruling Islamist regime's promise that Islam would be a route to emancipation for Darfur's Muslim population. It was a hollow promise, but it helped keep Darfur quiet for a decade. Only in 1999 when the Islamic movement split, did Darfurian Islamists begin to organize active opposition. That in turn helps explain the savagery of the government response: when the insurgency escalated in 2003, Khartoum was facing more than just a provincial rebellion but also a challenge from within its own ranks. The Darfur rebels included the Sudan Liberation Movement, with a broad base of support across Sudan's major ethnic groups (principally non-Arab but also some Arabs) and the Justice and Equality Movement (whose leaders have links with Sudan's Islamist movement). The main government proxies were the Janjaweed, from a segment of Darfur's Arab tribes (most Darfurian Arabs stayed out of the war).

Resolving Darfur's war was never going to be easy. It was complicated by the fact that the war coincided with the final stages of peace talks between government and SPLA. Despite the fact that the SPLA's leader, John Garang, had insisted that his aim was to create a "New Sudan" in which all the country's myriad peoples enjoyed an equal claim on power in the central government, the organizing principle of the peace talks was North versus South. In the Kenyan resort town of Naivasha, the Islamist government and the SPLA hammered out a peace deal based on "one country, two systems" that gave the South the right of self-determination. The so-called Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in January 2005. Its provisions include a transition to national democracy and a junior role for northern opposition parties, but nothing specific for Darfur. Over the next sixteen months, African Union mediators in the Nigerian capital Abuja tried to bring the Sudan government and Darfur rebels to an agreement that would resolve Darfurians' grievances while also buttressing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This was a tough assignment, made more difficult by the imposition of a tight deadline for concluding the talks. Driven by its priority of bringing UN troops to Darfur to replace the African Union peacekeeping mission, the U.S. insisted that government and rebels conclude a peace deal as quickly as they could. The April 30, 2006, deadline was too fast to keep the suspicious and fissiparous rebels onboard and the peace process came apart. The Darfur Peace Agreement was signed by just one of the two factions of the SLM and not by JEM, and that wasn't enough to bring peace to Darfur.

One of the tragedies of the near-miss at making peace for Darfur in Abuja is that the favorable alignment of political conditions may not easily be replicated. A year ago, the SLM comprised two major factions with a third dissenting group emerging to challenge the leadership of both.

A year on, the SLM is divided into at least a dozen fragments. They need to be united before there is a realistic chance of peace. The Khartoum government has also been locked in its own internal power struggle, with the leading advocate for making political compromises in pursuit of peace, Vice President Ali Osman Taha, sidelined within the ruling group. With hardliners in the ascendant, a peace deal is more remote. Relations between Sudan and Chad have also deteriorated to the point of a proxy war between the two countries. Chadian rebels backed by Sudan have mounted a sequence of military attacks deep into Chad, once reaching the national capital. Chadian president Deby is an active backer of the most militant Darfurian rebel groups and will not end this support unless his own political future is secure. Given that Deby's problems emerge as much from his own misrule as from Khartoum's destabilization, and there is no peace process in Chad, a resolution to the Chadian crisis is not in sight.

Meanwhile, Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement is in trouble. Two years after it was signed, many of the key provisions are falling far behind schedule and the prospects of democratization are looking bleak. The main incentive for the SLM and JEM to sign up to the Darfur Peace Agreement was that they would then become part of the national transformation under the deal with the SPLA-with that agreement now in jeopardy, there is little reason for them to settle.

The failure of the Darfur Peace Agreement has also compromised the potential mediators. The African Union made a series of mistakes after the conclusion of the Abuja deal, most notably that it concurred with the Sudan government's exclusion of the still-fighting groups from any further negotiations and any representation on Darfur's ceasefire commission. The AU's neutrality was thereby lost and the Darfur rebels no longer trust it. But the international community is still tasking the AU with bringing the rebels into the peace deal.

And lastly, peace in Darfur requires that the international community-especially the U.S.-make a peace agreement the priority. During the period of the Abuja negotiations, Washington's number one goal was to get UN troops to Darfur. This seemed like a sensible policy given that the AU force was too small and too poorly equipped. For many advocates of more assertive action to protect Darfur's civilians from the depredations of government and Janjaweed, a UN mission looked like a military intervention. In fact it wasn't: it was just an expanded AU force with blue helmets rather than green. The UN would not have fought the Sudanese army or militia, it would not have disarmed the Janjaweed by force, and it would not have been able to police the region. But both advocates and critics of UN troops in Darfur conducted their argument on the basis of something more-a force that would protect all Darfurian civilians, drive out the killers and arrest war criminals. This inflated expectation encouraged the rebels to hold out for a military intervention and fueled the fears of the leaders in Khartoum.

A war-fighting intervention was never going to happen. Like the upgraded AU force envisioned in the Darfur Peace Agreement, UN troops would have policed a robust ceasefire. The troop levels and operations envisioned by UN Security Council Resolution 1706, passed on August 31, 2006, were derived directly from the implementation plan for the Darfur Peace Agreement. Khartoum had agreed to much-expanded AU force to implement that agreement. But,

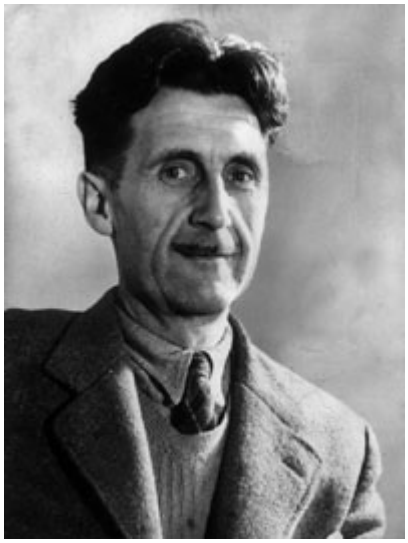
determined that this plan should only be implemented by the UN, the U.S. and other western nations did not give the AU the means to do even minimum activities, let alone increase its forces to the called-for levels. For more than a year, the AU troops have been neglected, often left without pay or without the fuel and equipment needed to conduct their mission. Putting the mission under the UN would bring certain benefits-the UN brings more experience and capacity to the task-but that is an increment only. For that modest benefit, massive diplomatic energy was expended and the Darfur peace process was rushed to a premature conclusion. U.S. efforts are still focused on going head-to-head with Khartoum on the question of UN troops.

Soon, America will realize the reality that the UN troops issue has been a distraction from the central question of peace in Darfur and begin to refocus on negotiations. Sadly, this change in tack is probably too late: the favorable political alignment that existed in the year after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement has gone, and may not come around again for some time.

Afterlife Of An Atheist

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Shakespeare's contemporary John Webster wrote that death hath ten thousand several ways for men to make their exits. But he was silent about the number of ways they re-enter. John Rodden has filled the gap with Scenes from an Afterlife, his account of the near ten thousand several ways that Orwell has been revived to make a re-entrance. Despite his not being a member of any dogmatic sect, religious or secular, George Orwell has been perilously exposed to numerous and varied posthumous canonizations, or indeed equally to anathematizations.



Apart from the ancient, and mostly anonymous, writers of the Bible, Orwell is probably unique in being claimed by such wildly disparate ideologues. At least in the Bible, "Thou shalt not kill," can be counterbalanced with a wide selection of comprehensively vindictive injunctions to smiting, although most Christians have historically tended to overlook the final word on turning the other cheek.

Orwell, whose final word was that he was a democratic socialist and supporter of the Labor Party, at least had the merit of relative consistency in his outlook, even if he changed its application in the light of changing events. If he were to have an afterlife, he would surely have been wryly amused at some of the posthumous claims made upon his works and his person. In other times, one suspects that his body would have been dismembered for relics, although it was equally likely that some parts would have been ceremonially burnt at the stake.

His actual resting place in an Anglican churchyard was an aesthetic choice rather than a spiritual one, and appropriate in as much as the Church of England, like the Labor Party that Orwell supported in his latter years, was the original broad church, imposing no particular tests for membership

Overall, John Rodden has a fact-based rather than faith-based approach to Orwell's legacy in Scenes from an Afterlife, preferring to let him speak for himself rather than have canonizers and devil's advocates, secular and spiritual, have their way with him.

Rodden's comprehensive examination of these has added interest in that, as well as the more

usual political claims to and for the writer's heritage, he also deals with the religious claims to Orwell's soul, even as he admits that his subject showed no signs of believing he had one.

The support that religious writers have had for Orwell is at first glance surprising, since it should be even more difficult to for them get beyond his inveterate opposition to the "Stinking RC" than it is to make him a closet conservative or posthumous Trotskyist as others have done regardless of his own forcefully expressed philosophy.

Orwell was not alone in his anti-Catholic bias. Britain had a strong tradition of it, based very much on the Church's anti-socialism, manifested at election times with calls from the pulpit to vote against the Labor Party. Indeed, it is part of an old radical and popular tradition in Britain, and indeed in old New England, which saw "Popery" as an enemy of democracy and the liberties of citizens. In addition to this cultural background of antipathy, the Roman Catholic Church was totally against the Republicans and supported Franco in Britain and elsewhere, which was no more calculated to endear it to Orwell than Soviet behavior had been.

Usually quite objective and dispassionate, John Rodden shows how even he can be influenced by his own background of Liberal Catholicism. He complains of Orwell "how schematized and blinkered by politics his religious thought could be," and says that some observers have "fairly noted" that Orwell had a "blind spot," when it came to religion.
However he may have slipped a little here. From the viewpoint of the irreligious, what Orwell had was not a blind spot, but clarity of vision. In fact, to an agnostic or atheist, the question is rather how confused other people's politics often are by their religious affiliation!

At least Rodden does not ascribe a spurious religiosity to his subject as others have done. He cites Auden, without lending credence to him when, apart from audaciously calling Orwell "a true Christian" obligingly revealed himself in 1970 to be agnostic about what Orwell would actually say about trade unions, birth control, nationalization and student demonstrations: "What he would have said I have no idea. I am only certain he would be worth listening to."

There is a history to such urbanity of course. Auden had forgiven Orwell his attacks on him during his communist period, although many others not attacked by Orwell never forgave him for being a premature pre-Twentieth Congress exposer of the Soviet regime.

There is no need to ascribe the faintest support for the Athanasian Creed and transubstantiation in Orwell's sympathy for the likes of G K Chesterton. Each had, from different premises, come to similar conclusions about the desirability of common decency as against the ideologues. When the far left talk about Orwell and decency, they usually intone both words with a scornful sneer since they see the concept as inherently unscientific and unsocialist.

Orwell was indeed Chestertonian in his prejudices and in his faith in the common man against the ideologues, even down to his occasionally unreal pastoral vision of an ideal society. There is as much of a socialist dimension to Chesterton and Waugh as there is a spiritual dimension to Orwell, alone suspects, not a lot in either case

Equally, the accidental concatenation of Orwell's opposition to the "birth control" people and that of the Church that Rodden mentions were derived from entirely different premises. Orwell's opposition to the birth control people seems more ad homines than it was to the concept itself. In the context of the thirties, it is worth remembering that many prominent birth control advocates were part of a social-engineering ideology of the type that Orwell despised. Birth control pioneers were often tied into the eugenics movement, explicitly racist and certainly class-biased, seeing the poor as inferior breeding stock to be neutered for their own good and that of society. His opposition had nothing to do with Pauline antipathy to sex itself, which, on the contrary, he seems to have warmly appreciated as a pastime in and out of matrimony.

Similarly, it is no surprise that Jews in Britain and the US, who stood for the same human decencies as Orwell, should have resonated in sympathy with him. Most of those involved would have denied any theological basis for their social and political opinions, even if they may have admitted a sociological inspiration from the position of the community they grew up in. In those days, the majority of Jews supported similar liberal and leftist causes as Orwell, so their good opinion was not a product of his ethnic attitudes. They did not ask whether he was good for the Jews, but whether he espoused the same wide, universalist causes as they did.

We should also beware of seeing positions sixty years ago through the prism of the present. The conflation of Jewish identity with the existence of Israel is a relatively recent phenomenon among Jews and it is even more recently that it has been foisted on the larger society.

Orwell did not let his friendship with Jews and his indignation with anti-Semitism and its effects blind him with sentiment when it came to Palestine. In those far off days, Zionism was a minority tendency even among Jews, and it was perfectly possible to disagree with it without being accused of anti-Semitism.

Indeed, he anticipated some of the modern Left by seeing Zionism as a European colonial venture imposed upon the Arabs rather than as a "Jewish Liberation" movement. On this issue he managed to disagree with many of his Jewish comrades on the Left, and the many in the Labor Party influenced by them, and yet to remain friendly with them all.

Indeed, Fyveld, as Rodden points out, after disagreeing in a comradely way with Orwell over Zionism later credited him with foresight for his prediction of how militarized such a settler state would become. Such latitude, on both parts, is a refreshing contrast with the Leninist left which would have purged anyone who differed on any such significant point of doctrine.

As Orwell would have been the first to recognize, people can arrive at similar positions from different starting points. He certainly distinguished himself from the democratic-centralist school of literary critique by accepting that even reactionaries could produce great art.

People of decency, of profound humanitarian impulses, may be fortified in their work by religious feeling, but they rarely derive those impulses exclusively from their religious beliefs. We usually feel that they would be good whether they were Christians, Jews, Muslims or

Atheists. The parable of the Good Samaritan holds and we mistrust those Pharisees who have to look up clauses in the holy rulebooks before deciding whether to do good or not.

“Why this is hell, nor am I out of it”

If Orwell had a serious afterlife, his reaction to the outright commercial exploitation that Rodden covers in his section on Orwellmania, would surely echo Mephistopheles’ answer to Faust’s question.

Rodden’s examples show how the advertising industry, whose copywriters surely represent one of the most shamelessly Ingsoc professions, lying for money, can devalue some of the key concepts of Orwell’s work. Rodden cites the Apple computers’ Super Bowl advert aimed at the implied Big Brother, IBM. For such referential adverts to work demands a general pervasiveness of the concepts throughout the population which in its own perverse Mammonistic way is a tribute to Orwell.

However, Scenes from an Afterlife was written before one of the more bizarre recent manifestations of Orwellmania that surely deserves the Rodden treatment in any future edition. The writing machines that Orwell had producing formulaic novels for the Proles could not match the TV reality show “Big Brother.” In the original Dutch concept, Big Brother referred to the round-the-clock surveillance of the competitors.

Now, I am prepared to bet that most viewers of the cloned shows around the world are completely unaware of any Orwellian reference, and if anything see the title as vague reference to the prowess of the winning survivor of the shows.

The snowball effect of repeated dumbed-down references is operating like a sort of linguistic Gresham’s law, with the bad and inappropriate usage driving out the sound original Orwellian coinage.

Across the world, television has now reduced one of the most chilling metaphors of the Twentieth Century, the archetypal image of absolute pervasive totalitarian power, to the voyeuristic fascination of greedy people humiliating each other in front of millions of viewers in the expectation of large rewards. One can only hope that other indispensably Orwellian concepts, such as thought-crime, doublethink and newspeak are not similarly killed with trivialization as metaphors.

Of course, this is only the culmination of a well-established process; Rodden cites such bizarre sources as Shooting Industry magazine predicting that the handgun business should recover at least as fast as the general economy unless “Big Brother” disarmed the citizenry.

Where the metaphors are still fresh and scarring is of course in the field of politics. As long as there are relics of totalitarian regimes such as Central Asia and North Korea, it would seem from Rodden’s account that there will be readers who see a direct personal account in Nineteen Eighty-Four and Animal Farm.

Some of the most interesting insights that Rodden has derive from his experience in the last days of the German Democratic Republic, where the Teutonic thoroughness of the Communists went deep. It reinforces what Orwell tried to show in Nineteen Eighty-Four, that totalitarianism has a push-me-pull-you effect. A mere authoritarian power, such as Jeanne Kirkpatrick used to describe with some degree of approval, can rely on death squads, punitive raids and torture chambers, to maintain power. But it does not care what people think, as long as they obey. Totalitarian regimes have to believe their own lies; they have to believe they are speaking for the people, for the workers: and that means that the people and the workers had better show no signs of skepticism either.

Rodden's researches during the morphosis of East Germany reminds us that in Nineteen Eighty-four, Orwell in fact invented, or rather described, brainwashing: how to get people to behave and believe in ways that denied reality. Big Brother's world was not kept going by the threat of brute force alone, but also because so many people accepted and in some measure supported the system. The scene of Winston Smith with tears in his eyes in the Willow Tree Café at the great victory was uncannily prophetic of the death of Stalin, when even denizens of the Gulag wept. Indeed recent polls show that even now just over half of Russians now harbor nostalgic warmth for the original of Big Brother, J. V. Stalin.

As Rodden records, there is something authentically Orwellian about being arrested and imprisoned for possessing a book by Orwell, and he interviewed such victims of the East German regime. "Like Winston Smith, they were falsifying history even as they discussed a book about the falsification of history," he sharply comments on Klaus Hopke, the Deputy Culture Minster of the GDR who in the early eighties declared that Nineteen Eighty-Four was about "the characteristic features of capitalist reality… the multinational firms and their bloodhounds."

The book was of course banned, and presumably only Inner Party people like Hopke could gain enough access to the novel to make any assessment of it at all. Others who got their hands on the texts were arrested. Consequently, the Inner Party assessment ruled, in a classic triumph of Doublethink.

Rosa Luxemburg, in Voltairean mode had argued against Lenin that "Freedom is freedom only if it also applies for the one who thinks differently." Ironically, Scenes from An Afterlife records that this potent truth from the founding indigenous icon of the GDR had itself also become an "Unquote," not to be repeated, so it was hardly surprising that a foreigner and a Westerner such as Orwell became a Goldstein figure, only mentioned to be reviled.

As Rodden records, Andrei Sakharov became just the latest in a series of Warsaw Pact intellectuals who wondered how someone who had not lived in the system understood it so well. The answer is of course that Orwell had lived in it, mentally at least. He had withstood the seductions of Marxist certainty himself, when many around had succumbed. It was not the threat of torture chambers that kept many of his contemporary Western intellectuals hewing to the Party line.

Orwell saw those outside direct Soviet control practicing Doublethink-in spite of all the evidence, they chose deny that the torture chambers and the Gulags existed. When the order came in 1939, they embraced the Nazi Hyenas as blood brothers in the struggle against British Imperialism. And when Hitler attacked the USSR, they turned on a sixpence to demand the internment of all who continued to say that.

So, in Nineteen Eighty-Four itself, Winston and his colleagues had an investment in the system: they believed. The totalitarian society, as typified by IngSoc, North Korea, or East Germany, does indeed have its torture chambers and Gulags, but it has Thought Police. It not only wanted its citizens to obey, it wanted them to believe. And it worked. As Parsons told Winston Smith in the Thought Police holding cell, "Of course I'm guilty…You don't think the Party would arrest an innocent man do you? Thoughtcrime is a dreadful thing, old man."

We have yet to get a full version of how Big Brother operates in North Korea, but defectors already suggest that much of the population is steeped in doublethink, somehow imbued with the propaganda about the success of the Party and its Dear Leader, while on another level aware of how sordid life is. Indeed the disparity is much greater than for Winston Smith who had to contend only with clogged drains and a pervasive smell of boiled cabbage. Untold thousands of Koreans have died without a whiff even of cabbage, and yet many of them and their surviving neighbors still seemed to think they have a stake in the system.

What Rodden describes in East Germany is a more IngSocish version, a culture of deprivation but not starvation, where making do, as Orwell and the British did during the wartime years of rationing, is debilitating and time-consuming rather than fatal. The search for coffee and razor blades takes time and energy that may otherwise have been wasted on thinking. But as he shows, right up to the end, a significant proportion of the intelligentsia had an intellectual investment in the society.

Rodden invites some degree of empathy, if not exactly sympathy, for individuals caught in a system that put such a premium on low-tech mutual surveillance. Similarly, he is perhaps too indulgent to the Orwellian overtones in our own societies, although he wrote before the serious post 9-11 excesses of the Bush and Blair administrations. "Winston's work is (from our society's viewpoint) illegal and base, consisting as it does of the falsification, bowdlerization, and "rectification" of history," he says.

He is of course right about it being base, but one can hardly call it illegal. The huge intellectual apparatus surrounding Washington's K Street, the lobbyists, the governmental spin masters, the political campaigners, the cable TV and radio shows, the PR companies and consultants are every bit as pervasive in their effects as the work as MiniTru. They do not have the excuse of the Thought Police and Big Brother for their labors, but while they do not have the state monopoly of the latter, they are in some ways more effective since we maintain the appearances of equal access.

In the dangerous game of what would Orwell say, I cannot help feeling that he would rephrase

Victor Hugo about the rights of the rich to sleep under the Seine bridges and remark upon the right of every poor person to own major print, electronic and broadcast conglomerates.

It is an unpleasant fact, not often mentioned, that even now, those on the Left in the West who revile Orwell usually have political origins in parties that sympathized with the Soviet Union and "actually existing" Socialism. Rodden is sometimes too kind in his discussion of so-called cultural studies professors who indulge in Orwell bashing. Their hate for Orwell for being a premature anti-communist has survived the disappearance of the Soviet system they loved, admired or apologized for.

Raymond Williams, Rodden reminds us, described Orwell as an "ex socialist" in 1970, and added that Orwell's influence on the Left was "diminishing" and would continue to do so. In fact Williams' Left of the 1970's has diminished to a shadow of its former self outside the ivory towers of academia. Rather, history is validating the arch statement of the admittedly conservative Geoffrey Wheatcroft on Raymond Williams, that he "will be read when George Orwell is forgotten-but not until then."

The New Left, the communists and Trotskyists, have in their various ways morphed.
The former Euro Communists were among the inspirations for Blair's New Labor project, while insofar as Trotsky has real political influence in the US, it is through his former followers among the Neoconservatives in the Bush administration. More than ever before, the gold standard for socialism is Orwell's social-democracy, the Golden Mean between capitalist excesses and Leninist despotisms. As he put it, "Socialists don't claim to be able to make the world perfect: they claim to be able to make it better." (II 265)

It may be that Rodden's readings of too many hard left academics in his field, which is after all one of their few redoubts, may have left him excessively gloomy about Orwell's future in the education field. He points out that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Luxembourg's comrade in arms, saw education as the key to building a society, and so appropriately, he considers the position of the "set" books for examinations in Britain and the USA.

He cites Scott Lucas, an intemperate and unrepresentative hard left Orwell-hater, to substantiate a claim that most Left academics doing cultural studies today look at continental, Marxist oriented thinkers as their exemplars, not to Orwell.

In reality, I suspect that compared with the general society of the U.S., where socialists tend to be ghettoized in the liberal arts faculties, most British academics across the spectrum would be considered left, but not Marxist. In the Literature departments and the teacher-training institutions, Orwell's much more indigenous strain of Anglo-American empiricism is, and is likely to remain, much more acceptable than the forgotten fossils of the New Left.

As Rodden quotes about Dickens, "Severe artistic limitations, a sense of decency, impassioned sympathy for the underdog,-most readers of Orwell find his work characterized by these very same shortcomings and strengths." But Orwell, not only has the brevity needed to conquer the syllabus for an attention-deficited generation of school readers, he has relevance beyond

Dickens. Orwell's warnings against the totalitarian mindset are every bit as pertinent today as when they were written. Animal Farm works even if the reader does not have a clue about the progress of the October Revolution, although of course it adds deeply to the appreciation to know about it, just as it works in ex-Soviet Russia where people have no concept of a mixed family farm.

In his epilogue Rodden brings it all together. Despite these ghosts and doppelgangers of his subject conjured up by fevered ideologues, he suggests the almost novel approach of letting Orwell speak for himself. Orwell was a self-confessed Democratic Socialist, and, as Rodden sketches around his complex subject, "a moral radical with a bracing contempt for radical chic," "radical by conviction, conservative by sentiment," with "socialist politics and a conservative ethos."

The tentative nature of Rodden's descriptions is what gives Scenes from an Afterlife its verisimilitude, not least since they share with Orwell an ancient radical injunction from Oliver Cromwell: "Consider that ye may be mistaken." Such a dubious thought never crosses the minds of the ideologues that Rodden parades through this informative, if occasionally inadvertently depressing work. It is never far from the thoughts of the author, nor was it from those of his subject.

Notes

John Rodden, *Scenes from an Afterlife*, ISI Books Wilmington 2003

Israel’s Palestine: It’s Apartheid And Not Peace

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

The Messenger and His Message

Jimmy Carter’s book, P*alestine: Peace Not Apartheid,* is an insider memoir with a political purpose. It tells the story of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process from 1973 to the present intertwined with Carter’s own experiences and reminiscences as the president who convened Camp David I, brought about the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, and subsequently visited the region repeatedly as an election monitor and unofficial mediator. It is particularly important to understand that the story told in this relatively short book of 216 pages establishes Carter’s credentials, not only as an advocate of an equitable and just peace between Arabs/Palestinians and Israelis, but as an expert on the positions and actions taken by both sides during these years. More often than not he was a direct or indirect participant and witness to this history.

From this position as insider and expert Carter describes what he believes “has brought us to this present situation . . . and some of the things that can and must be done to bring peace and justice to the region” (11). And, using his fame and reputation, he has done this for American public consumption. Indeed, to spark a public debate in United States on bringing “peace and justice” to the Holy Land is in fact the book’s purpose. In doing so, it is to Carter’s credit that he treats these two nouns, peace and justice, as two sides of one coin. Certainly history has demonstrated that, in the case of Israel and Palestine, you can’t have one without the other.1

Early on in the text, Carter notes that “most Arab regimes have accepted the permanent existence of Israel” (14). The fact that this has, at least since 1988, included the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) helps bring Carter to the conclusion that “it is Israel that remains the key” to any ultimate peace (ibid.). In other words, it is the Israeli government that must be willing to make the necessary compromises to realize both peace and justice including, as we will see, “conform[ing] to agreements previously consummated,but later renounced” (16). Carter’s story unmistakably suggests that, for those searching for the “missing partner” to the peace process, the place to look is Jerusalem and not Ramallah.

Within the American political milieu, relating this information to a wide audience is just about

revolutionary. For anyone familiar with the intimidating power of the Zionist lobby in America it will come as no surprise that Congress, both political parties, and the media have been bought and bullied into uncritical support for the Zionist position at least since 1922 (the year of the first joint congressional resolution in support of the Balfour Declaration). That means President Carter's book is a milestone event. It is the first time a major American politician has publicly promoted a balanced view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and this marks the author out as a public figure of extraordinary integrity, honesty, and bravery. Embedded in his memoir is a description of the events that led him to take this courageous public stand.

Jimmy Carter's basic understanding of Israel and Palestine has been religious. As with many other Christian Americans, Carter relates to Israel/Palestine as the "Holy Land." He tells us that "having studied Bible lessons since childhood and taught them for twenty years, I was infatuated with the Holy Land" (22). However, unlike other Bible reading presidents (Woodrow Wilson for example), Carter's devoutness has not blinded him to the fact that the Palestinian Arabs are real people with legitimate rights. Thus, when he became President in 1977, his inherently humane understanding of both his faith and his presidential responsibility led him to attempt an even-handed approach to the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflict.

Following from his religious perspective, Carter has never doubted Israel's right to exist. And, upon finishing up his first visit to Israel in 1973, he even concluded that the Israelis, though "dominant" over the Palestinians, where also striving to be "just" (34). On the other hand, he determined that U.S. foreign policy had to be based on the implementation of United Nations resolutions 242 and 338. As Carter notes, these two resolutions led him to conclude that "Israel's acquisition of territory by force is illegal and that Israel must withdraw from occupied territories" as well as work positively for resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem, if it was to achieve its right to "live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries." As to Israel's settlements, Carter remarks that the American position taken up to and through the time of his presidency had been consistent. The settlements were "illegal and obstacles to peace" (38-39). He has not deviated from this position.

Carter's experiences as a president making a major effort to negotiate a just resolution to this major Middle East crisis fed a growing belief that Israel was actually the recalcitrant party when it came to negotiating peace. Thus, at Camp David Anwar Sadat proved "willing to take bold steps for peace" based on UN resolutions (39). Menachem Begin, on the other hand, was overly cautious and devious. He often acted as if he needed to avoid being trapped or, more likely, was seeking a way to trap others. For instance, Begin could surprise Carter by asserting that he was willing to give the Palestinians "full autonomy," but when it came to putting promises on paper, Begin went over every word of the final agreement-"he and I spent a lot of time perusing a thesaurus and dictionary" (46). As to Begin's famous commitment to freeze settlement construction, that was given orally. Both promises turned out to be lies. Carter puts it quite bluntly: "For Menachem Begin, the peace treaty with Egypt was the significant act for Israel, while solemn promises regarding the West Bank and Palestinians would be finessed or deliberately violated" (52). The settlement building was accelerated rather than frozen and there would be no autonomy, much less independence, for the Palestinians. On those

subsequent occasions when Carter was received by Begin, the former US president was treated shoddily and Begin would scarcely look him in the eye.

Begin's duplicitous behavior at Camp David should have alerted the American political and diplomatic establishment that their assumption about Israel's desire for peace in Palestine was and is essentially wrong. In other words, it was and is a mistake to assume that the Israeli government actually wants a just settlement when it comes to the Palestinians. Carter, Reagan, Bush Sr., Clinton and, after a fashion, Bush Jr. have tried to move the peace process forward with no success. The Arabs, including the Palestinians, have offered recognition, normalcy and trade in exchange for a viable Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza and a permanent Israeli border at the 1967 line. Israel has rejected all of it. Even the Oslo Accords, wherein the Israelis pledged themselves to "phased withdrawals" from the West Bank never saw them actually do what they promised. There are two conclusions that can be drawn from this history. The first is that successive Israeli governments, when confronted with a choice of land or peace, have said yes to the illegal process of colonizing conquered land and no to peace. In this regard, Begin's policy after Camp David was a model for most of Israel's future behavior in Palestinian territory. The second conclusion is that, while it is Zionist ideology that drives the colonization process, it is 40 years of American aid, particularly military aid, pouring into the country regardless of the policies Israel pursues, that has put the Israelis in a position where they can thumb their noses at peace.

Only now, in this book, has Carter taken the unprecedented step of publicly stating the first of these conclusions. Only now do we have a prominent American politician taking seriously Benjamin Natanyahu's 1996 declaration that he would "never exchange land for peace." Only now, does an American leader take seriously Ariel Sharon's infamous command, "Everybody has to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements because everything we take will stay ours. . . . Everything we don't grab will go to them" (147). Rather disingenuously, Sharon subsequently declared that "all negotiating failures had been due to the ongoing and escalating Palestinian terrorism" (154). And, as for Ehud Barak's "generous offer," only now does an American leader tell us just how ungenerous it really was (150-151). When it comes to the allegedly improved offers at Taba-"the fact is that no such offers were never made" (52). Carter speaks the truth when he tells us that Arafat simply could not have accepted the demeaning and emasculating "generous offer" made at Camp David II and survived as a viable representative of the Palestinian people. Nonetheless, the "official statements from Washington and Jerusalem were successful in placing the entire onus for failure on Yasir Arafat" (152).

The rest of the Jimmy Carter's book describes the same sad scenarios as played out in the Geneva initiative (rejected by Sharon), the true consequences of the "Gaza Withdrawal" ("besiegement and acute malnutrition"), and the creation of what Carter accurately labels the "imprisonment wall" (174). It also details the continuing purposeful manipulation of the "peace process" (now in the guise of the "Roadmap to Peace") by Israel. This has been accomplished by the imposition of an "endless series of preconditions that can never be met", so that no viable Palestinian state will come about (160). Under such circumstances, Palestinian

acceptance of Israeli terms simply means surrender to a colonizing conqueror bent on the destruction of Palestinian culture and society.

Carter finally comes to the conclusion that what the Israelis are really aiming at is not peace but apartheid. The Israelis are now imposing "a system of apartheid with two peoples occupying the same land but completely separated from each other, with the Israelis totally dominant and suppressing violence by depriving Palestinians of their basic human rights. This is the policy now being followed . . ." (215). As a result, "it is obvious that the Palestinians will be left with no territory in which to establish a viable state" (196).

In the last chapter Carter tells us that "the only rational response to this continuing tragedy is to revitalize the peace process" (206). The Israelis must honor past agreements such as UN resolution 242 and the promises made at Camp David, and accept the 1967 border "unless modified by mutually agreeable land swaps" (207). The Arabs must guarantee Israeli security within that border. Additionally, the United States must stop "unofficially condoning and abetting Israeli confiscation and colonization of Palestinian territories" (216). He is, at least in theory, correct on all points. The question is if, at this late date, any of this is still really possible? Carter thinks it is. However, it will necessitate an on-going struggle that must take place not only in Israel and Palestine, but also in the U.S.; for it is the United States and its obscenely lavish support of Israel that has made that country's arrogant and illegal behavior possible.

Kill The Messenger!

When *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid* was launched Carter announced that "for the last 30 years, I have witnessed and experienced the severe restraints on any free and balanced discussion of the facts. This reluctance to criticize any policies of the Israeli government is because of the extraordinary lobbying efforts of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee [AIPAC] and the absence of any significant contrary voices." As a result, Carter went on, "It would be almost politically suicidal for members of Congress to espouse a balanced position between Israel and Palestine, to suggest that Israel comply with international law or to speak in defense of justice and human rights for Palestinians. . . . What is even more difficult to comprehend is why the editorial pages of the major newspapers and magazines in the United States exercise self-restraint, quite contrary to private assessments expressed quite forcefully by their correspondents in the Holy Land."2

Carter has repeated this statement again and again as he travels the country promoting his book. Thus to the charge of apartheid on the part of Israel given in the text, he has added the accusation that the American Zionist establishment and its allies are suppressing information and debate about Israel's illegal policies. Since the Zionist establishment has behaved this way since 1922, one can be forgiven for interpreting Carter's words in the worst possible light. That is, while acting as agents of a foreign power (Israel), the AIPAC and its allies have successfully employed insidious lobbying practices toward both politicians and media owners and editors in order to suppress evidence of on-going (post 1967) violations of international law.

America's Zionist leadership has been predictably aghast at both the appearance of President Carter's Book and his public accusations. After all, it is not just Menachem Begin who was accused of bad faith here, it was the entire American Zionist movement as well. Therefore, in the blink of an eye, out came the movement's leaders and representatives to not only discredit the message, but also to kill the messenger.3 For example, Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, has recently spent much of his time defaming Jimmy Carter by accusing him of anti-Semitism-a charge which, normally, is fatal to any ordinary American political figure.4 Jennifer Laszlo-Mizrahi, founder and president of The Israel Project has commented that Carter "has a very clean image, but now he's selling a very dirty rag."5 To these we can add attacks made by Martin Peretz, editor and chief of the New Republic, Ethan Bronner, the New York Times deputy foreign editor, and the never silent Alan Dershowitz, Harvard Law professor and professional Zionist bulldog. Dershowitz has called Carter's book "indefensible," "shallow and superficial," and "conveying misinformation, ahistorical facts to American audiences," and thereby "misleading the court of public opinion."6 He has also suggested that the former president "has been bought and paid for by Arab money."7 Dershowitz has dogged Carter's speaking tour with demands that the former president debate him. Carter has refused, commenting, "There is no need for me to debate someone who, in my opinion, knows nothing about the situation in Palestine."8 This last point is significant. It can be safely said that none of today's American Zionist leaders have spent any time in a Palestinian town or city.

Zionist efforts to defame and demean Carter for having the audacity of charging Israel with promoting apartheid and undermining of the peace process can only be taken seriously by those ignorant of the realities of Israel/Palestine. Unfortunately, given the Zionist suppression of information, this includes the vast majority of the American population. Therefore, most readers of Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid will not realize that one can find many well-placed Israeli Jews saying the same things as Carter. Consider the following:

1. Jimmy Carter: Israel is using their "political and military dominance [to] impose a system of partial withdrawal, encapsulation, and apartheid on the Muslim and Christian citizens of the occupied territories." (189)
A. Shulamit Aloni (Minister of Education under Yitzhak Rabin): "Jewish self-righteousness is taken for granted among ourselves to such an extent that we fail to see what's right in front of our eyes. It's simply inconceivable that the ultimate victims, the Jews, can carry out evil deeds. Nonetheless, the state of Israel practices its own, quite violent, form of apartheid with the native Palestinian population."9

B. Avraham Burg (Speaker of the Knesset from 1999 to 2003): "It turns out that the 2,000 year struggle for Jewish survival comes down to a state of settlements, run an amoral clique of corrupt lawbreakers who are deaf both to their citizens and to their enemies. . . . The Israeli nation today rests on . . . foundations of oppression and injustice."10

2. Jimmy Carter: "Israel has decided to avoid any peace negotiations and to escape even the mild restraints of the US by taking unilateral actions . . . to carve out for itself the choice

portions of the West Bank, leaving the Palestinians destitute within a small and fragmented remnant of their own land." (210)

A. Dov Weisglass (former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's "closest aide") referencing the Israel's "disengagement plan": "The significance of the disengagement plan is the freezing of the peace process. . . . [It] supplies the formaldehyde that is necessary so there will not be a political process with the Palestinians. When you freeze the process you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state. Effectively . . . a Palestinian state, with all it entails, has been removed from our agenda."11

3. Jimmy Carter (citing Dr. Hanan Ashrawi): "They [the Israelis] have provoked tremendous violence by acts of incitement like shelling, bombing, house demolition, uprooting trees, destroying crops, assassinating political leaders, placing all Palestinians under closure in a state of total immobility,a prison. And then they wonder why some Palestinians are acting violently." (P. 154)

A. Shmuel Toledano (former Deputy Director of Mossad): " The IDF…has lost its morality and military ethics….[It is] soulless and merciless."12

4. Jimmy Carter: "Palestinian Prime Minister Haniyeh announced that his Hamas government was 'ready for a dialogue' with the members of the Quartet, expressed approval of direct Olmert-Abbas peace talks, and said that Hamas would change its rejectionist position if a satisfactory agreement could be consummated and approved by the Palestinian people. Such Palestinian approval was an important facet of the Camp David Accords." (P. 186)

A. Ephraim Halevy (former Chief of Mossad): "Israel should try to negotiate a long-term truce with Hamas. . . . Such an understanding could be the basis for future negotiations on interim borders between the two entities."13

5. Jimmy Carter: "'Imprisonment Wall' is more descriptive than 'security fence.'" (P. 174)

A. Meron Benvenisti (Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem 1971 to 1978): "The fence creates three bantustans on the West Bank-Jenin-Nablus, Bethlehem-Hebron and Ramallah….[The result of the fence will be] the imprisonment of 3 million Palestinians in bantustans."14

One might ask Deshowitz, Foxman, and the rest of this crew the following question, if Carter is an anti-Semite and an Arab stooge for writing and saying what he has, what do they make of those former Israeli officials who have publicly said much the same thing? Are Benvenisti, Halevy, Toledano and Burg "self-hating Jews"? Are they too "bought and paid for by Arab money"? Perhaps Dershowitz, et. al. would, driven by their fanaticism, answer in the affirmative. Apart from confessing that they traffic in slander and lies, that would be the only way they could escape the charge of maintaining double standards, one for the American public scene and the other for Israel. But unless confronted with their hypocrisy, they will avoid the issue of double standards entirely. They know quite well that the debate that goes on in the Israeli media is just what they wish to suppress in the US media. That makes Dershowitz,

Foxman, and the rest not defenders of Jews, but rather something akin to Zionist agents seeking to sabotage American free speech and press so as to better maintain the money and equipment necessary for the creation of “bantustans,” the “freezing of the peace process” and the sustaining of an “amoral clique of corrupt lawbreakers.” Those who have the opportunity to confront these hypocrites should point this out.

A Problematic Aspect of the Message

Of course, Jimmy Carter’s book is not perfect. There is at least one questionable aspect of his interpretation of the situation in Israel and Palestine that should be addressed. However, it is not those parts of the text that his critics focus on.

What is problematic about Carter’s interpretation of the present situation is his assumption that the Israeli public’s alleged desire for peace also means that they stand against the apartheid policies of their leaders. Carter tells us that “a majority of Israelis favor withdrawing from Palestinian territory in exchange for peace” and that 62% of Israelis favor “direct talks with Hamas” (211, 185). He quotes Dr. Naomi Chazan of Hebrew University to the effect that “I don’t think any difference now remains between the majority of Israelis and Palestinians in understanding that . . . [there must be an] acknowledgment of the Palestine right of self-determination, and [the need] to make sure that the two-state solution is a just and fair solution . . .” (212-213). At the very end of the book he asserts that “Peace will come to the Israel and the Middle East only when the Israeli government is willing to comply with…the wishes of a majority of its own citizens-and honor its own previous commitments-by accepting its legal borders ” (216). In addition, he has been telling his book tour audiences that, within Israel proper, “democracy prevails and citizens live together and are guaranteed equal status.”15

Do Israel’s Jewish citizens really want peace as badly as Carter suggests? It might well be the case that most Israeli Jews, if you put the polling question to them in the right way, will tell you that they want their leaders to negotiate with the Palestinians and end the decades of war on the basis of a two state solution. This, of course, begs the question that, if most Israelis want this solution so badly, why do they keep electing leaders who will not negotiate in good faith or, for that matter, negotiate at all? And, given that Israel is a parliamentary democracy, why aren’t these leaders turned out of office (rather than reelected) when it becomes repeatedly obvious that they seek to make a two state solution impossible?16

Whatever the complex answers to the above questions might be, it seems clear that the alleged desire for peace does not necessarily mean a rejection of apartheid by Israeli Jews. That is, most Israeli Jews have no real problem with applying an apartheid style regime to those Palestinians that are, now or later, under their control. Thus, in November of 2002 public opinion polls showed that a majority of Israelis favored the proposed “Druckman Law” that would “allow Jews to bar Arabs from living in their communities, and that most Israeli Jews were unwilling to have Israeli Arabs live in their neighborhoods.”17 On June 24, 2004 Haaretz reported that “most Jewish Israelis support transfer of Arabs.”18 In March 2006 the Israel based Center for the Struggle Against Racism reported on a poll that found that 68% of Israeli

Jews “would refuse to live in the same [apartment] building as an Arab.”19 And finally, in May of 2006 Israel’s Democracy Index found that “nearly two-thirds of Israelis [Jews] want their government to encourage the country’s Arab minority to emigrate.”20

Such consistent poll and survey figures call into serious question Carter’s assertion, made repeatedly during his book tour, that “I know that Israel is a wonderful democracy with equal treatment of all citizens whether Arab or Jew. And so I am very carefully avoided talking about anything inside of Israel.” Indeed, as Ali Abunimah has observed, in this Carter is wrong, for “discrimination [in Israel] against non-Jewish citizens both informal and legalized is systemic.”21

Conclusion: Carter’s Message for America

This misleading aspect of Carter’s book and public presentations while on tour are, however, minor when compared to the public service he has rendered. This service is twofold. First, as president and mediator, it was Jimmy Carter who, through the precedent he set at Camp David, made a negotiated settlement a demonstrated possibility in the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflict. It is to this end that he now strongly emphasizes the need for Israel to “withdraw to the 1967 border as specified in UN resolution 242 and as promised in the Camp David Accords . . .” (215). Second, with Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, Carter has broken through the “tremendous intimidation in this country that has silenced our people . . . not just folks running for office, . . . [but] the news media as well” on the issue of Israel and Palestine.22 With Carter’s help, more and more Americans will now have their eyes opened about the warlike and racist behavior of the nation they have so willingly been subsidizing for the last 59 years-a fact that translates into US culpability in the destruction of Palestinian society.

With this knowledge comes responsibility. For Carter, “one of the major goals of my life, while in political office and since I was retired from the White House by the 1980 elecStion, has been to help ensure a lasting peace for Israelis and others in the Middle East” (11). For those who have read and been moved by Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, it is now their responsibility to help him do just that.

Notes

1. It cannot be taken for granted that this connection is obvious. For instance, an admission that some Israeli leaders fail to understand that for peace to be lasting, it must entail an element of justice can be found in this quote by Sholomo Ben Ami, Israel’s Foreign Minister in the Barak government and head of the Israeli negotiators at Camp David II. In an interview given in 2002 he stated, “In my view they [the Palestinian leaders] bear the primary quilt for the Palestinian national movement’s obsession with seeking justice instead of a solution.” See, http://www.bitterlemons.org/previous/bl150702ed26.html.

2. Jimmy Carter, “Speaking Frankly About Israel and Palestine,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12/8/06.

3. This response is not a new one. In 1926 a Carnegie Institute of Peace report critical of

Zionist discrimination against Palestinians was met with much the same sort of hysterical finger pointing and shouting. The same reaction was given to the journalist Vincent Sheen's critical reporting from Palestine in the late 1920s early 1930s. The State Department's Near East Division got the same treatment in the 1940s, etc. Historically, the American Zionist establishment has run with the motto, "sois mon frere, ou je te tue-be my brother, or I kill you." Thus it has known only one way to react to its critics and that is to demean and silence them. See, Lawrence Davidson, America's Palestine: Popular and Official Perceptions from Balfour to Israeli Statehood (University Press of Florida, 2001).

4. Foxman asserts that "for a man of his stature and supposed savvy to hold forth that the issues of Israel and the Middle East have not been discussed and debated because Jews and Zionists have closed off means of discussion is just anti-Semitism." See James D. Besser, "Jewish Criticism of Carter Intensifies" in *The Jewish Week* posted at http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/newscontent.php3?artid=13420

5. Ibid.

6. See Norman Finkelstein, "Slime Throwing as 'Debate'" in *CounterPunch,* 12/29/06.

7. See Alan Dershowitz, "Ex-President for Sale" at: http://www.gather.com/vieweArticlePF.jsp?articleId=281474976879837.

8. Ibid.

9. See Ynet (Hebrew addition), "Aloni: Indeed there is apartheid in Israel." January 2007 (http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3346283,00.html The statement was originally published in *Yediot Aharonot*.

10. Translated by J.J. Goldberg and appeared in the Jewish Forward, 8/28/04. The statement was originally published in *Yediot Aharonot*.

11. Reprinted in the editorial "Sharon Comes Clean" in the Financial Times (of London) on 10/8/04. The statement was originally published in *Haaretz*.

12. Cited in Haaretz, August 2004. Http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/461995.html

13. Associated Press, May 26, 2006. Also reported by *Haaretz* at http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/720295.html

14. Meron Benvenisti, "Bantustan plan for an apartheid Israel," in *Guardian* Unlimited, April 25, 2004. Http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1203156,00.html

15. Carter, "Speaking Frankly…." *LA Times*, ibid.

16. Of course, polls of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have also shown that most favor

a two state solution. And, a majority of Palestinians have, until recently, always supported leaders who have been open to negotiation with Israel. It is Israeli recalcitrance that, at least in part, helped win the last Palestinian election for Hamas.

17. *Haaretz News Service,* "Poll: most Israeli Jews back proposed "Jews-only Land Law," 11/7/02.

18. See http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/441681.html

19. See http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/697458.html

20. *Al-Jazeera* news report, "Survey: most Israelis want Arabs out," 5/9/06.

21. Cited in Ali Abunimah, "A Palestinian View of Jimmy Carter's Book," *Wall Street Journal*, December 26, 2006. Also posted at http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article6310.shtml. Also see the statement released in 2006 by over 40 Arab-Israeli intellectuals in which they describe Palestinian life in Israel proper as subject to "systematic discrimination." Http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php?wc_c476&wc_id=715

22. Cited on *Al-Jazeera.net*, "Carter defends criticism of Israel, 12/9/06.

The Mystique Of Genetic Correctness

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

The advent of Dolly the cloned sheep in 1996 – RIP in 2003 – left many an onlooker feeling both celebrative and uneasy.[1] With irrepressibly manic ingenuity the biological sciences are dissolving our supposedly fuddy-duddy moral boundaries so that many scientists find themselves in debates they really would rather avoid as to the wisdom of playing cavalierly with recombinant DNA. If one believes the giddy news headlines, however, resistance is useless. Genetic engineering inexorably erodes old norms and instead gives us (whoever "us" is) "the power to impose our own invented norms" – norms which arise worryingly from within the scientific culture itself.[2] As a process of acquiring knowledge and manipulating nature, science is lodged snugly inside the encompassing realm of production-for-profit, and so scientific activities ought to be examined in the context of social processes, even if it should not – *pace* Alan Sokal – be reduced to them.[3] In an economic system intent on commodifying everything in its path, there is ample cause for public concern about the foibles of bio-engineering.

Scientists, despite what fables say, usually conform to the reigning values in the comfy milieus in which they usually grow up. The average nuclear physicist or molecular biologist is as likely to equate their self-interest or personal creed with the common interest of the whole community as is a cunning televangelist or used car salesmen. So the greatest care is needed when wielding tentative scientific findings and one is well-advised to err on the side of generosity when it comes to rushing to verdicts about human development because these judgments are self-fulfilling in their consequences.

One must step back at least a century to appreciate what is unfolding. The Victorians took a hearty pride in looking hard facts about evolution in their hairy faces, which especially to Punch-subscribing British observers, looked indecently Irish. It was not clear at the time whether Greeks, Italians or Jews were full members of the white – or human – race either. Even British South Africans, understandably piqued, imagined that rebellious Boers were not quite "white" enough.[4] Not even pre-Israel (Yishuv) Zionists were averse to eugenics to churn out the 'perfect' Jews the Nazis elsewhere were intent on eliminating.[5] The social upshot of the most impeccable research was that groups deemed low on the social scale were designated biological problems foremost and then – to the extent they posed a threat or nuisance – social problems too. While humanity, after Darwin, (mostly) managed to digest the news of its wayward descent from apes rather than radiant angels, some groups, as always, were deemed less descended.

Biological value tends to coincide neatly with class and/or racial "worth" because avowedly superior groups do most of the observing, analyzing and recording. This convenient concordance yielded a tenacious legacy of determinist explanation. Its' biological rendition is a

stringently reductionist view "in which the arrows of causality run from genes to humans and from humans to humanity."[6] How human beings think, feel and behave is dictated by genetic structure so completely that nothing intervening between that structure and action makes any real difference. That's the underlying doctrine. In the early 20th century statistician Karl Pearson, for example, discerned via an impressive array of calculations with high degrees of significance that "the influence of environment was not one-fifth that of heredity" and that "it was man who makes the environment, and not the environment which makes the man."[7] That was that.

Are we witnessing the resurgence of the scientifically intoxicating project of biological "improvement"? Eugenics was a prim social engineer's dream of honing people to a state of perfection resembling nothing so much as engineers themselves (or how they would like to see themselves). Scientists and/or a sensationalist media routinely announce discoveries of genetic causes for phenomena as infinitely complex and disparate as homosexuality, shyness, homelessness, schizophrenia, manic-depression, autism – and perhaps someday even for the gall or gullibility to advance such extravagant claims. Only a century ago scientists with no less reliable evidence proclaimed the unearthing of single gene explanations for thalassophilia ("urge for sea-faring"), drapetomania ("irrational urge by slaves to run off"), Jewish facial expressions, "shiftlessness" and chicken stealing.[8] On reflection, there are very sound reasons not to consign public policy to scientists, their employers, or politicians to whom those employers dish out lavish campaign contributions.

Genetics research raises nasty little critter issues that can scurry effortlessly over, under and around every specialist's boundaries. No scientist *qua* scientist can or should instruct us as to whether we should clone living creatures, retrieve sperm from comatose men, treat genetic materials as corporate property or fix insurance premiums according to fallible gene testing results. Identifying hereditary disease – or, for that matter, how hereditary a hereditary disease is – is a tough task that also poses the thorniest moral issues. Behold "designer children." A Harris Survey a decade ago indicates 40% of American parents, with the best – and most obsessive intentions – in the world, happily will embrace genetic engineering if it can craft their little treasures into sharper, slicker competitors. (What's genetically wrong with the other 60% of parental slackers, hmm?) It is possible to find out in the 11th week of pregnancy what sex the child is and to abort the flawed product if you don't like what you learn. This is practically a "traditional" practice today in India (despite laws against sex selection) and China as a daughter-preventer, but middle class Americans and Europeans are more progressive and humane than that, aren't they?

Parallels between ye olde eugenics and thoroughly modern genetics are, even at a glance, far stronger than scientists care to acknowledge. A cultural amnesia about the sordid history of eugenics is cultivated with the greatest of ease in commercial societies that prize short-term, amoral, expeditious thinking. Why indeed are our elites always so tempted to assume humanity is "hard-wired" for every imaginable trait? The answer lies in a far from solely biological predisposition to gain power and, no less important, a desire, which owes more to laziness than to Richard Dawkins' selfish genes, to shirk responsibility for one's actions and the welfare of

others (so long as it is convenient for oneself).[9]

Raw Eugenics

In the late 19th century USA a declining middle class birth rate coincided with mass migrations northward of recently freed blacks and the unseemly inpouring of especially Eastern and Southern Europeans. These alien influxes, as they always do, annoyed the locals. In 1913 arch-eugenicist Henry Goddard sternly advised US authorities that of the tired huddled masses pouring through Ellis Island: 83% of the Jews, 80% of Hungarians, 79% of Italians (especially Southerners) and 87% of Russians indubitably were feeble-minded. Maybe it was the environment.

The "wrong" people were breeding. There were plenty of 'lowlife' immigrants already around to do the dirty work. No more need apply. In *The Clone Age* Lori Andrews interviewed numerous Americans who expressed the same opinion, lamenting sparse 1.8 reproduction rates and the falling sperm counts among comfortably situated natives.) Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Grover Cleveland, Woodrow Wilson, Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge freely invoked eugenical tracts in public forums. Eugenics, after all, promised to transfer political conflicts into a serene biological realm where impartial "science" held sway. All policy decisions flowed from this ineluctable truth. This contorted quasi-utopian trend was part of a middle-class movement aiming to fashion an "administrative state," a state whose socially refined exponents intended that their expertise would displace cruder conflicts based on class, race, and gender.[10]

In Britain Francis Galton published *Hereditary Genius* (1869) which stated flatly that genius was inherited and that elites everywhere were 'elected' by providential nature. That being clearly the case, the obvious objective then was to upgrade the racial "stock" via a judicious blend of negative measures (to discourage the "unfit" from reproducing) and positive ones (to encourage those who were ordained "fit" to breed).[11] People were viewed pretty much like poultry or fruit flies, except that certain specimens, unfortunately, could cast ballots.

The eugenics movement was based on the doctrine that mental characteristics (intelligence, diligence, sobriety) pass across generations just as physical ones (blue eyes) do. Nature tramples nurture. Galton heartily denounced philanthropy and the public health movement as hideous wastes of good money. Eugenicists, you see, merely were observing the dictates of science when they opposed old age pensions, public schooling, the minimum wage or prohibition of alcohol (inasmuch as it might impede the plunge of lower breeds to their genetically fated doom). Poverty and deprivation was overlooked except as natural aids in culling a flock these sages rarely encountered. (In evacuations of children from British cities after September 1939, many rural families was shocked by the signs of the terrible urban poverty which many working class children also escaped – and many of the same rural families campaigned for the children to be removal forthwith.)[12]

If every inherited characteristic was a blend of traits of the parents and ancestors, as

eugenicists argued, the knottiest problem was that this implied a regression to the mean, portending loss of prized characteristics over time. Not only did the best stock need to be prodded to breed, they must maintain “desirable” traits too. A tall order in such a disorderly world. The way out of this fix was to endorse the Lamarckian doctrine of inheritance of acquired characteristics, which Galton, ever the pragmatic optimist, decided to believe required no more than three generations to fasten firmly in genes. Galton later willed his fortune to finance the London Eugenics laboratories where Pearson continued his biological crusade. Eugenics wouldn’t go away, though it would try – after that bit of Nazi excessiveness – to assume more pleasing shapes.

Tainted Breeds, Tainted Deeds

Here was an enormously enticing vision, grounded in good hard statistics, for improving one’s fellow man. For capitalists, a social Darwinian theory of human evolution was a clear demonstration of the iron necessity of the free market; for a mechanistic strain of Marxist it proved the utter inevitability of coveted social change. History was on your side whichever side you were on. Eugenics, viewed as “preventive medicine,” was even compatible with the fight for women’s rights and with some socialist goals. George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells were beguiled, although Wells later came to scribble the admonitory ‘Island of Doctor Moreau.’

In America a flood of sensationalist studies stoked a sense of imminent apocalypse among the better-read. From the sagas of the squalid “Jukes” (1877) to the “Kallikaks” (1912) stern WASP investigators imbued what they viewed as pure rural sociopaths with every conceivable vice.[13] The film *Deliverance* traded on this enduring image of slack-jawed hillbillies for its dramatic kick while physicist William Shockley later cited the Kallikaks study as if it still were deemed pristine social research.[14] The specter of the unrestrained fertility of tainted stock begetting away in the Appalachians at taxpayers’ expense was ideally calculated to stir popular alarm.

Immoral acts were “viewed as evidence, not as a consequence, of mental defect.”[15] Eugenicists were less agitated about survival of the fittest than survival of the unfit. Leonard Darwin, a cousin of the Beagle voyager, helpfully explained that in eugenics the term “fittest” designated who *ought* to survive in the evolutionary sense rather than who survives. In other words, nature the supreme arbiter needed a helping hand. Apart from the holocaust, never did so eminent a group strive so hard to achieve so vast and vicious an objective. British scientist Joseph Needham impishly would challenge the birthright “fitness” of rich shareholders of companies which relied for their profits upon unemployment, low wages, and poor safety conditions inflicted on fellow human beings.

Eugenicists, pleased at the advent of Mendelian genetics, needed to believe that neuropathic characteristics were transmitted in a straightforward way. It was wholly self-evident to them that a better body carried a purer spirit. This tacit assumption was abetted by the medical model – a view of life which presuppose a mystical correspondence between brain cells and particular thoughts. The medical model’s “degenerationist” view held that mental qualities

were rooted in the brain's physical structure, and put "considerable weight on physical stigmata, partial sight, deafness, dyslexia and left handedness."[16] So, on the basis of partial and highly disputable evidence, public policies were urged which, if and when enacted, inflicted irreversible damage on targeted groups. American Harry Laughlin urged a 'gradual' approach – immediate sterilization only of the lowest 10%, as infallibly determined by relative lack of wealth. Once this judicious pruning was done, he would cull the next lowest decile. It was not clear where this progressive decimation was supposed to stop.

Degeneration and its Discontents

Although geneticists began to appreciate the full complexities of heredity by the 1920s, most biologists and geneticists still favored eugenical ideas. Charles Davenport of the Cold Spring Harbor eugenics research center invoked Mendelian genetics to claim that a single bad gene – because it would not blend – would ruin an entire stock. Until the Second World War many biologists "agreed with, or at least did not publicly oppose eugenicist formulations] and this attitude was shared by many prominent American psychologists and sociologists."[17]

Scientists already found that a stable genotype can correspond to a continuous variations in phenotype, that "many symptoms regarded as pathological might only arise from interaction of genotype with surrounding conditions" and that "a genotype cannot always be derived from phenotype" – findings which should have extinguished the theoretical basis of eugenics. Wilhelm Johennsen, a Danish geneticist, observed that "the complexity of society made it impossible that one single human type should be the best. We need all different types of humanity."[18] One could not draw a more democratic lesson – nor one more studiously ignored. In 1930 a British study demonstrated that mental defects occurred proportionately across social classes, not mostly among the poor. In 1933 the British Medical Association rejected the notion of the inheritance of feeble-mindedness. In 1935 the American Neurological Association rejected eugenics as scientifically untenable. None of these professional repudiations made the slightest dent in already formed public attitudes. In 1937 Fortune reported 66% favored sterilization for mental defects, 63% for criminals; only 15% of those surveyed opposed sterilization.

That same year British eugenicist R.B. Catell mournfully reiterated Galton's prophecy that "300 years from now half the population will be mentally defective."[19] Indeed, if "we really want to build an A1 nation we must take this matter to its logical conclusion, and employ the whole machinery of our medical services, not merely for "preventative medicine" in the narrow sense, not even for ante-natal hygiene but for large-scale efforts along eugenic lines – and just such an epic effort was going into action in Germany" – was it not?

Home of the Free and the "Life Unworthy of Life"

The USA, Cattell found to his evident surprise, was the first country to approve compulsory sterilization. Indiana legalized it in 1907 and in another decade fifteen states joined the mission to preserve "home europaeus." Scientific American editorialized in favor of compulsory

sterilization. In 1927 the US Supreme Court approved sterilization for institutionalized inmates. As in the notorious Buck vs. Bell decision, eugenics regained momentum on the pretext of preventing an outbreak of feeble-mindedness. (In this sense it was indeed the disease for which it purported to be the cure.) In Connecticut in 1890 a pauper – by definition, congenitally feeble-minded – having sex with a woman under age 45 was liable to a three years prison term. By the 1890s, incidentally, craniectomies emerged as a medical fad for "curing" retardation, despite a 15 to 25% death rate.[20] The doctors who performed them doubtless were all pillars of their communities.

Sterilizers liked to report that, after such prudent snippings, their patients were happier, healthier and grateful. California by 1927 sterilized 5,000 patients a year. Harry Laughlin played a major role in lobbying for the restrictive 1924 Immigration law by testifying that foreign-born and poor people disproportionately occupied prisons – despite a Midwestern senator pointing out to his miffed Southern colleagues that Danes, Norwegians, Dutch, Germans were more literate then the average southerner. The US government tactfully would suppress findings during World War II that southern blacks scored higher than Southern whites.

Two dozen states approved involuntary sterilization of criminals, epileptics, and those deemed promiscuous. Involuntary sterilizations occurred at much the same rate in states with no legislation too. Yet retarded children have mostly normal parents and mentally retarded parents have normal children. The incidence of mental retardation had not grown over time. The American Neurological Association noted in 1937 that these people lived shorter lives with low marriage and fertility rates. The panic was a thoroughly manufactured myth.

The Eugenics Society openly applauded innovative Nazi programs. The Nazi law on Preventing Hereditarily Ill Progeny was heavily influenced by American models, which grateful Hitlerites acknowledged, awarding a gold medal in1936 to an prominent American eugenicist.. The 1933 law mandated sterilization for the retarded, schizophrenics, manic-depressives, epileptics, the deaf, alcoholics and other unwanted afflictions. In Germany from 1933 to 1945 three and half million sterilizations occurred. The Third Reich launched its campaign to purify the earth by murdering 75,000 patients of inferior stock. Though church-led protests in August 1941 brought the practice temporarily to a halt, it soon resumed secretly. Seventy to one hundred thousand people were thus killed in Germany – and a quarter of a million victims throughout Europe.

Racism, it must be understood, was promulgated by fully credentialed professionals in white lab coats who by their own self-understanding conducted impeccably dispassionate scientific research. The German Medical Association informed Nazi leaders that they certainly would soon devise a foolproof way to detect Jews, Gypsies and homosexuals through blood tests. Few professional groups were more supportive of the Nazi blueprint than physicians.[21] Deichmann points out that biologists enjoyed substantial state funding and, if they didn't fuss about dismissals of Jewish colleagues or Nazi ideology, had "substantial freedom of research," including the freedom to experiment on psychiatric and concentration camp inmates: "The fact

that some of them made use of this option reveals the abyss of a science without a humane orientation, an orientation that cannot come from science."[22] Science, in this crudely reductive but widespread rendition, made mass murder all that much easier. Physicians on trial at Nuremberg for camp experiments were quick to cite American examples to show that the task of eliminating "inferior elements" was not a mission unique to Germany.[23] Nuremberg prosecutors, many of whom were themselves under sway of eugenicist notions picked up at home or in the Ivy League, never prosecuted Nazis for sterilizations, only for deaths.

Reilly points out that it was less revulsion at Nazi racial crimes than the sheer wartime shortage of physicians which curbed American sterilizations.[24] The baby boom ended all the fuss about depopulation. Totalitarianism, not repulsive eugenics practices in themselves, put eugenics into disrepute. Research soon demonstrated that many mental disorders stemmed as much or more from traumatic experience or deprivation as from inherited characteristics. Scientists became more aware of race as a constructed category – though not so much as to prevent abuses such as the Tuskegee experiments. This is the history that genetic engineering enthusiasts dismiss, ignore or deny is relevant to an understanding of what they are up to today. Everything's different.

What New World?

While books on genetic engineering, pro and con, contain the obligatory allusions to *Brave New World,* one wonders how many authors really have taken Huxley's point. The "new" genetic determinism is accompanied in the press by precious little skepticism. Once again the mass media revels in reporting that "research has tipped the scale overwhelmingly toward nature," even though further examination always discloses back-pedaling as to what is thought, let alone proven, to be heritable. The handsomely funded Human Genome project to much fanfare created a 'complete" map of the nucleotide system for genes. In *The Clone Age* Lori Andrews recounts her dismaying experiences in the project's Committee on Ethical, Legal and Social Implications, which was hamstrung and ignored – operating as an in-house device to deflect outside criticism and thereby enable scientists inside to do as they pleased. Genome project proponents primly oppose all government "interference," preferring to place research in both scientific and in corporate control, such as these categories are distinguishable anymore. This is hardly reassuring and only testifies to the profound naivete – or disingenuousness – of those eager proponents.

If corporations fail to choreograph the human gene pool it will not be for want of trying.[25] In 1991 the National Institute of Health announced a program of patents on human gene fragments -or 'express tag sequences' – on 2,375 fragments representing about 5% of genes. Control of the fragments will block any use of the full gene, even if the identity of the genes was unknown. The strategic use of patents raises the prospect of corporations owning our genetic material – an obscene prospect that is only lately coming to light. Why should genes be owned by whomever possesses the technology to manipulate them? Physicians with financial stakes in genetic research increasingly have incentives to deceive their own patients. Will the expensive products of genetic technologies be made available only to the rich, or else be made

compulsory ? More like the former, but neither is a joyous prospect.

All these issues ultimately hinge on cultural understandings/misunderstandings of science. The peculiarly parched view we are encouraged to have that humans beings are nothing but vehicles for genes rests on an artificially atomized view of the world. The trouble with it is that the properties of the parts can't be understood except in their context in the whole because the environment of the organism is constantly being remade by the life of the organism, as Lewontin pointed out. There is no such thing as "general genetic superiority – different environments bring out different degrees of superiority."[26]

Disease now supplies the perfect moral justification to pursue a kinder and gentler eugenics quest. What is control of reproduction for, except for "improvement of the race," as unapologetic eugenicists put it? Does a fetus with an "unsound" genotype have a right to be born ? Cystic fibrosis, Duchesne disease, muscular dystrophy, myotonic dystrophy, Huntington's Chorea, Tay-Sachs disease and Down's syndrome are single gene disorders but most are complex and are not related in any invariant ways to genes. Huntington's chorea, according to recent research, may not, as previously assumed, result just from possession of the single gene.[27] Everyone carries probabilities and predispositions for diseases that may appear only in conjunction with certain environmental stimuli. Are all diseases transmitted genetically or are many acquired behaviors based on the milieu? There is the incalculable problem of sussing out how physiological dispositions blend with environmental cues to cause whatever they cause.

Sensationalized reports of genetic causation occur in the nebulous zone where researchers meet the media. It customarily is front page news when a claim for a genetic cause is lodged and page 10 news when retracted, as the Breggins observe about "the" gene for alcoholism.[28] Claims for a manic-depressive gene have been retracted; the gene for depression detected in Amish families turned out to occur within a single extended family, which reintroduced socialization as a more probable cause. The gene, if any, for schizophrenia is elusive as ever.[29] The infamous "gay" gene never was corroborated nor has a gene for autism been found. Most scientists themselves know better than to advance such an explanation.[30] But ask someone not only on the street but in the corridors of power and they will likely say that scientists have found genetic causes for all. The allegation that an extra male "Y" chromosome caused aggression in "XYY syndrome" people hit a dead end too. Andrews cites a case of parents of an XYY child deciding to abort just to be on the safe side.[31] People can, and have been, denied health insurance and/or employment either because of gene testing or for refusing to undergo it.[32]

The gene for sickle cell anemia extends to all peoples inhabiting malarial regions in Africa and the Middle East where it serves a protective function against the disease. Curing sickle cell raises the vexing problem of pleiotropy wherein "negative" genes that exert positive effects also will be lost. The majority of diseases with a genetic component are polygenic disorders and likely involve significant interaction with the environment. This consideration raises a question as to which end – environmental or molecular – one should start in order to study a given

problem. Genetics are not enough. From Cyril Burt to the present, the tendentious misuse of "twins studies," so as to prove predesignated conclusions on genetic causation, is one of the dodgiest areas in the history of science.

I recently attended a University seminar where I was disturbed to find that hardly anyone objected when a presenter soothingly stated, ipso facto, that genetic engineering cannot be eugenical if the state was not involved. So we presumably need not fear market-driven genetic modification. Nothing could be more mistaken. Eugenics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was not a top-down phenomenon but rather emerged from a folksy blend of class bias, narrow scientism and a cynical seeking of advantage. Eugenicists lobbied very hard for their programs until various states implemented them, or parts of them. Nor did it matter whether these policies worked or not, the fervent promoters went ahead with them anyway.

The future holds out the spectacle not of coercive control but of a "eugenics of the free market." Andrews relates a case of an HMO instructing a couple, who found through amniocentesis that their child-to-be possessed a gene for cystic fibrosis, that it would not pay for the child's care if the pregnancy came to term.[33] Parents want normal children but what is "normal" is determined both by the values within their social circle and by the rules imposed by the institutional environment. Under Nazi eugenics we supposedly breed steely SS officers; under modern genetics we can get Beverly Hills 90120 clones and the prospect of a glittery world populated by soap opera or pop music stars, presumably with ethics, sensitivity and compassion to match. For all the eugenical fuss, a high IQ never has been the supreme quality for worldly success; rather, a passable intelligence will do nicely if one is born into an affluent family and/or is willing to conform cunningly to reigning dogmas. Innovation is prized insofar as it does not threaten gate-keepers or prove disruptive. Perhaps there are genes for conformity or cunning or bigotry or integrity ? To ask this question about such qualities is to answer it.

Genetics, as popularly understood, is an embodiment of a methodology of reductionism which is useful as a research tool but dangerous when identified as the scientific enterprise and applied to the world. Genetics as a discipline jettisons human beings as ends in themselves. Genetics misapplied as a *total philosophy* gets the same result. The problem is not biology (and its various meldings with other sciences) but the mindset of the manipulators.

Reductionist methods have the resilience of a Hammer film vampires – always rising again seductively no matter how many stakes are put through their hearts. People love it when two plus two always equals four, and many want the entire universe to behave that way. In the 1930s the field psychiatry adopted somatic treatments such as electric and insulin shock due to the seductive assumption that mental disorders stemmed from ascertainable organic defects. In the 1990s "psychiatric geneticists began to propose genetic anticipation, the tendency of some illness-causing genes to expand in size when passed from generation to generation, as the mechanism behind the increasing severity of schizophrenia or manic-depressive illness as handed down by a family tree."[34] Hence, the problem cannot be family conflict or lousy schools (both rooted in bad social conditions), the child instead is blamed – with the very best

intentions – as carrier of disease or a misshapen gene, which supports the biopsychiatric inclination to "reduce human conduct and social conflict to grossly sluggish neurotransmitters in a particular type of nerve cell." It's not begging the question, you see, it's genetic.

Eugenics in all its subtle forms is propelled by an anti-democratic world view. It simply is not possible to accept a reductionist mode of genetics and not be drawn into this stance. Science should be a voice at the table but never be taken as the last word in policymaking. One should beware of scientists pleading, like the inventor of the cloning process that yielded the short-lived Dolly, that the messy ethical and social implications were really unimportant on the grounds that one is "only a scientist."

Many geneticists inertially (for lack of a better adverb) endorsed forms of eugenics long after the 1940s. In 1970 67% of American physicians polled felt that "forcible sterilization of criminally insane, retarded and feeble-minded was a desirable social policy." The Boston Globe in 1982 found that fully half of those it surveyed favored sterilizations for the feeble-minded and for criminals. Involuntary sterilizations continued in the United States well into the 1960s; in Canadian provinces until 1978; and in Sweden until 1975. You "hear no hatred in the eugenical voice, just pragmatic selection," Professor Hilary Rose observes, "The difference is that today there is a huge resistance."[35]

Possibly the eugenics episode may work today as a sobering reminder of how mortal our rulers are and how fallible the scientist is. The eugenics story need to be retold and reviewed so that the wider community weighs the risks in this scientific game and brings to bear the necessary degree of skepticism to ballyhooed claims. As for modern genetical fancies, it is hardly possible to improve on the advice of Herbert Muller who himself flirted with eugenics half a century ago before coming to the conclusion that in order to call the bluff of genetic correctness we first need to organize a "cooperative society [where] inequalities due to artificial class distinction, race prejudice, inherited fortunes and privileges are done away with, which will bring us much closer to the ideal eugenic conditions in which practically every individual will have as favorable opportunities for development as every other, and thus have his potentialities recognizable for what they are…then for the first time we shall have an estimation of a man's intelligence from a genetic standpoint."[36]

Notes

[1] In February 2003 Dolly was euthanized. She suffered from 'progressive lung disease and earlier had developed arthritis. Sheep tend to live twice as long as Dolly lasted. Cloning, actually, is full of glitches. See Tim Radford. "Cloning, Deaf to the Warning: Society and Science are Not Ready." The Guardian. 8 August 2005.

[2] See Bryan Appleyard, *Brave New Worlds: Genetics and The Human Experience* (London: Viking, 1999). p. 3.

[3] On Alan J. Sokal's spoof article in the Spring/Summer 1996 *Social Text* see Stephen Hilgartnek, "The Sokal Affair in Context" *Science, Technology and Humen Values* 22, 4

(Autumn 1997) and Jennifer Daryl Slack and M. Mehdi Semati, “Intellectual and Political Hygiene: The Sokal Affair” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 14, 3 (September 1997); and Nick Jardine and Marina Fraser-Spada, “Splendors and Miseries of The Science Wars” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 28, 2 (June 1997).

[4]Susanne Klausen, “For the Sake of the Race: Eugenics Discourses of Feeble-mindedness and Motherhood and the South African Medical Record” *Journal of South African Studies* 23, 1 (March 1997).

[5] See the report on Stachlav Stoler-Liss’ research on the influence of eugenics on the Zionist movement in the 1930s. Tamara Traubmann, “Do Not have Children if they won’t be Healthy.’ Haaretz 16 June 2004. http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=437879. On the home front see Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 106-109.

[6]Leon J. Kamin, Richard C. Lewontin, and Steven Rose, *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology and Human Nature* (London: Pelican, 1984) p. 18. “The essence of the reductionist position is the assumption that a disorder is caused by a simple malfunction of a body region – or a biochemical substance – or a gene.” (p. 189).

[7] Eileen Magnelli, “The Non-Correlation of Biometrics and Eugenics: Rival Forms of Laboratory Work in Karl Pearson’s Career at University College London” *History of Science* 37, 2 (June 1999), p. 132.

[8] William H. Tucker, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research* (Champaign: University of Illinois, 1994), p. 65.

[9] On this theme see Bruno Bettelheim and Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *The Art of The Obvious* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993).

[10] See Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964) and Dwight Waldo, *The Administrative State* (New York: Ronald Press, 1948).

[11] Galton was nowhere more maliciously and unconsciously naive than when interpreting photos of the children of Jewish immigrants to London in the 1880s: “I felt, rightly or wrongly, that every one of them was coolly appraising me at market value, without the slightest interest of any kind.” This is what a Kleinian analyst would call an epic instance of projective identification.

[12] Clive Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992), p. 139; Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Pimlico. 1991), p. 79.

[13] See Nicole Hahn Rafter, White Trash: The Eugenic Family Studies 1877-1919 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988 and J. David Smith, *Minds Made Feeble: The Mythical*

Legacy of the Kallikaks (Rockville,MD: Aspen, 1985)

[14] See Joel N. Shurkin, *Broken Genius: The Rise and Fall of William Shockley, Creator of the Electronic Age* (New York: Macmillan, 2006).

[15] Matthew Thomson, *The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy and Social Policy in Britain, 1870-1959* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), .pp. 7, 20.

[16] Ibid., .pp. 7, 20

[17] Edward J. Larson, *Sex, Race and Science: Eugenics in The Deep South* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1995). pp. 30.

[18] Hansen, "Something Rotten in The State of Denmark: Eugenics and the Rise of the Welfare State" in Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, eds, *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996), p. 24.

[19] R. B. Cattell, *The Fight For Our National Intelligence* (London: P.S. King & Son, ltd., 1937), p. 12.

[20] Hansen, "Something Rotten in The State of Denmark," pp. 14-15.

[21] On engineers see Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[22] Ute Deichmann, *Biologists Under Hitler* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). p. 331.

[23] Philip R. Reilly, *The Surgical Solution: A History of Involuntary Sterilization in the United States* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 101.

[24] Ibid., p. 95.

[25] John Frow, "Information as Gift and Commodity" *New Left Review* 219 (September/October 1996), p. 94.

[26] Richard Lewontin, *The Doctrine of DNA: Biology as Ideology* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 72.

[27] Margaret Lock, "Globalization and the State: Is an Era of Neo-Eugenics in the Offing?" unpublished paper, 2007, p. 9.

[28] Peter and Ginger Ross Breggin, *War Against Children* (New York: St Martins Press, 1994), p. 62.

[29] Richard Bentall, “Why There Can Never be a Genetic Theory of Schizophrenia” in Steven Rose, ed. *From Brain To Consciousness* (London: Allen Lane, 1998).

[30] ”Every scientists knows there is not a straightforward mapping between genotype and phenotype; we know this so well that we don’t talk about it. But the general public don’t realize it and they use the most dangerous word in genetics, which is the three letter word ‘for’ : a gene for this and a gene for that.” Steve Jones, ‘Darwinism and Genes’ in Jeremy Stangroom, ed. *What Scientists Think* (London: Routledge, 2005), p.p. 9-10. This begs the question of why there is such a public misunderstanding.

[31] Lori Andrews, *The Clone Age: Adventures in the New World of Reproductive Technology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999).

[32] Julian Borger, “Who’s Testing Our Genes – and Why?’ *The Guardian*. 13 September 2000. In the Shriver Center in Massachussetts, for example, physicians reported 582 cases of people who were turned away because of ‘flawed’ genes.

[33] See Andrews, *The Clone Age*.

[34] Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From The Era of The Asylum to The Age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), p. 246.

[35] Speaker at Conference on evolution, society and genetics at ICA in London, 24 January 1998.

[36] Herbert J. Muller, *Out of The Night: A Biologist’s View of The Future* (London: Gollanz, 1936), p. 104.

Kurt Jacobsen *is book review editor at Logos and a research associate in Political Science at the University of Chicago. He is author of Technical Fouls: Democratic Dilemmas and Technological Change; Dead Reckonings: Ideas, Interests, and Politics in the ‘Information Age,’ and a forthcoming volume on ‘Freud’s Foes.’*

A Conversation With Raul Hilberg

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Q: You have famously argued that there were three solutions to the Jewish problem; conversion, expulsion, and finally extermination. Could you explain what you mean by that?

Raul Hilberg: This is an underlying pattern to which I came to early on in my research. Looking through the sweep of history it is clear that conversion was an object of the Christian world. The expulsions began in the late Middle Ages when it would appear that the Jews were not willing to become Christians. That pattern existed for several hundred years in Europe. You could take it back to Oxford and then go to Spain in 1492 and Portugal a few years later. So we are really talking about the later Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times for the expulsions.

Now, the business of a final solution, that permanent solution, is a Nazi idea. You go back even to the beginnings of the Nazi party and find that they are still thinking in terms of the emigration of the Jews -there was a plan called the Madagascar plan, which was actually a thought in Poland and even in France (Madagascar was a French possession), maybe all of the Jews could be shipped there. So this idea was still floating in the German foreign office and all the way up to Hitler as late as 1940, especially 1940 when France surrendered. However, when the War did not end as the Germans had hoped it would with the West (they were already making preparations to attack the Soviet Union), the serious thought of annihilating the Jews emerged. The earliest indication of this is a meeting Hitler had with a bunch of party members early in February of 1941. He had by then not quite formed the decision, but it was on the way.

Q: There was the revisionist conference in Iran several months ago. How worried should

scholars and the general public be about the capacity of this kind of revisionism to engender anti-Semitism?

Hilberg: This revisionism began in the 1960s. It is not new. I boycotted Germany for quite a while, but when I passed through a while back Munich I went to a kiosk and bought a local right wing paper, a German paper, I found to my great astonishment that I was mentioned on the title page as a Zionist leader. Now, that was a big surprise to me, but the headline was: "The Lie of the Holocaust". So, Germany in the sixties had adherence to this belief, even though there they should have known better than anywhere else. There was a Frenchman who was already in print in the 1960s. Half of his book was devoted to me. It was a neo-Nazi publication. As soon as my book, The Destruction of the European Jews, was out in 1961, I became a target of these groups.

To me, the later developments in Holocaust denial were just a very slow spread, not even a growth, but a spread from France/Germany to the United States to Canada and ultimately picked up by the Arab world. The Arab world is very disoriented when it comes to Europe anyway. They are as confused about the West as we are about them. Even so, the conference in Iran did not even succeed in Iran – it was needless difficulty and trouble. There were Iranians who publicly denounced this conference. So, I am not terribly worried about it even though at the time that that conference took place last December I was asked by the German government to take part in a counter-conference as the keynote speaker that was held the same day in Berlin. I ordinarily do not engage in debates with Holocaust revisionists. I did not do so at the Berlin conference either, but the essence of my talk was that, yes, there was a Holocaust, which is, by the way, more easily said than demonstrated. I demonstrated this and people did come to it. Nevertheless, the German papers did not publicize the counter-conference in Berlin because they could not resist publishing the faces of the Rabbis who had gone to Iran.

I have come to the conclusion, not once but several times, that, as far as I am concerned, I do not agree with legislation that makes it illegal to utter pronouncements claiming that there was no Holocaust. I do not want to muzzle any of this because it is a sign of weakness not of strength when you try to shut somebody up. Yes, there is always a risk. Nothing in life is without risk, but you have to make rational decisions about everything.

Q: Many of the recent anti-Semitic incidents in Europe have led people to talk of a new anti-Semitism. Is this really something we should take seriously or is this simply a continuance of the older anti-Semitism?

Hilberg: It is not even that. It is picking up a few pebbles from the past and throwing them at windows. I am old enough to remember what the effects of an anti-Jewish attitude are. Here, at the University of Vermont it was unthinkable, even in this liberal state, to have a Jew as a dean as late as the seventies, let alone president. In other words, there was still a lot of segregation in the United States. If you go back and you pick up any New York Times in the thirties or even the forties you will see ads for apartments in New York City and the word "restricted". This is a Jewish owned newspaper and they printed ads barring Jews. And this was an embedded anti-

Jewish regime, which the society itself supported and it's gone. It's simply gone.

We cannot even talk about restrictions on Jews in the Islamic world because the Jews have left the Islamic world. They are not there anymore except in Morocco and maybe some tens of thousands still here and there, but that is a remnant of the two hundred thousand that were still there when the state of Israel was created. So the anti-Semitism of the past belongs to the past, and particularly the word "anti-Semitism." There was an anti-Semitic party in Germany and there was an anti-Semitic party in Austria. The leader of the Hungarian regime, Admiral Horthy, who, when some extreme right wing guys were trying to take over Jewish businesses shouted them down. He said, and I am paraphrasing, "you are not going to take over these businesses because the Jews at least know how to run them and who are you? And don't you talk to me because I was an anti-Semite before you were born." Adolf Hitler himself, and nobody reads Mein Kampf, makes a statement that his father would not be an anti-Semite because it would degrade him socially. Nietzsche's sister married an anti-Semitic leader and he referred in letters to his sister in the whole correspondence "to your anti-Semitic husband." Now, you can see that anti-Semitism was somewhat correlated with some backward glance. It belongs to the nineteenth century with its other "-isms," with imperialism, with colonialism, with racism. It sounds bizarre if I tell you that the Nazis did not call themselves anti-Semites. You do not even find the word.

Q: Really?

Hilberg: Yes, there was a sense that Nazism was something new. The anti-Semite had stopped at a certain point; the anti-Semite could talk about eliminating Jews, but did not know how to do it. The anti-Semite did not have the power, the anti-Semite was a propagandist. The Nazis were serious and this was a far different proposition. When you see the actual legislation in Germany, Austria, and elsewhere that states that it is criminal to deny that there was a Holocaust, it is because these governments have to distance themselves from Nazism. Nowadays of course Nazism and anti-Semitism are conflated into one kind of ideology, but it is a different phenomenon. There was an extreme anti-Semitic newspaper in Germany, *Der Stürmer*, which was published by Julius Streicher. I do not remember now whether it was Höss, the Auschwitz commander, or somebody else who was asked, "Did you read *Der Stürmer*?" He said, basically, "Look, I'm a lieutenant colonel of the SS, I wouldn't be caught dead reading *Der Stürmer*." It was like reading the lowest of the low gossip rags in the United States. There was an issue of social standing.

Q: What are your thoughts on the rhetorical and symbolic usage of the word "Holocaust"?

Hilberg: I resisted the use of the word "Holocaust" to begin with because of its religious underpinnings. In the end, it is like anything that becomes usage; you do not escape from it. But, "Holocaust" becomes problematic in a number of ways, and the one which is least discussed, because it's politically incorrect to do so, is that everything is becoming a Holocaust. I will give you one example: I was walking in Berlin one day and I see a sign "Holocaust" and saw some street demonstrators with signs reading "Holocaust, Holocaust, Holocaust." I could

not figure out what they were demonstrating about until I saw a cage and realized they were talking about cruelty to animals. The word "genocide" is also being bandied about, and of course the Genocide Convention has a definition which goes beyond what they call a "Holocaust." So if you kidnap children in order to make them do something that's genocide, if you use opium that's genocide, etc. Because it's an international convention, the Greeks put something in there, the Chinese put something in there and so on and so forth.

"Holocaust" is a misused word again and again because it means, especially when it is capitalized, the Jewish catastrophe and once you pin it on all sorts of things it loses its effectiveness. There are now books being written that state the Armenians were not really subjected to genocide or the Gypsies were not really subjected to genocide – even though in my opinion both were – but it results in these arguments and it's an unavoidable situation. As soon as the President's Commission on the Holocaust was set-up-that's the same President Carter who is now being called an anti-Semite who created the Commission-everybody showed up: the Armenians, of course, showed up, the Poles showed up, the Ukrainians showed up, the Czechs showed up. There are all of these definitional problems and arguments that emerge when using words like "Holocaust" or "genocide."

Q: Moving beyond the way these words are symbolically and rhetorically employed, what do you see as the kind of relation of the Holocaust to other historical and current genocides? How can we use the lessons of it to confront the kind of violence and persecution of groups which are occurring today, whether or not sociologically we consider them genocides?

Hilberg: I did not know what to do with Cambodia or other events like that, but Rwanda convinced me. That is why in the third edition of my book I got Rwanda in there. Why I put it there is the answer to your question. In Buchenwald and possibly some other camps as the war ended, the inmates put up big signs that said "never again." I think it was really the Communists who were behind that, but I am not sure. The signs said "never again" in various languages because there was a Babel of languages in these camps. Millions of people, men, women and children killed only because they were classified as Jews. Now, that should not happen again and that is the responsibility of the world. The result was, in fact, the Genocide Convention. The word genocide was a made up word by Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer from Poland whose previous speciality was terrorism. When the Holocaust happened he published a book in 1944, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe. In that book he invented the word genocide because he argued that the law has to have that concept as a crime. Of course the United States did not want to sign the Genocide Convention because the State Department and other representatives had their doubts. One major doubt was that if we had a Genocide Convention, then the blacks in this country would challenge all the segregation laws. The Genocide Convention is a treaty, and if it's a treaty under Article six of the Constitution we cannot sign this convention because it would override our sacred state laws which discriminated against blacks. That was their argument. Eventually that argument collapsed.

What remains today, however, is that the "never again" is implicit. Yet, come Rwanda and President Clinton refused to call it genocide when it really was! We said that we will never

tolerate this sort of thing again, but allow half a million people plus to be killed in three or four months in Rwanda. After ten Belgians were killed withdrawals began of the international peacekeeping force. It was the same thing as in Germany, the Hutu decided now we are going to solve the Tutsi problem like the Germans did with the Jews. It is even clear that they decided it months before they started killing because they imported machetes and made preparations like the Germans. So here we were, the whole world, there's no World War II going on, there is no excuse that we need all the aircraft we have, so we cannot bomb Auschwitz because we need them on the Western Front, and nothing is done. It's peace, it's the nineties, and nothing is done. So much for "never again." So the problem has obviously not disappeared.

You have to make decisions. When you are sitting in the Defense Department or the State Department in the White House you never can predict exactly what configurations some happening will show you. You have to think it through and these people haven't got any time to think. They have to do all their thinking before they took office. This is a major problem. Nevertheless, this is the first time in history that we take a sort of global responsibility. I am not saying we are alone, we have our partners doing this and the notion of a gloabl responsibility is really brand new, it is post-World War II.

Q: What are your thoughts on the current debates over how to interpret the Holocaust and its legacy in the work of people like Norman Finkelstein or Daniel Goldhagen?

Hilberg: Well Finkelstein is now maligned all over the place. There were obviously lobbies who tried to dislodge him from his position. Finkelstein is a political scientist. I believe he has a PhD degree from Princeton and, whatever you may think of Princeton, this is a pretty strong preparation to be a professional political scientist. He wrote to me a couple of times. He was the first one to take Goldhagen seriously. He attacked Goldhagen in a very long essay which I could never have written because I would have never had the patience. Goldhagen is part of an academic group that in my kind of research is a disaster…

Q: Why is that?

Hilberg: Because [Goldhagen] was totally wrong about everything. Totally wrong. Exceptionally wrong. In other words, this whole fury of his anti-Semitism was, at the root, that it was especially eliminationist anti-Semitism, was totally absurd. He talks about anti-Semitism among Germans, Estonians, Ukrainians, Latvians, and Lithuanians, but where did this unique eliminationist anti-Semitism come from? It is just totally absurd. I mean, totally off the wall, you know, and factually without any basis. Finkelstein took this seriously. I took it less seriously, but I was a latecomer in attacking this Goldhagen fellow.

Now Finkelstein had a second point, which, in my opinion, was one hundred percent correct and that is that the response to the issue of the Swiss banks and German industry, which had coincided during the War, was not only coercive on the part of the Jews who mobilized, but also on the part of all the insurance commissioners, the Senate, the House, and the critical committees. The only thing they could not break through was to the courts, which still have

independence. So they lost at court, but they threatened people like Alan Hevesi in New York. They could make threats because Swiss banks wanted to expand here. For Finkelstein, this was naked extortion and I'm not sure who agreed with him except for me and I said so openly. In fact, I said so to the press in maybe seven countries.

The press did not expect my answer. The World Jewish Congress was led by a man who was appeared to be from his own autobiographical statements to be totally, not even average, but like a child almost. What this tycoon, who took over the World Jewish Congress, was saying was totally preposterous. The claims lawyers, joined by the World Jewish Congress, made an incredible display of totally inappropriate behavior.

Now when he talks about the Arabs, some Jews feel that he is also anti-Zionist, that he is anti-Israel; that he seems to always emphasize the suffering of the Arabs. I do not join him in this particular venture because I have my own view, but you cannot say he is altogether wrong either. Would you like to be an Arab citizen in Israel? Think of the doors that are closed. You may eat better and have a better income than if you lived in a slum in Cairo. The great irony is that the economic condition of Israeli Arabs is considerably better than the proletariat in some other Arab countries, but a person needs something more. A person needs a feeling of dignity. Think of the security check points. It is a life that certainly something ought to be done about it in one way or another. This particular battle cannot be fought forever. It cannot be. The Israelis will tire of it. The Israelis will simply tire of mistrusting people. It is not possible to go on this way forever. Finkelstein has the corner on the germ of correct vision in these matters because he is pretty sharp. More often than not, especially with regard to these other matters like Goldhagen and the Swiss banks he has been right.

Q: One last question, as time goes on in the twenty-first century what direction should research on the Holocaust take now?

Hilberg: Well, if you had asked that question first, it would have needed a half hour. Rightfully so, the research today is oriented towards finding out details and especially what happened at the local level. This research has already started. It is not very well developed in this country, but it is very much in progress in Europe. The principle researchers of the Holocaust today are Germans and Austrians. There are also some French and Italians. There are not many Holocaust researchers worth mentioning in this country.

The second thing that we should and must do is look at those aspects of what happened which are still taboo. What is taboo is the life of a terminal Jewish community in some ghetto and the notion that some people died first, then other people died next, still other people died last, and then, better yet, some of them survived. What accounts for these very discernible developments? Example: the first to die were the poorest of the poor. We have got to face this issue. We have got to realize that it will not do in the academic world to call all of the Jewish dead, as I have heard one Rabbi call them, *Kedoshim*, which means holy people. This is not my language. We cannot do that. We have to see them as they were and we have not done this. We have had the lectures. This is one aspect in which I do not agree with Elie Wiesel although I

have known him for a long time. He says “listen to the survivors and listen even to their children.” I say, yes, we will listen to the survivors. We have listened for quite a long time, but it is not enough. It will not tell us what happened to the people that did not survive. You are not a random sample. This requires a lot of assiduous research through a lot records that have been buried and have not been examined.

The third thing that needs to be done is: you have to identify more clearly who the neighbors of the Jews were. How they were impacted if at all? How their reactions were motivated, be it to join the perpetrator or help the victim or, in most cases, remain neutral. Neutrality does not mean ignoring something. It means a decision not to do anything. We have to examine that as well. So we have to examine the Holocaust in all ways and it boils down to doing a lot of local research because at the local level are the records that tell us something. For example, if I read in local records that the Byelorussians are not delivering enough grain to the Germans because they secretly steal it to make vodka and in such huge quantities under the German occupation, you would have to begin to ask the question what percentage of that population was perpetually drunk? Now these are very, very important questions and that is the direction the research needs to go in. It is not for amateurs, it is not for untrained people, it is not for philosophers, it is for people who know languages, who know history, who know political science, who know economics, etc. At the root they must be well trained. The Holocaust is not today, as it might have been in the beginning, a subject for the laymen.

Martin Espada And Anne Waldman Poetry

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Martín Espada

The Soldiers in the Garden
The God of the Weatherbeaten Face

Anne Waldman

Corset
5 Female Poets Next to a Block of Ice

Martín Espada

The Soldiers in the Garden
Isla Negra, Chile, September 1973

After the coup,
the soldiers appeared
in Neruda's garden one night,
raising lanterns to interrogate the trees,
cursing at the rocks that tripped them.
From the bedroom window
they could have been
the conquistadores of drowned galleons,
back from the sea to finish
plundering the coast.

The poet was dying;
cancer flashed through his body
and left him rolling in the bed to kill the flames.
Still, when the lieutenant stormed upstairs,
Neruda faced him and said:
There is only one danger for you here: poetry.
The lieutenant brought his helmet to his chest,
apologized to señor Neruda
and squeezed himself back down the stairs.
The lanterns dissolved one by one from the trees.

For thirty years
we have been searching

for another incantation
to make the soldiers
vanish from the garden.

The God of the Weatherbeaten Face

For Camilo Mejía, conscientious objector

The gods gathered:
the crusader god took off his helmet,
the desert warrior god stood his shield in the corner,
the sword-maker god sat between them sharpening blades,
the bombardier god spread his maps on the table,
the god who collects infidel heads traded trophies
with the god who collects heathen scalps,
the god of gold opened his handkerchief
for the god of oil to wipe his dripping chin,
the god who punishes sin with boils scratched his boils
and called the meeting to order.

And the gods said: *War*.

Sergeant Mejia heard the prisoner moan under the hood
as the guards shoved him into a steel closet, then pounded
with a sledgehammer on the door until the moaning stopped;
heard machine gun fire slicing heads from necks
with a roar that would be the envy of swords;
heard a soldier sobbing in the toilet for the headless boy
who would open his eyes every time the soldier closed his own.

Sometimes a song drifts up
through the moaning and sledgehammers,
machineguns and sobbing.
Sometimes a voice floats above pandemonium
the way a seagull floats over burning ships.
Sergeant Mejia heard his father's song,
the peasant mass of Nicaragua:
Vos sos el Dios de los pobres,
el Dios humano y sencillo,
el Dios que suda en la calle,
el Dios de rostro curtido.
You are the God of the poor,
the human and simple God,
the God who sweats in the street,
the God of the weatherbeaten face.

Iraq was crowded with the faces of this God.
They watched as Sergeant Mejia said *no* to the other gods,
miniscule word, a pebble, a grain of rice,
but the word flipped the table at the war council,
where the bombardier god had just dealt
the last hand to the god of oil,
and cards with dates of birth and death,
like tiny tombstones, fluttered away.
Sergeant no more, Camilo Mejia walked to jail.
Commanders fed the word *coward*
to the sniffing microphones of reporters
who repeated obediently: *coward*.

The cell crowded with faces too, unseen travelers
wandering in from a century of jails:
union organizer, hunger striker, freedom rider,
street corner agitator, conscientious objector.

The God of the weatherbeaten face,
dressed as an inmate steering a mop,
smuggled in the key one day, and Camilo Mejia
walked with him through epiphany's gate.

Martín Espada *is the author of 8 books of poetry, including* Rebellion Is the Circle of a Lover's Hands, Imagine the Angels of Bread*, and* Alabanza: New and Selected Poems 1982-2002*. He is a professor in the English Department at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst, where he teaches creative writing and the work of Pablo Neruda. The poems in this issue of* Logos *are reprinted, by permission of the author, from his most recent collection,* The Republic of Poetry *(NY: W. W. Norton, 2006, www.wwnorton.com)*

Anne Waldman

Corset

in memory, Kathy Acker & for Ambrose

what is it to be corset maker binding the bone and cotton in a daily sweat of labor and purpose what is it to know the sweat of all you my sister workers of daily living surviving an economic purse-string purpose what is it to be declared the most dangerous of purpose when J. Edgar Hoover has your number and what is it here now in St. Petersburg hungry and anxious and soul-stirring for surviving my purpose what is the cause of insomniac passion my further disillusionment in your systems in your many systems in all the systems that bind the bone in this labor to you who will always profit off the labor of Emma's hands sewing binding aching toiling bone and cotton in the class struggle a dangerous purpose you want to call it that why you can call it that and it's so much more but do call it that and you will I'm sure call it that and

most dangerous of violence and terror too and what of a Spanish Civil War I'll call wake up all minions! I'll call: arise! and would cast in a daily sweat of labor a struggle a sweet edge that way for it's an energy of daily sweat and toil to be free of the fascisms of how and when and why and why o never free of J. Edgar Hoover but my imagination ever free of the imagination of J. Edgar Hoover who will surely most certainly have your number in his fractious labor and psychopathic toil even now when he the ghost of fractious J. Edgar Hoover is stalking haunting the work places the meeting places the "commune" of all my sweat and purpose–what is it to a large woman be-speckled and intent in my libertarian socialist moment to incite a riot what is it to be thus called trouble and to be forever "unpopular with authorities" to be watched and goaded and arrested and in lock-down what kind of terror moment is this and will it survive and assassinate a president this kind of moment will it will it survive McKinley will it survive psychopathic fractious J. Edgar Hoover and will the ghosts of Haymarket stalk the Union Hall still in that old purpose and will that will now sisters break the corset that binds the moment?

5 Female Poets Next to a Block of Ice

(–Wrestle the damn dream down!)
–Eleni Sikelianos

This was the dream
where I left the palm and stereo at home
left my fatigues at home
I became lost in a Theater of Reading
I was provoked by aggressive how-to book titles bobbing out at me
as I passed the (fluctuating) shelves
"Incapably Positive Chronicles"
"Received Ideas But In No Things Received"
"The President Is Not Projective Thirst You Can Be Too"
"My Hands Are Tongue-Tied"
"More Than Laura Riding Knows"
I open a volume, hands shaking but my condition ordered me to salute
Heil!
I felt like Queen Mab, I wanted to eat nightshade
and ply the spirits of poesia out of their caves
My sisters–all four of them–reminded me of
the Library in Alexandria–think of it before its sacking
–(time is a spiral)
and suggested how one might behave
in such a place–
such a Memory Place, you need, girlfriends, to bow
Joanne was seen polishing marble
Diane remained in samadhi
Alice had her glasses on to scrutinize a miniature map
Eleni was eager for the card catalogue, she started "And you?"

She was *enceinte*, she held the future in a book
I was a lumpen proletariat, a deadbeat, a shaman
I wanted him, the only librarian in the room (snap fingers)
to be a nurturing woman librarian
The world was askew how get it right again?
Stacks of glassine Duncan, Olson thin, weathered Ginsberg,
his pages long with hair
It was "all about" Spicer's grail, the Enron scandal
It was all about death in war, torture
The empire of reading was clear
You needed special glasses provided by Homeland Security
But here there was no "home," there was no "secure"
But something was going to change, get born.

Anne Waldman *is the author of over 40 books and pamphlets of poetry, including* Fast Speaking Woman; IOVIS, Books I & II; In the Room of Never Grieve; *and* Structure of the World Compared to a Bubble. *A co-founder of The Kerouac School at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, she is also the editor of numerous anthologies, including* The Beat Book and Civil Disobediences: Poetics and Politics in Action. *The two poems in this issue of* Logos *are reprinted, by permission of the author, from her most recent book,* Outrider *(Albuquerque, NM: La Alameda Press, 2006, www.laalamedapress.com) .*

Jonathan Shahn Sculpture

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Jonathan Shahn's work treats one of art's oldest subjects, the human form. A sculptor whose work resists categorization under a specific school or tradition, he looks at and draws inspiration from the entire history of art. He embraces pre-modern, ancient, medieval, renaissance, tribal, and modern art, synthesizing their contributions in order to reexamine that omnipresent object of human social and reflective life, the human head. In so doing, he offers new ways of seeing the head. With a deft awareness of the importance of how the conditions under which the head appears to us constitute our mundane perception of it, Shahn plays with spatial limitations and lighting to help abstract the head from our everyday experience of it. His sculptures unveil the many manifestations of facial expression to reveal our humanity, but without strict adherence to any single artistic tradition, making his work representative of a kind of cosmopolitan humanism. Yet, by abstracting from normative experience, Shahn's work is singularly a product of modern artistic questions.

Jonathan Shahn is represented by New York's Jonathan O'Hara Gallery and teaches at The Art Students League of New York. Included below are quotes by Mr. Shahn extracted from an interview that was conducted by Logos Journal.

The artist at work in his studio

In art, there is always a difference between what you see and what you know, which is actually what you think you know. You make so many assumptions about things that you look at, whether it is people, animals, trees, or anything. You make assumptions, but the more arcane something is to you, the more likely you are to look at it, rather than to know it. With the human head there is the opposite extreme. You have got so many preconceived ideas about it. However, you are constantly substituting what you think you know for what you see. Or, obliterating what you see with what you think you know. Sometimes when I teach, I have models pose for a portrait with their head lying on a table, so you are looking at the head from an unusual position right away. All of a sudden it becomes odd and strange-looking, meaning

that you have to look at it much more carefully. When you are working, you try to create a lot of situations of strangeness for yourself like that. You want to see things like you have never seen them before. There is more pleasure in it that way.

There is an obsession that a lot of people have with modern sculpture and bases. About how

the elimination of the pedestal was really a great moment. It's interesting when they put things on the ground. They do not need a pedestal anymore. But, big deal. It's fine to make a pedestal too, but now you do not have to. Big deal again. It's just one of those simple-minded things that people overdo referring to. Some of these pieces are a lot about pedestals and bases. There is a piece that I always liked when I was going to school in the Boston Museum, an Egyptian piece. It was the head of a scribe. I always drew it. I liked that relation of that block to the head… One of the reasons I started making [my pieces] in boxes was because I was not satisfied with the way they looked. They could have been on pedestals, but that did not look interesting. I also hated the light, the spotlights. So, I decided to make the limits of its space and make the lighting as well.

=

The more familiar things are, the harder it is to see them. It's about looking at something familiar as if it were something you did not know very well. You have to look at it more intensely to try to understand it. Sculpture is complicated by a spatial proponent. It has dimension and thickness. When you are looking at most faces or heads, you see them as images, or pictures. In images, the vertical and horizontal placement of every part is critical, but the depth has no existence, except as an illusion. That is why it is very difficult for people who are very skilled in two-dimensional drawing, to learn how to do sculpture. They have developed such a high degree of skill in this vertical and horizontal concept of things, and have not particularly given thought to depth. In other words, if I make the side of somebody's head and then their ear, I can do things in drawing like make the ear look as if it was behind the line of the cheek. I do not care how much behind, just so that it looks as if it is behind. Whereas when I am making a sculpture, I have to really think about the whole space, as if my eyes were everywhere around.

I am interested in what the pieces in the boxes look like, what kind of heads they are. I want them to get as much consideration from the format as they can. It is not like a conceptual work where you have an idea of a head and any head you do will do. That's not the important part. What I'm trying to do is make an intense head, one that has emotional qualities. People make too much of an opposition between expressionism with form that carries beyond their representation of form versus representational art as being more rational. I do not believe in that particular opposition. I am trying to put the qualities of expression or emotion in things that have the appearance of very ordinary proportion.

Chalmers Johnson ‘s War On The ‘war On Terror’, The Sorrows Of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, And The End Of The Republic, Blowback: The Causes And Consequences Of American Empire

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Chalmers Johnson ‘s War on the ‘War on Terror’

The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004) by Chalmers Johnson

Blowback: The Causes and Consequences of American Empire (New York: Owl Books, 2nd ed. 2004) by Chalmers Johnso

Like several of Noam Chomsky’s recent books, Chalmers Johnson’s *Sorrows of Empire* is part of the American Empire Project series that is published by Henry Holt and Company, and it is therefore not surprising that Johnson and Chomsky have some family resemblances: both authors are professional academics, Johnson, an Emeritus Professor at the University of California, San Diego, specializes in East Asian politics and economics, while Chomsky is a Professor of Linguistics and Philosophy at MIT; both men take as their thesis that something has gone terribly wrong with the American political system and that people the world over, as well as Americans, are suffering the consequences, the worst of which are yet to come; both are pessimistic about the consequences of U.S. imperialism and the lies and disinformation that routinely prevent citizens’ awareness of their government’s actions; and both authors write with an existential determination as they look into the abyss of arrogance, stupidity, and willful disregard of consequences in American foreign policy by government officials and the élites who control them.

Despite similarities in subject matter and thesis, however, the two authors use very different rhetorical strategies to present their research and conclusions: Chomsky is an old hand at political dissent, hardened by years of writing against the imperial stupidity of American domestic politics and foreign policy, so that his tone is full of wit, black humor, irony, and sarcasm that reveals a righteous indignation against behavior that is often criminal, inhuman, and vicious in the extreme when it isn’t merely stupid, destructive, and against common norms of human decency and international law; Johnson, on the other hand, is low-key, often presents his material with understatement, and at times is almost apologetic to be presenting such bad

news, the "sorrows" of the past (and likely future) consequences of our foolish political behavior as a nation. How one reacts to these books (apart from which side of the military-industrial complex one is on or which side of the socio-economic divide one inhabits) is in part a function of one's style of inquiry and dissent, and whether one is long on patience and optimism. I will briefly outline the argument, organization, and rhetorical strategy of Johnson's book, and then I will make some brief, final observations.

A useful introduction to Chalmers Johnson can be found in the "Introduction" and "Prologue" of an updated, post-9/11 edition of his previous book, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000; 2004). In the "Prologue: A Spear-Carrier for Empire," Johnson describes his career, beginning with his military service in Japan during the Korean War, and his subsequent graduate study, which introduced him to post-War China. His doctoral research in Japanese archives about the effects of Japanese military brutality in China provided irrefutable evidence in support of ideas about Chinese Communism that had been previously discredited in the United States because of American ideological blindness during the McCarthy era. Johnson's subsequent research on the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) revealed the successful socialist roots of Japan's post-War economic "miracle," whose source was a "vast bureaucratic state apparatus that supported and guided the economy in much the same way the Department of Defense supported and guided the military-industrial-university complex in the United States (xxxii)." Thus his career reveals a paradigm [my interpretation] in which a scholar who supports Cold War establishment-ideology progressively discovers 1) an ideological obtuseness and tunnel vision on the part of government analysts (e.g., as the result of McCarthy-era hysteria), 2) a pattern of historical behavior that produces disastrous consequences far beyond anything anticipated in intensity and longevity (the Chinese Communist revolution that was in large part fomented by Japanese military brutality), and 3) serious contradictions between professed ideological objectives and performance (Cold War military garrisons to contain the spread of communism in a U.S. client state that has a centrally-controlled economy, contrary to U.S. economic ideology).

All three points in this paradigm form a conceptual basis for both *Blowback* and *The Sorrows of Empire*, which are concerned with a general loss of common sense, a U.S. foreign policy that includes CIA "dirty tricks" as well as outright economic and military aggression, and ideological blindness. Although some of Johnson's statements and conclusions may sound radical since such thought is routinely missing from the controlled or self-policing American mass media, the author's personal history, professional credentials, careful demeanor, and circumspect rhetorical approach all urge the impartial reader to carefully consider the author's ideas and to heed his warnings.

At the back of *The Sorrows of Empire*, tucked into the "Acknowledgments" page, Johnson states the rationale for his rhetorical approach to his subject:

This book was not easy to write. I do not like what it has to say about my country. But I am convinced by the course of events leading up to and the developments following the terrorist

attacks of September 11, 2001, that this analysis is fundamentally correct. It is because I do not like stating that the United States is probably lost to militarism that this book is so heavily documented.

Further along on the "Acknowledgments" page, he describes his task in part as "throw[ing] light on the suicide of the United States as a democracy (367)." Such directness is mildly shocking but entirely in keeping with much of the evidence in the rest of the book. Taken as a whole, the book does add up to the statements that the U.S. is "probably lost to militarism" and that the book "throws light on the suicide of the United States as a democracy," but most of the time, especially in the early portions of the volume, the thesis of the book is stated in a more benign manner. Near the beginning of the book, for example, the thesis is expressed thus: "This book is a guide to the American empire as it begins openly to spread its imperial wings (4)." Considering the subject, this sounds relatively mild, at least until we recognize *openly* as the operative word here. Elsewhere, startling statements tend not to startle because of context and a lack of irony: in response to the (sometimes disingenuous) question after 9/11, "Why do they hate us?",

> …a growing number [of Americans] finally began to grasp what most non-Americans already knew and had experienced over the previous half century, namely, that the United States was something other than what it professed to be, that it was, in fact, a military juggernaut intent on world domination. (4)

It almost seems as if it's not Chalmers Johnson who has discovered that the United States is "a military juggernaut intent on world domination," but non-Americans and a few Americans whom Johnson is quoting.

The book is divided into an introductory prologue, and ten chapters that can be loosely divided into four sections: in chapters 1-3 Johnson describes historical parallels to current U.S. behavior and contexts, and along the way he defines and describes the "militarism" that has become a given in American political culture; in chapters 4-8, he analyzes U.S. military institutions; in Chapter 9, he gives us a brief analysis of globalization; and in Chapter 10, he offers a systematic conclusion. A good deal of the book is based upon historical analysis. For example, in Chapter 1 Johnson draws parallels between the United States and republican Rome, whose empire drew it into an imperial political structure. Here again, Johnson's lack of irony and use of quotations makes his message seem less radical than it actually is. In the following example, Johnson quotes Canadian essayist Manuel Miles:

There is a trend toward autocratic takeovers of imperial republics…. Even now this process is underway in the USA, the President, like the first Roman emperors, decides when and where to wage war, and his Senate rubber stamps and extorts the funding for his imperial adventures…. (15)

Along the way, there are historical references closer to the present as well:

The Spanish, Dutch, and British Empires all enriched their homelands through colonial exploitation. Not so the [American] empire of [military] bases. Militarized and unilateral, it tends to subvert commerce and globalization because it weakens international law and the norms of reciprocity on which trade depends (24-25).

Another kind of historical analysis is based upon Johnson's description of American military development and foreign policy attitudes from the Spanish-American War (1898), with brief mention of the much earlier Monroe Doctrine, which is later explored with greater precision and in greater detail (190-92). As if to avoid political partisanship, Johnson discovers the modern grounding of U.S. imperialism in Presidents Theodore Roosevelt (a Republican) and Woodrow Wilson (a Democrat) [although Roosevelt's "trust-busting" is certainly a far cry from the military-industrial promotion of the present era]:

Roosevelt and his colleagues advocated an American imperialism, modeled on British precedents, that sought power and glory for their own sakes through military conquest and colonial exploitation. Wilson, on the other hand, provided an idealistic grounding for American imperialism, what in our own time would become a "global mission" to "democratize" the world. More than any other figure, he provided the intellectual foundations for an interventionist foreign policy, expressed in humanitarian and democratic rhetoric. Wilson remains the godfather of those contemporary ideologists who justify American imperial power in terms of exporting democracy (48).

George W. Bush would no doubt be surprised and gratified to find himself in the political company of one president who actually (personally) fought some battles and another president who sincerely sought world peace and had some intellectual horsepower, but such comparisons obscure more than they reveal, and they tend to overlook the lack of systematic philosophical tradition in American politics. A valid point, however, is that both major parties are responsible for the abuses of militarism, even the Carter administration, and especially the Clinton and Kennedy administrations, although the Reagan and both Bush administrations seem the most culpable, perhaps because they are the most *openly* imperialistic. Later in the chapter, the author describes three hallmarks of American militarism: lobbyists take over politicomilitary [*sic*] policy; a preponderance of military and arms industry representatives fill high government positions; and the highest priority of the state becomes military preparedness.

The definition of "militarism" in the first chapter, together with the "hallmarks" from the second, are the foundation for much of Johnson's explorations in the early chapters of the book: "[Militarism is] the phenomenon by which a nation's armed services come to put their institutional preservation ahead of achieving national security or even a commitment to the integrity of the governmental structure of which they are a part (23-24)."

Further on we find more recent and, it seems to me, more germane historical parallels between the present behavior of the United States and the British Empire: "Much as Britain at the end of the nineteenth century had to make colonies of Egypt and South Africa in order, so it said, to protect the sea approaches to its imperial enclave in India, and then had to conquer Sudan and

the upper Nile to protect Egypt and much of sub-Saharan Africa to protect South Africa, the United States now argues that it must totally dominate space to protect its new, casualty-free war-fighting technologies" (81).

But this kind of logic, comparable to the "domino theory" in the Vietnam War, leads to an endless progression of places and commitments that must be protected, resulting inevitably in imperial overstretch, bankruptcy, and popular disaffection, precisely the maladies that plagued Edwardian Britain. Such strategic planning also tends to produce unintended consequences in the form of unjustifiably brutal wars of imperial conquest, such as Britain's against the Boer settlers of South Africa. … The root cause of all this mayhem was not the need to defend India but the urge to dominate globally, in short, imperialism and militarism. Alternative ways to achieve the same objectives, or a decision to abandon those objectives as not worth it, were never seriously considered (82).

By glossing over the role of the 'slippery slope' logical fallacy in the context of the Vietnam War, and instead emphasizing the role that the same flawed logic played in the British Empire during the Edwardian period and in the U.S. during today's era of 'Star Wars' military technology to dominate space, Johnson does much to defuse and neutralize potential fruitless partisan political debate, so that we can focus on the kind of thinking that brought us here, and the probable consequences.

Johnson applies the same kind of historical perspective to the United States military, including its special forces and private mercenaries that are convenient ruses to avoid congressional oversight, its empire of bases around the globe that number in excess of 750, its control of the media and links to Hollywood that obscure its activities during wartime and peacetime through censorship and elaborate public relations ruses, the historical development of U.S. military bases, and the way all of these historical facts were orchestrated into the present débâcle, "Gulf War II." Once again, Johnson provides us with some highly pertinent facts and leaves us to draw our own conclusions. For example, the historical development of bases suggests that [my interpretation] the United States was already firmly entrenched in traditions of militarism even at the *beginning* of the Cold War, which both obscured and justified our huge military budgets. To cite but one piece of evidence:

Former ambassador to Japan and Undersecretary of State U. Alexis Johnson admitted that giving Okinawa to the military in the late 1940s was simply the price of getting the Pentagon to go along with the [1952] peace treaty [that ended World War II between the United States and Japan], which restored Japanese sovereignty over the four main islands but kept Okinawa under American military rule (200-201).

The history of bases also includes the history of U.S. creation or support of fascist régimes (e.g., Greece, Spain, the Philippines) to secure military bases, a history that is extended to the Persian Gulf region in the present, post-9/11 world. Once again, by allowing his readers to draw their own (unpleasant) conclusions, Johnson tends to maintain his position as impartial observer and monitor of evidence.

In his examination of the current Iraq War, Johnson examines the motives, which he categorizes as "oil," "Israel," and "domestic politics." He demonstrates that an "oil war" was already being planned by the Pentagon during the second Clinton administration in the late '90s (226), an idea that reinforces previously-presented evidence that Afghanistan was attacked and the Taliban overthrown not because they were harboring al-Qaeda, but because they were not cooperating with an oil consortium, led by the U.S. company Unocal, to allow a pipeline across their country from Central Asian oilfields (174-85). Johnson also presents evidence that Iraq was attacked by the United States to support the regional hegemony and expansionist foreign policy of Israel's Ariel Sharon and his Likud Party, who have close ties with key figures in the present Bush administration, including Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, David Wurmser, John Bolton, and Michael Ledeen, ties that Johnson examines in some detail (234-35).

It's refreshing to see this important point raised since it's a topic that is generally off-limits to the mass media in the United States. Finally, the war is considered as a strategy in U.S. domestic politics, to distract voters from dismal domestic problems: "to keep discussion away from issues such as the president's and vice president's close ties to the corrupt Enron Corporation, the huge and growing federal budget deficit, the looting of workers' pension funds by highly paid CEOs, vast tax cuts that favored the rich, a severe loss of civil liberties under Bush's attorney general, and, in the foreign sphere, the embarrassing fact that, despite the war in Afghanistan, al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden evidently remained at large and potent" (236). However, all of these 'reasons' can better be considered under Johnson's umbrella of American militarism, demonstrated in a document that he cites, entitled *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, produced by a group of right-wing Republicans who organized the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) and who include Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, and seven others, all of whom became prominent members of the current Bush administration. In the words of this document, the PNAC were waiting for a "catastrophic and catalyzing event, like a new Pearl Harbor" that would enable them to put their ideas into practice.

Some would conclude from this that 9/11 conspirators included American élites looking for an excuse to expedite their programs. Johnson generally doesn't go there and instead preserves a more neutral position, perhaps lest he be consigned to the conspiracy-theory 'fringe'; but elsewhere, describing leases for new long-term military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan that were leased less than a month after 9/11, Johnson gives a nod in that direction when he comments that the U.S. was "reacting incredibly fast for a government responding to an unexpected event" (183). For those who might scoff at such a notion, one might recall the close cooperation between our own CIA and FBI with Russian KGB successor groups (FSB, GRU, etc.), who apparently blew up apartment complexes in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia to stir up war fever against Chechnya as a distraction from domestic politics, in order to re-elect a non-Communist President, Boris Yeltsin, whose approval ratings were in the single digits. And for those who think that our élites are incapable of such heinous acts as attacking their own people, later in the volume Johnson provides evidence [my interpretation] that should serve as an antidote for all but the most die-hard Young Republicans:

During the 1960s, the Joint Chiefs of Staff actually delivered to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara a proposal, dubbed Operation Northwoods, that the military clandestinely shoot innocent people on American streets, sink boats carrying refugees from Cuba, and carry out terrorist attacks in Washington, Miami, and elsewhere and then pin the blame on Cuban agents. The intent, after the failed Bay of Pigs operation, was to provide an excuse for a new invasion of Cuba. Every member of the Joint Chiefs signed off on it. McNamara silently refused to act on it and a few months later forced the retirement of General Lyman Lemnitzer, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs (301).

In short, Johnson sometimes marshals evidence and then leaves radical interpretations to his readers… but not always:

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is particularly fond of neologisms such as "forward deterrence" and "unwarned attacks," which he seems to think are strategic innovations. Perhaps he is merely trying to disguise their more familiar names: "aggression", that is, what Nazi Germany did to Russia on June 22, 1941, and "surprise attack", what the Japanese did to us at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 (300).

The implied but usually unstated conclusions from Johnson's examination of the United States military establishment and its industrial-academic-petroleum complex is that not only is the United States an imperialist power, but it has been so for a long time, and by the early twenty-first century its behavior is on a par with our World War II fascist enemies, Nazi Germany and imperial Japan.

One might comment here that Johnson could easily have extended his historical analysis of attitudes and institutions in the United States much further back for the same purposes, to the Mexican War when the Alamo débâcle became a pretext for increased imperialist aggression, for example, or even to the attitudes toward native Americans and territorial expansion during the colonial period. As one gradually becomes aware of the historical reality behind the window-dressing of the U.S. political system, there is a tendency to assume that things have gotten worse sometime during the recent past. But if we extend Johnson's historical examples further back in time, I think we must conclude that with some possible exceptions in New England during the colonial and early republican periods, we have always been controlled by a clique of moneyed interests who wage constant class warfare and are happy to sacrifice the well being of the community or nation for their own selfish purposes. For example, surveying the dismal political and cultural prospects during the Van Buren presidency (1837-41), the supposed sunny and benign optimist Ralph Waldo Emerson in a manuscript couplet described the president thus: "The towers that generations did combine/ To build and grace, a rat may undermine." And later, addressing a Kansas Relief Meeting in 1856, Emerson's comments make it clear that the same sort of cynical political manipulation that goes on today has always been there: "*Representative Government* is really misrepresentative; *Union* is a conspiracy against the Northern States which the Northern States are to have the privilege of paying for; the *adding of Cuba and Central America* to the slave marts is *enlarging the area of Freedom*. […]our poor people, led by the nose by these fine words, dance and sing, ring bells and fire

cannon, with every new link of the chain which is forged for their limbs by the plotters in the Capitol." Things haven't changed much, if at all: we are stilled plagued by 'plotters in the capitol' and the élites who control them.

Most of the overt interpretations and conclusions in this volume are contained in the final chapter, "The Sorrows of Empire." After the careful marshalling of evidence in previous chapters, finally "the gloves come off," as Johnson projects four main consequences that will ensue from "the path our elites chose after September 11, 2001":1) "a state of perpetual war, leading to more terrorism"; 2) "a loss of democracy and constitutional rights as the presidency fully eclipses Congress and is itself transformed from an "executive branch" of government into something more like a Pentagonized presidency": 3) "a system of propaganda, disinformation, and glorification of war, power, and the military legions"; and 4), "bankruptcy, as we pour our economic resources into ever more grandiose military projects and short-change the education, health, and safety of our fellow citizens" (285).

Although Johnson stresses that the future is "as yet unmade" (285), the overwhelming evidence of the entire book [my interpretation] is that we have already been experiencing all four consequences of empire for well over half a century. For example, in Chapter 9, "Whatever Happened to Globalization," Johnson describes Nixon's 1971 abandoning of the gold standard in international finance as the result of our ruining our economy "by lavish spending on the Vietnam War, on nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, and on payments to countries that it feared might join the Communist camp or 'go neutralist' if the United States stopped bankrolling them" (265). There are equally trenchant comments on the military spending during the Reagan presidency and during the present Bush administration, and in his earlier book, *Blowback*, Johnson discusses in detail the consequences of the 1971 transformation from a controlled world financial exchange system based on the 1944 Bretton Woods agreements, to one that allows currencies to "float," resulting in "finance capitalism":

The historian, business executive, and novelist John Ralston Saul described Nixon's action as "perhaps the single most destructive act of the postwar world. The West was returned to the monetary barbarism and instability of the 19th century" (*Blowback*, 201).

Indeed, there are no pretexts for optimism, and plenty of evidence where the future lies, given recent events, which include "impeachable offenses" by President Bush to get us into the Iraq War (306), a "vast cesspool of mismanagement, waste, and [...] criminal conduct" (309), and our "refusal to dismantle our own empire of military bases when the menace of the USSR disappeared" (310).

The final paragraph of the entire text offers a brief but unlikely antidote:

There is one development that could conceivably stop this process of overreaching: the people could retake control of Congress, reform it along with the corrupted election laws that have made it into a forum for special interests, turn it into a genuine assembly of democratic representatives, and cut off the supply of money to the Pentagon and the secret intelligence

agencies. We have a strong civil society that could, in theory, overcome the entrenched interests of the armed forces and the military-industrial complex. At this late date, however, it is difficult to imagine how Congress, much like the Roman senate in the last days of the republic, could be brought back to life and cleansed of its endemic corruption. Failing such a reform, Nemesis, the goddess of retribution and vengeance, the punisher of pride and hubris, waits impatiently for her meeting with us (312).

Clearly, the odds against this sort of sweeping reform are overwhelming. One need only look at the failure to effect even the most rudimentary campaign finance reform during the past few years to realize that the possibility of the U.S. political system ever reflecting the will of its citizens is remote indeed.

Johnson's *Sorrows of Empire* is a well-researched and timely book that draws together a lot of material to give an overview of the depressing state of the United States in the early twenty-first century, a state that is historically understandable from both a national and a global perspective in light of its policies and actions during the past century and more. If we consider the likely effect of Johnson's book, the answer, unfortunately, is "probably negligible": the U.S. élites who control the show do so in the face of world opinion and against all odds, simply because of narrow self-interest.

By way of concluding this review essay, we need to look at an especially important observation when Johnson describes the imaginative failure of Americans: "elsewhere in the world, the devastations of war are all too common. To us they remain abstract. September memories, in fact, underscore how the horrors of modern warfare have never touched the cities of America. That is the only reason we can reorganize U.S. force projection around robot strikes, strategic bombing, and even usable nuclear weapons. All of this represents a failure of the American imagination to grasp the real effect on real people of such assaults. We wage war without knowing war" (78). A "failure of imagination" indeed. There is a failure to understand what it means to drop a bomb on someone, even among people who should know better. Michael Moore's movie, *Fahrenheit 911*, is especially to be commended for showing heart-rending footage of victims of the second Iraq war on both sides, Iraqi citizens whose families were murdered in the U.S. bombings, and American citizens whose families lost loved ones who served as soldiers during the U.S. assault on Iraq.

An even greater problem, however, is that these sorts of events rarely touch the élites who plan or perpetrate such things. I know of a CIA family whose son worked in Afghanistan training the *mujahideen* and supplying them with Stinger missiles to use against the Russians, who were drawn into the Afghan war by secret CIA operations planned by Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski. The mother in this family lost a young child as a result of inadequate health-care facilities in a western-Colorado town, and she retained a hatred for that town for decades.

Now just imagine if that death had been due to deliberate aggression by a foreign power instead of inadvertent poor health-care facilities: wouldn't that woman be justified to hold a

deep and abiding hatred of the perpetrators of that death? The CIA-induced Afghan war resulted in the loss of somewhere between 1 1/2 and 3 million lives, and Brzezinski has been known to justify the success of that operation ('chalk one up for Zbig') on the basis of its successful promotion of U.S. ideology and its helping to destroy a country that among other things provided cradle-to-grave health-care for its citizens, something which our élites claim to be impossible for our wealthy society.

It's hardly a surprise that some years later an Afghan 'terrorist' started randomly shooting people in their cars as they drove toward the entrance of the U.S. Pentagon. Within the reigning ideology, the U.S. state-sponsored terrorism that devastated Afghanistan becomes merely a footnote to the Cold War, while the individual who, understandably, tries to strike back at the perpetrators of his personal tragedy is branded a "terrorist."

Meanwhile, the woman who hates a town for its real or imagined negligence in the death of her young child can't imagine the long-range grief brought about in part by her adult son's training of *mujahideen*. Nor can Brzezinski, who glories in his role as 'cold warrior,' understand what it means to kill millions of innocent people. This same Brzezinski, by the way, is a charter member, along with fellow 'peacenik' General Alexander Haig, of the American Committee Against the War in Chechnya, an organization designed to draw U.S. dissent and attention away from our complicity in and covert support for the genocidal Russian war against Chechnya. This kind of moral obtuseness is a failure of intelligence as well as imagination, and it is just plain evil. When coupled with an awareness of the arrogance of our élites, the contemplation of such moral issues is well-nigh unbearable.

Talking India: Ashis Nandy In Conversation With Ramin Jahanbegloo (delhi: Oxford Up, 2006)

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

At a time when India and Iran are mentioned together as countries whose nuclear aspirations have gained the ear of the world, Talking India furnishes a salutary reminder of other conversations that can take place between ancient civilizations and of the rich history, now only occasionally remembered, of the intellectual, cultural and political exchanges between India and Iran.

In 1989, explains Ramin Jahanbegloo, one of Iran's leading intellectuals, he became interested in the work of Ashis Nandy, and over the course of the next decade he lured Nandy into several lengthy conversations. By the late 1980s, certainly, Nandy had already established an international reputation as a leading Indian voice in debates on modern science, the political cultures of India, secularism, violence and modernity, the logic of development, and the politics of knowledge; down to the present day, he remains Îndia's most distinctive intellectual figure, alluringly independent of the conventions of the academy, the intellectual fashions of the day, the platitudes of social science discourse, and the comfortable certitudes of the middle class.

One of the alarming features of the present age is its inability to live with ambiguity, and it is not surprising that Nandy, who cannot easily be assimilated into known political and intellectual camps, should have been subjected to assault by a diverse group of critics, from Marxists and positivist historians to secularists and feminists. Many of Nandy's observations are not calculated to win him the goodwill of his critics. 'I have seen in my life', Nandy tells Jahanbegloo, 'that most Marxists hate the proletariat. Only they do not know that. The proletariat doesn't seem to them adequately revolutionary, knowledgeable, or conscientized' (15). Among some of the canards circulated by Nandy's critics is his supposed empathy for Hindu nationalists and affection for the RSS, a paramilitary group often described as keen on turning India into a Hindu fascist state.

These critics have no patience for the nuances developed by Nandy, who tellingly informs Jahanbegloo that Hindu nationalists have reserved their most 'venomous attacks' not for Muslims and Christians, but for Hindus: 'They think that the Hindus are disorganized, effeminate, fractious, constantly quarreling amongst themselves', and so on (15). We might say that Nandy's critics have similarly reserved their choicest abuses for him, a Bengali intellectual who, forswearing the intellectual trajectory of an uncritical Indian modernity (with particular Bengali inflections), has endeavored to find in the experience, cultural practices, and worldviews of colonized and marginalized people a more humane and sensitive moral and

intellectual framework by which we all might live.

Nonetheless, whatever the price Nandy may have paid for his dissenting views, it is instructive that he has operated within something of a democratic space. Ramin Jahanbegloo, unfortunately, has no such protection: as Talking India was coming out earlier this year, he was taken into custody by Iran's police. Jahanbegloo has now been released after several months of solitary confinement, though the price of his freedom has, in part, been a televised 'confession' where he admitted that he had been led astray by vendors of ideologies fraught with hazards for the Iranian state and society. Though his tormentors are unlikely to read this book, if they were to do so the preposterousness of imagining Jahanbegloo as some kind of traitor to the nation would become all too apparent.

Though Talking India commences with questions from Jahanbegloo designed to acquaint us with Nandy's early education and formative intellectual influences, it is mainly organized around the principal cultural issues and political questions on which Nandy has, over the course of the last three decades, lavished his attention. The culture of the Indian state has long been of interest to Nandy, and here he discourses on the discomfort of Indian élites with democracy and their disdain for, and fear of, Gandhi — the original article, not the namesake who proclaimed an Emergency in 1975 and had little opposition from intellectuals for doing so (30-31, 38-39).

Apropos of his controversial views on sati, or the practice of widow-immolation which the British outlawed in their territories in India in the 1820s but which has made the rare occasional reappearance in more tradition-bound parts of the country, Nandy affirms that a 'respect [for] the principle enshrined in the mythology of sati' can be sustained alongside a vigorous repudiation of 'the practice of sati in historical time'. He suggests that Rammohun Roy and Rabindranath Tagore (about whom Jahanbegloo penned a book) alike stood by this view (52-53). This is perhaps Nandy's clearest statement on sati, though it is doubtful that it will reassure the bulk of his feminist critics.

One pressing question to which Nandy continually returns might be put thus: why is it that plurality is admitted in some spheres of life, but not permitted in other domains? Nandy argues that the 'Enlightenment vision and secular ideologies allow one to pluralize the domains of spirituality and religion', but that a 'plurality of knowledge, particularly that of science, is seen as dangerous, subversive, and a challenge to the intellectual and moral status of the most deeply entrenched elites of our times' (58). The West stipulates what shall count for knowledge, cosmopolitanism, and even dissent — and it is all too clear what Nandy thinks of the supposed universalisms of Western thought.

The 'Indian peasant is more cosmopolitan than the New York intellectual after centuries of colonialism': she or he has to have some theory of the West, some tacit knowledge of the West if only to ensure survival, but the New York intellectual requires no such awareness of other worldviews or folkways, accept as officially sanctioned forms of multiculturalism (116).

Even those who have an intimate awareness of Nandy's work will find Talking India intellectually engaging. Unlike many Indian intellectuals, such as A. K. Saran, Jit Singh Uberoi, and the late T. G. Vaidynathan, whose relatively small body of written work bears no relation to their intellectual presence in classrooms or public forums, Nandy cannot be described as a reticent writer. Indeed, his surprising confession in The Intimate Enemy (1982), 'English is not my language' (p. xix), is belied by the enviable elegance of his expressions and the sheer mastery of English idioms. Nonetheless, the interview or extended conversation affords a different opportunity to enter into a thinker's mind, and Talking India will not disappoint those who, even if they have encountered Nandy's arguments in his previous writings, expect to find a small interpretive twist to formulations that otherwise appear familiar.

Nandy's extended comments on the nation-state and civilization are a case in point. We have all heard that the last Englishman is now to be found in India, but Nandy provides a political edge to this observation with the remark with 'India also holds many parts of the West in custody or trusteeship' (79). Gandhi's critics derided his idea of trusteeship, which they averred was an expression of his acute distaste for class warfare and originated from his cunning and utopian desire not to strip his capitalist friends of their wealth but rather to persuade them to hold it in trust for the poor. Nandy knows, much better than most others, that Gandhi was far more than subtle than has been commonly imagined, and that his idea of trusteeship can be understood in many registers. India was to hold in trusteeship what the West had jettisoned from its own intellectual and cultural practices that could not be reconciled with a draconian conception of modern science and instrumental rationality, but, even more so, it was incumbent upon people to treat nature as if it had been entrusted to their care. Contemporary ecological movements cannot be disassociated from the civilizational notion of trusteeship that Gandhi and now Nandy has brought to the fore.

Nandy's interpretation of the idea of trusteeship points us to the work of civilizations: the ideology of the nation-state may have created a rift between India and Pakistan which seems unending, but he avers that 'Delhi and Agra are more important to Pakistan today than Peshawar and Multan', and the 'Pakistani elite cannot connect to living cultures of their own people as enthusiastically as they can connect to the memories of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal empire' (77). Though Nandy worries that formerly colonized peoples are more attached to the idea of the nation-state than are Europeans, he is perhaps comforted by the thought that they have not altogether abandoned civilizational categories. For much too long Indians, Iranians, Indonesians, Africans and others have not conversed with each other, each reserving their cultural and intellectual exchanges for the 'West'. Talking India, which brings an Indian intellectual into conversation with an Iranian one, is a refreshing sign of the possibilities of forms of interculturalism other than those which have been bequeathed to us by the West.

Vinay Lal *is associate professor of history at UCLA. He is the author of* Empire of Knowledge: Culture and Plurality in the Global Economy *(2002),* Of Cricket, Guinness, and Gandhi: Essays on Indian History and Culture *(2003),* The History of History: Politics and Scholarship in Modern India *(2003),* Introducing Hinduism (2005), *the editor of* Dissenting Knowledges, Open Futures: The Multiple Selves and Strange Destinations of Ashis Nandy *(2000), and the co-*

editor of The Future of Knowledge & Culture: A Dictionary for the 21st Century *(2005) and* Fingerprinting Popular Culture: The Mythic and the Iconic in Indian Cinema *(2006).*

Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics & Harriet Mcbride Johnson, Too Late To Die Young: Nearly True Tales From A Life

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Melinda Tankard Reist, editor, *Defiant Birth: Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics* (Australia: Spinifex Press, 2006)

Harriet McBride Johnson, *Too Late to Die Young: Nearly True Tales from a Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005)

Ninety years ago the Washington Post asked, “Who are the unfit?” and then answered its own question by noting that the unfit tended to be anyone not belonging to the particular group conducting the discussion. Since then, of course, a lot of people have come “under discussion”. It is difficult to estimate the exact number. It depends who is doing the discussing.

If, for example, those “under discussion” include only those designated as unfit by, say, the Nazis, the Pol Pot regime, and the janjuweed, then we would be talking about a certain number of millions. If, however, we choose to include others who did not always “fit” into the range of desirability of dominant cultures at various times and places – say, indigenous peoples, gays and lesbians, Turkish Armenians, and targeted peoples in the Soviet Union, Rwanda, China, and the Middle East – the number under discussion would be quite a bit larger. And were we to include in the peoples of interest those groups that have been under generations of intense psychological and political pressure to give up their “primitive” or “underdeveloped” or “unproductive” ways, the reckoning would be greater yet.

None of this would matter, of course, except that the question behind the question, “Who are the unfit?” has always been, “And what are we going to do about them?” (And the answer, far too often, has been “Get rid of them . . . somehow.”)

Remarkably, there have always been designated candidates for victimhood who resisted the outcomes that others had in mind for them. Some, like Eli Wiesel (1) and Ward Churchill (2), went on to write extraordinary books about the fierce resistance-to-being-gotten-rid-of experience. Whether their accounts moved us to tears or to shame or to rage, or whether they simply inspired us or prodded us to deeper thought, they always managed to clarify for their readers the high cost of falling for other peoples’ ideas of fitness.’

Recently, several more major books have been added to the resistance genre. Some are by and

about a group that practically defines “unfitness” for most of us: the “disabled”. There is no way of knowing how many of “them” may have come “under discussion” over the years – or, to use another euphemism – how many may have been placed “under treatment.” If we tote up all the euthanized “aged”, the institutionalized and forgotten “mentally ill”, the aborted “imperfects,” those destined to age and become infirm – not to mention, those who choose to ignore the advice of the post-humanists and the temptations of “enhancement”- the numbers might well be staggering. (3)

Whatever the numbers of those not yet old, not yet dead, and not yet committed to enhancement, there is a perspective among those deemed “disabled” that might surprise many of their would-be caretakers and fitness advisors, particularly those who may have paid little attention to what happened recently at Gaulladet University, or who may have been unaware of why Terri Schiavo was a cause celebre among crip activists. (4)

Like “fitness” resisters before them, the authors of Defiant Birth, Women Who Resist Medical Eugenics, and Too Late to Die Young, Nearly True Tales from a Life when faced with other people’s intentions for and judgments about them, refuse to submit. Instead, with a little help from their friends, they create their own versions of lives well-lived. Difficult lives, surely, but well-lived ones. These are not biographies of well-known super-crips, like Helen Keller and Stephen Hawking and all the celebrated, super-extraordinary-but-disabled others. These are books about people less well-known but no less worthy of our attention.

Defiant Birth is a collection describing women who continued their pregnancies despite the advice of others. The editor, Melinda Tankard Reist, surrounds nineteen personal narratives by women from Australia, Canada, and the U.S. with her own chapters about the eugenic pressures that emanate from medicine, technology, and mainstream society. The nineteen stories Reist includes are by women who faced the judgments of others – often medical professionals – about the quality of the fetus they were carrying or the quality of themselves as would-be mothers.

These are women who opted to keep their babies and to welcome them, no matter how potentially strange, unfamiliar, or short-lived. In some accounts, the dire predictions of others turned out to be true; in others, they did not. Whatever the political axe one might suspect was being ground by the selector of the stories, each mother clearly finds joy and meaning in her newborn’s life. These are not people seeking approval or wallowing in victimhood. As Teresa Streckfuss insists in the third chapter, “…(D)on’t pity us for carrying a child we know will die…Grieve for the fact that our baby will die. We wouldn’t wish away the time we had with Benedict,. . .just to save us the pain of losing (him). . . Someone asked us after Benedict died, Was it worth it?’ Oh yes! For the chance to hold him, and see him, and love him before letting him go. For the chance for our children to see that we would never stop loving them, regardless of their imperfections? For the chance to give him everything we could? Oh yes!”

The stories, as Abby Lippman, board chair of the Canadian Women’s Health Network, points out in a cover blurb, “challenge our general notions of what is a ‘good’ mother, and what

makes for a ‘happy’ baby. They lay bare how simplistic – even dangerous – are offers of ‘choice’ when society limits the childbearing options for women and judges anyone less than ‘perfect’ as disposable.”

Another book, Too Late to Die Young, carries much the same message but was written by a much lighter hand. Unable to walk, bathe, or dress herself since birth, Harriet McBride Johnson manages to engage the reader in a witty picture of her own seemingly less than perfect life. She is not the loving mother finding value in the short life of her child; she is the child herself, living a life longer, fuller, and much more wicked than expected.

Whether she is the lawyer arguing a case in a Charleston courtroom, or the activist rolling down the bumpy streets of Castro era Cuba, she is both funny and convincing. Whether she is the local politico seated behind the bigger, more important political butts at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, or the woman meditating in her bed about the pleasures of the flesh, or the brilliant crip contributor to the New York Times Magazine debating her own right to life with a Princeton academic who “thinks the humans he is talking about aren’t people, aren’t persons’,” she comes off as someone you want to know better.

She refuses to be merely inspirational. She is determined to enjoy life. Nevertheless, she rarely neglects a teachable moment, as when she brags that she is the proud holder of the world endurance record for protesting the insufferable pity-mongering of the Jerry Lewis telethons. Warts and delightful all, Harriet McBride Johnson is herself proof of what can happen when people resist the assumptions and stereotypes of others and refuse to be dis-abled.

Among disability activists, there is a slogan: “Nothing about us without us.” The slogan reflects a determination to end the centuries of paternalism that has characterized treatment of the disabled. Harriet McBride Johnson takes us into the landscape of that slogan’s vision of self-determination by offering up the details of her own life. She ends her book saying: “I believe that living our strange and different lives, however we choose and manage to live them, is a contribution to the struggle. Living our lives openly and without shame is a revolutionary act.” The mothers in the Reist book would agree.

Notes

(1) See, for example, Wiesel’s *Night*, New York: Hill and Wang, 2006.

(2) See, for example, Churchill’s *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present*, San Francisco: City Light Books, 1997.

(3) For a disability perspective on new and emerging technologies, see the writings of Gregor Wolbring. His articles are available on the Internet at
http://www.bioethicsanddisability.org/articles.htm

(4) The resistance perspective among the “disabled” is not a new perspective. For earlier works, see, for example, Marta Russell, *Beyond Ramps: Disability at End of the Social Contract,*

A Warning from an Uppity Crip, Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1998.

Beth Burrows *directs the Edmonds Institute, a small public interest organization focused on environment and technology and headquartered in Edmonds, Washington.*

Murambi, The Book Of Bones

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Murambi, the Book of Bones.
by Boubacar Boris Diop Translated by Fiona McLaughlin. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2006.

This translation of Diop's internationally acclaimed novel, originally published in French,[1] introduces one of Africa's most important political novelists to an English-speaking audience. *Murambi* was born out of an initiative by African writers to commemorate and reflect upon the Rwandan genocide. In just 100 days between April and July 1994, close to 1 million people—mostly ethnic Tutsis—were killed in one of the bloodiest atrocities of the twentieth century. The project *Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire* ('Writing as a duty to remember') brought ten prominent African writers to that country in 1998. At the time, there was very little non-specialist writing, let alone artistic reflection, on the tragic events. The writers of the *Rwanda* project exemplified a reemergence of African writers into the public sphere and an attempt to revive what Jean-Paul Sartre termed a "literature of engagement" on the continent.[2]

Diop himself has had a long engagement with Sartre; a veteran of the student movement of 1968 in Senegal, Diop was an avid reader of the French philosopher and novelist (his nickname "Boris" is taken from one of Sartre's characters in *Les Chemins de la Liberté)*.[3] Diop went on to co-found the first independent newspaper in Senegal and is widely respected today as one of the country's foremost public intellectuals. *Murambi* is Diop's sixth novel.

Murambi tells the story of a young history teacher, Cornelius Uvimana, who returns to Rwanda from his home in exile in Djibouti four years after the genocide. His entire family was killed in the violence, with the sole exception of his uncle, Siméon Habineza. Cornelius' journey home is a ritualistic attempt to come to terms with what happened to his family and his country: he intends to write a play about the events. In a series of fragments that are narratively discontinuous but imaginatively interwoven to describe the events of 1994, we hear the voices of a host of different characters: perpetrators, victims, and in-betweens. This mélange of first-person accounts is presented in a sequence—before, during and after the genocide. Through these stories, we begin to see a fuller historical picture emerging, including the extensive planning, training, and propaganda that led up to the massacres, the very real terror (and stench) of the killing fields, and finally, Cornelius Uvimana standing alone amidst the decomposing pieces of his dismembered society.

Diop's combination of journalistic reporting, historical narrative, and tightly leashed creative writing closely follows established conventions in genocide literature. The genre has been defined most decisively, of course, by responses to the Jewish Holocaust, which cast into doubt

the capacity of art to represent the horror of mass atrocities. The post-World War II debate on the role of art in post-genocide society circled around Theodor Adorno's famous comment that "it is impossible to write poetry after Auschwitz." Artists (as opposed to literary theorists) have put forward very little to counter Adorno's assertion. Most of the famous works of Holocaust writing have strictly limited the imaginative interpretation in deference to the "truth" of eyewitness testimony and archival material.[4] References to many fiction writers of the Holocaust as "docu-novelists" is indicative of the narrative style that dominates the genre.[5] This description could apply equally well to *Murambi,* which inserts itself into these debates through the soul-searching of Cornelius and also mirrors a distrust of artistic license that is typical of genocide writing.

Despite its formal conservatism, *Murambi* does break new ground for a politically engaged literature in Africa. Diop's novel can be seen as part of the search for new interpretations of the genocide in its connection to death and devastation in the African experience of history. The author attempts to balance an acknowledgement of the overpowering effects of colonialism with a refusal to place it at the center of an explanatory framework that would extinguish African subjecthood. In the militant tones of the anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s, the great West African novelist Ousmane Sémbéne has praised Diop for exposing the hand of the former colonial powers in the Rwandan genocide.[6] Indeed, Diop lays the devious maneuverings of the French generals as bare as the bones of the victims of the massacre at Murambi, hastily covered up but later exhumed as a grim testament to the events that took the lives of so many. We behold the French military covering the evacuation of the masterminds of the genocide, including the butcher of Murambi. However, those who come to Diop's novel with the sole intent of finding an indictment of colonialism will be gratified, but only at the expense of losing the plot entirely. *Murambi* works expressly to reject a posture of absolute victimhood, showing that this position inevitably leads to glorification of violence as the only possibility for self-determination.

Through the character of Siméon Habineza, Diop explores the role of ideologies of victimhood in perpetuating the cycles of violence in Rwanda. When the villagers in Murambi set out to destroy the palatial home of the man who organized their relatives' massacre, Siméon reminds them that acts of vengeance in Rwandan history have always called down new acts of retribution. He is deeply concerned that the victims of yesterday should not interpret suffering as a moral license to act violently and then seek absolution in their own grief. He faces down the mob with his characteristic quiet simplicity:

I want to tell you this: you have suffered, but that doesn't make you any better than those who made you suffer. They are people like you and me. Evil is within each one of us. I, Siméon Habineza, repeat, that you are not better than them.[7]

In this way, Siméon Habineza attempts to dislodge a nascent victim identity that bestows an immutable innocence upon the suffering people of Murambi, but only by stripping them of the ethical responsibility that constitutes subjecthood. It is through this interruption of the victim identity in formation that Siméon discovers the roots of the vicious hatred that many have

found so inexplicable. He reflects on the role of the former colonial powers in producing warring ethnic identities and provoking the periodic outbreaks of civil conflict. Under German rule before World War I and later under Belgian rule, Tutsis were distinguished from Hutus by their supposedly taller, slimmer bodies, long noses and lighter skin that were taken as marks of racial superiority. The racial hierarchy instituted by the colonial government subordinated all Africans, but gave preference to Tutsis in education, politics and in the economy. The 1959 revolt of Hutu peasants against Tutsis, who represented and imposed colonial authority at the local level, began the waves of violence that led up to the 1994 genocide.

These colonial legacies notwithstanding, Siméon feels that something still remains to be explained in the "rejoicing of the crowds in Kibungo, in Mugonero, and in Murambi."[8] What caused such intense celebrations of death? Siméon recognizes in the cult of victimhood the desperation of those to whom history "happened" and who can achieve agency only through the act of butchering the perpetrators of that history. Or their proxies. Indeed, where Frantz Fanon saw self-recovery for the colonized in violent uprising against the colonialist, Siméon sees cycles of retribution in post-colonial Rwanda that are driven by the violent assertion of victim identities.[9] His insistence that the villagers have a capacity to do evil, and not simply to be done to, is ironically what prompts them to act as and gain a consciousness of themselves as subjects rather than objects.

This position goes against the prevailing understanding of the experience of suffering in world politics. At a time when the most violent and enduring conflicts involve group identities constructed around narratives of suffering, as with Israel and Palestine, and when torture is becoming respectable—indeed almost fashionable—in the US-led war on terror, surely it is time to rethink innocence and the imputed limitless horizon on what is ethically justifiable in the name of those who suffered and died. In any case, history should suggest to us that the categories of "victim," "perpetrator" and "witness" are never wholly discrete. As Primo Levi described so poignantly in his account of life in a Nazi death camp, our ordinary categories of moral judgment are emptied, distorted and inverted in the midst of mass extermination.[10] In Diop's novel, similar moral conundrums emerge. Cornelius' friend Jessica, who was part of the resistance mounted against the genocidal Hutu militias, reveals that she looked on as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) mercilessly butchered their enemies in the process of "liberating" the country. Cornelius himself discovers as he progresses on his journey that he is in fact "the perfect Rwandan: both guilty and a victim."[11] As Cornelius observes, "Maybe it was absurd of the victims to keep proclaiming their innocence so obstinately."[12]

Murambi suggests that ending violence and rebuilding society after large-scale atrocities demand a willingness of victims to give up the impotence of innocence and become self-determining through acts of forgiveness. Forgiveness not as a vague spiritual disposition towards evildoers, but as a survival imperative that demands that victims *act* in a non-violent, non-vengeful way towards perpetrators in order to redeem themselves as subjects of history. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission advanced this perspective in the face of strong opposition to what critics saw as the eclipse of justice by an uncompromising insistence on forgiveness. Against his critics, TRC Chairman Desmond Tutu emphasized that

there is not much of a future for post-conflict societies without forgiveness and reconciliation.[13] The force of the moral imperative voiced in South Africa reverberates through *Murambi*, and the interaction between Siméon and the villagers foreshadows Rwanda's own attempt to set up a transitional justice mechanism based on truth-telling and reconciliation: the *Gacaca* system of community courts.

Despite the limitations inherent in extending the traditional *Gacaca* to deal with a mass tragedy on the scale of the Rwandan genocide,[14] the model must be contrasted with its political alternative: pursuing "the enemy" willy-nilly across the globe, targeting civilian populations, and authorizing summary executions, torture, and extended detentions without trial. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the second option is not the preserve of superpowers; it simply requires "the headiness of those who have the power to be cruel to other human beings."[15] Human rights activists have presented evidence that the new Rwanda regime engaged in retaliatory attacks against Hutu refugees in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo following the Tutsi genocide. For this reason, it is disturbing that *Murambi* barely gives a nod to the fate of thousands of Hutus who were massacred as the RPF advanced on Kigali and in the violence that followed the refugees across the border into Eastern Congo. [16] To a novelist like Diop who takes Sartre seriously, we must pose Sartre's own question: "Why have you spoken of this rather than that, and—since you speak in order to bring about change—why do you want to change this rather than that?"[17]

Diop's novel presents the year 1959 as *the* starting point for the violence that led to the genocide.[18] Why 1959, and yet the history of violent ethnic conflict is much longer? Why is the idea of ancient and eternal intertribal conflict thoroughly discounted in the novel, only for the narrative to take up unquestioningly the historicist view of an inexorable build-up of hostilities from 1959 to 1994? Must history be *either* reductionist *or* teleological? *Murambi* certainly gives that impression. Also, in its relative silence regarding what happened to a broad spectrum of Hutus (not just the "moderate" Hutus accused of harboring Tutsi sympathies), *Murambi* becomes party to the silencing of stories that do no fit the "official" version of the Rwandan genocide.[19] Thankfully, Diop's insights are powerful enough to penetrate beyond the writer's self-imposed limits. *Murambi* reaches beyond borders to illuminate what is obscured in today's international order and make clear the genocidal implications of notions of "us versus them" that are taken for granted in every-day politics. It is a testament to the novelist's vision that he accomplishes this in spite of a restrictive framing of the narrative that would surely have hampered a writer less politically astute than Diop.

Notes

[1] *Murambi, Le Livre des Ossements.* Paris: Stock, 2000.

[2] Fiona Mc Laughlin, "Introduction: to Call a Monster by Its Name," in *Murambi*, xv.

[3] Charles J. Sugnet, "Dances with Wolofs: A Conversation with Boubacar Boris Diop," *Transition 10.3* (2001) 138-159.

[4] Even today, Paul Celan's 1945 poem *Death Fugue* stands out as one of the most artistically unconstrained representations of life in the concentration camps.

[5] James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990.

[6] Comments carried on back cover of *Murambi*.

[7] *Murambi,* 164.

[8] *Murambi*, 170.

[9] For a commentary on Frantz Fanon's argument that violence in the context of anti-colonial struggles was life-affirming for the native and the implications of this assertion in the case of Rwanda, see Mahmood Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda,* Princeton University Press, 2001.

[10] Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity,* New York: Collier Books, 1993.

[11] *Murambi,* 79.

[12] *Murambi,* 66.

[13] Government of South Africa, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report.* Forward by the Chairperson. http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/trc/

[14]See, for example, Barbara Oomen, "Donor-Driven Justice and its Discontents: The Case of Rwanda," *Development & Change* Vol. 36 Issue 5, Sep2005.

[15] Eileen Julienne in *Murambi*, ix.

[16] The situation was complicated by the presence of Interahamwe militia elements among the refugees. See Aliko Songolo, "Marie Béatrice Umutesi's Truth: The Other Rwanda Genocide?" *African Studies Review* Vol. 48 Issue 3, Dec2005.

[17] Jean-Paul Sartre, "What is Writing?" in *'What is Literature?' and Other Essays*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988, 39.

[18] *Murambi*, 48, 74.

[19] Kenneth Harrow "'Ancient Tribal Warfare': Foundational Fantasies of Ethnicity and History," *Research in African Literatures* Vol. 36 Issue 2, Summer 2005. Also see Aliko Songolo, op. cit.

The Second Horseman by Kyle Mills

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Intriguing, entertaining and frighteningly plausible. That, in a nutshell, describes Kyle Mills' political thriller, *The Second Horseman*, an 'airport reading rack' novel about a nuclear holocaust facing the Middle East as a unquestioningly pro-Israel America stokes Islamic fanaticism. Despite some loose ends and plot hiccups, this is by far the best of Mills' works and one of the best of its genre. I don't just say this on account of the politics, which, as an Arab Muslim with a British education, I am inclined to agree with, he needles Arabs often enough and not always without cause, but because of the level of artistry on display.

With all due respect to sensitive American authors, symbolism, subtlety and irony are not usually their strong points, all of which do lift *The Second Horseman* well above run-of-the-mill US thrillers nowadays, even if a bit below the enviable level achieved by the best British spy-novels. The last American novelist who combined literate political themes and nail-biting suspenseful action was Robert Ludlum. It's fair to say that Mills is inheriting his throne, and taking a more genial political direction too. Still, this somewhat crude literary state of affairs is hardly the fault of Yank authors, given the vicissitudes of the publishing industry, the critics and, ultimately, the American readership. I don't claim to have entirely deciphered every implied allegory here, mind you, but that in itself is a healthy sign. How many of us can completely figure out a John le Carré novel or even expect to?

So long as symbolism doesn't get in the way of the entertainment value, and the story line is chockfull of relevant themes and pungent observations, that should be good enough to allay carping critics. After all, many of Mills' predictions in *Sphere of Influence*, the first book of his I read, have come unnervingly true, as have some of the more ominous possibilities in *The Second Horseman*. For example, Mills posits that the Israelis pull out of Gaza, do everything to make sure Gaza implodes, and then amass their troops on the border to reenter Gaza because of its allegedly inexplicable violence.

Then there is what Mills foresees as a growing Al-Qaeda penetration of the western Levant, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine , alongside the utter failure of the US intelligence and law enforcement apparatuses to deal effectively with terrorism for the usual litany of reasons: bureaucratic infighting, corruption, cultural myopia, lobbying and vested interests. And don't forget the vast nuclear proliferation threat posed by the ex-Soviet bloc – woefully neglected in Washington – and the related problem of prevalence of an implacable Cold War-mindset; focusing too much on state-sponsored terrorism (*their* state-sponsored terrorism, that is, not ours or our allies) instead of on wily footloose terrorists armed with rogue nukes.

And that's only the half of the factors that come into play as Mills' tracks the inevitable logic of what may very well happen *as a result* of this combustible stew. The novel, in short, sounds warning bells about what is in store if the US remains on its current course, a sorry fate highlighted tragically by the intriguing relationship of liberal President Morris and his Arab American National Security Advisor, Edwin Hamdi. They spend their political careers trying to

undo the mistakes of their saber-toothed predecessors only to be faced ultimately by a wicked fate accompli. Too much has already been set in motion and so events will follow their own malevolent course, with the world spinning out of control.

In one disturbingly plausible scene President Morris finds himself forced to bomb Syria so that he can then pursue a subsequent conciliatory policy towards Arabs and Muslims that Hamdi shrewdly urges. What has transpired is that a loner, who happens to be a Syrian with no organizational affiliation, blows himself up next to a synagogue and the President must respond aggressively to placate the public and you-know-which lobby. In line with present day events, Hamdi protests to the President that Syria can't be held accountable for its porous borders with Iraq given America's own problems with Mexico, a point Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad has made on more than one occasion.

The novel's storytelling and character construction really bring out the prophetic political content. In the opening scene, for example, Brandon Vale, incarcerated jewel thief extraordinaire, plays poker with an African-American inmate with an Arab/Muslim name, Kassem, and a tattoo of hooded KKKman dangling from a hangman's rope with a broken neck. If an American can embrace Islam as a protest against racism, what do you think the reaction of people who already are Muslims and not Americans is going to be to mistreatment? There's a TV set in the room blaring away about the US fatalities in Iraq and the various terrorist incidents in the Middle East, something that doesn't interests Vale in the slightest, him and most of the inmates who are into life, and prison, for the money.

Vale is the stereotypical self-absorbed American, which is a perfect psychological profile for the masterminds who groom him for a crucial job, rob Las Vegas to buy rogue Ukrainian nukes off the global market (because Al-Qaeda's out to get them). Vale isn't so much amoral as non-moral; he's never hurt anyone, as he repeatedly protests to his captors. He doesn't bother with high sounding ideals and political causes, a trait that distracts most Americans from the immense damage their government often causes abroad but also exonerates them from the charge of imperial designs or power lust.

Interestingly, the prison-guard, Daly, who 'releases' Brandon for Brandon's future paymasters, is an envious redneck figure. He's the kind who hates slightly better off, educated whites as much as he hates 'niggers'. His hatred is misplaced since he should be joining hands with the likes of Brandon and Kassem against their common enemy, wealthy white men who see all those beneath them as scum or stooges. Filling out the minority quota is Brandon's immediate superior, the lovely, partly Latina Catherine 'Juarez'. Her father was an FBI agent but she only got a chance to go to college and then into the national security apparatus thanks to her mentor, Richard Scanlon, the very man who railroaded Brandon to prison on trumped up charges so as to use him later for a 'mission.' Ironically, robbing Las Vegas was Vale's original plan. Scanlon, a former FBI honcho, has gone into the pricier private sector, providing contract security and intelligence services for the government.

Scanlon is sort of a fixit man, disillusioned with government incompetence and corruption in the war on terror and so trying to do his best to stem this woeful tide from his private sector perch. Hence, he allies with Hamdi, and is by far the most complex character here, and most likely the second horseman of the apocalypse; the one who spreads war and devastation. He's half-American, half-Egyptian, a professor who's dedicated his life to finding peace in the Middle East and has had to scratch his way to the top in what his considers to be the country of 'the

Jew'. Not that he has any theological quibbles with them. He's has no religious convictions whatsoever and plans to do something horrendous to the Middle East with the 12 warheads the Ukrainian mob are peddling on the black market.

If anything, he's the quintessential American taking the cowboy approach of getting rid of the problem by blowing it away. I'll say no more so as not to spoil it for readers. He is doing this so the US stops having to suffer terror attack in response to its pro-Israeli position – not that Hamdi likes the Arabs much either. At least he respects the Israelis for their efficiency and determination. Hamdi, half-Egyptian, is probably meant to embody the half-hearted nature of America's alliance with Egypt, the main 'moderate' Arab state, and how Egypt still comes out worse in comparison with Israel. And he also highlights what could happen if this favoritism remains unchecked: namely, moderates turn into extremists, and for non-religious, purely political reasons.

There's a hint of this outcome in the cases of Hamdi's two chief Arab-American CIA henchman, Jamal Yusef and Ramez. They believe in America and want a peaceful solution to Arab problems but are egged along by anger at the way they are treated by WASP superiors; namely, people like Paul Lowe, the CIA director. Lowe's a Cold War relic, unable, as Mills puts it, 'to think outside the box.' Scanlon belongs to the same generation but he got out soon enough to realize how bureaucratically nearsighted the intelligence community is when combating terrorism. As for the commander in chief, President Morris, he's a good man by all counts, what an American President 'should' be, evenhanded, but sadly can't really be because political pressures won't allow it.

As for the criminals, the two Ukrainian mobsters, a brother team, one former military, the other a career mobster, represent the neglected threat posed by a former Soviet Union now that it's given up on ideology and taken up America's brand of unadulterated self-interest. Their calculated hypocrisy is that they are Jews selling nuclear warheads to an al-Qaeda splinter cell, even if it means endangering Israel. Well, the younger one, Pyotr, does take issue, at first, unlike his hard-nosed elder brother Grigori. As for Vale's 'crew', all military and security types provided by Scanlon, they're the 'honest criminals', who take some care not to hurt anyone (as Vale insists) which is a lot more than anyone can say about the government flunkies they work for.

By the end, Brandon Vale learns to stop feeling guilt for his lifestyle, given the mountains of dead that always arise when you work for 'the good guys.' He quietly goes back to his life of crime, after getting paid handsomely and acquiring a new identity. Catherine Juarez joins him in his new life and, one suspects, future criminal endeavors. The implication in the closing scene is that if Americans minded their own business and stick to their apathetic, non-ideological lifestyle, maybe the world would be a better place.

The History Of Human Rights: From Ancient Times To The Globalization Era (berkeley: University Of California Press, 2004), By Micheline Ishay

By | 2007: Vol. 6, No. 1-2

Judging by the queries about the book from usually indifferent New York City Subway riders, *The History of Human Rights* certainly has an interested audience outside the academy. To be sure, considering the "slaughter bench of history," and the twentieth century's innovations of mass murder, the development and institutionalization of human rights the book charts represent remarkable achievements. But institutionalization is not the same as compliance. Thus what may account for my fellow travelers' interest is that, as immigrants from developing countries, they are probably well aware that the mid-twentieth century's human rights victories proved incapable of halting atrocities perpetrated after their ratification. For while an acknowledged genocide in western Sudan rages, economic disparities continue to increase globally as the richest, most powerful nation on earth is engaged in an ill conceived war initiated on the most flimsy pretexts. Speaking in this context, Micheline Ishay provides a necessary and refreshingly accessible study.

The account begins with a brief survey of religious and tradition-based human rights forerunners. Concentrating mostly in Europe and North America, it in turn jumps ahead to seventeenth and eighteenth century innovations, nineteenth century industrialization and nation-state consolidation, and the wars and other economic and identity-based conflicts of the twentieth. For Ishay this is no necessary historical progression. Throughout, she reminds us of the incompleteness of human rights struggles. Each substantive chapter ends with the discordant refrain, "Human Rights for Whom?" And in relating the dynamic expansion and contraction of ideas about and applications of rights, these sections not only identify those yet to be included in the larger theme but usefully attempt to explain why they were excluded.

The discussion of religious and tradition-based precursors demonstrates that the peoples of the Earth do share a common concerns with the welfare of humanity. In referencing these early articulations, Ishay follows the philosophers who advised the authors of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But the chapter is also the least effective in terms of explicating the differences, as well as the nuances (some would say contradictions), among religious formulations. For instance, the Biblical injunction "Thou shalt not kill," may be read, as Ishay does here, as prefiguring the right to one's life. (19) However, it may also be understood as the injunction of an omnipotent god jealously guarding his ultimate power. In the latter, god gives life its worth, but in most modern human rights formulations, human life has unconditional worth. Nonetheless, because the early religious incarnation protecting

individuals and whole peoples was by divine dicta, few traditions had independent, publicly accessible ways of resolving conflicts between the individual and the community: judgments were literally pronounced ex cathedra. Except in instances of aristocratic assertion, individual dissent was difficult. In the West, this limitation existed throughout the era of imperial Church hegemony. Critical changes in these relations developed, however, when internal disputes over the issue of conscience and justification eventually surfaced in the Reformation.

The resultant religious and dynastic wars precipitated a change in the reliance on a benevolent divine will supporting these nascent human rights, necessitating some other anthropocentric basis. Appeals to natural law in an emerging, largely secular space in western Europe and North America constituted a public sphere of exchange increasingly unfettered by the domination of the Church. This new public sought to explicate how state power, which was necessary to guarantee the emerging rights, could be balanced with protections against illegitimate extensions of that power. Although Western conceptions of individual rights and just war theories grew out of the religious conflicts in early modern Europe, other factors contributed to altering the narrow focus on conscience and religious reform producing substantively new universalist principles. The transformation of natural law from a strictly legal to a rights-based conception occurred in this period (D'Entrèves). Ishay points to four concurrent transformative, intertwined developments: modern science, a developing mercantile system, the great exploratory voyages that began the effective shrinking of the world, and the emerging middle class. (64,65) Over four centuries, these unprecedented social, political and economic ruptures helped create or consolidate the new political entity of the nation-state. While the expanding Reformation undermined Church authority, for example, a rising mercantilism fueled by capital in part from overseas plunder destabilized the feudal socioeconomic order. The relation of the emerging mercantile class to nation-state foundation and to the development of rights feature critically in the conflicts that grew in the nineteenth century and remained unresolved for the twentieth.

With the rise of nineteenth century industrial capital and a growing, exploited working class, human rights necessarily took on a socialist vocabulary. This is the book's most important historical point. Ishay's well documented treatment demonstrates "that the struggle for universal suffrage, social justice, and workers' rights-principles endorsed by the two International Covenants adopted by the United Nations in 1966-were socialist in origin." (119) The early nineteenth century's most significant rights contraction resulted from the Congress of Vienna, which sought the reimposition of old monarchic and aristocratic structures. Particularly in Germany, Hungary and Italy, it denied nationalists' yearning for popular self-determination inspired by the French Revolution. However, many important expansions in rights resulted from subsequent alliances between liberal nationalist and more radical socialist forces. One such case was the French Chartist movement (People's Charter 1837) that was, if not socialist, "a working-class movement radicalized by its political experience." (123) In 1848, a far-reaching, popular uprising pushed human rights further still. Eventually, most of these popular movements were curtailed. And after the massacre and exile of the June Days protests, a new, more radical socialist wing supplanted the coalition strategy initiated by early socialist reformers such as Claude Henri Saint-Simon.

Yet even this radical resurgence marked by the 1871 Paris Commune's demands for more comprehensive reforms were soon crushed. For Marx and Engels, these failures resulted from liberals' betrayals of their own principles and the continued divisive influence of religious and nationalist identities. But the Paris Commune's defeat did not mark the end. It inspired the labor movement for almost a century afterward, and the decades following the suppression saw the organization of labor parties in several countries that exist to this day. This was particularly significant as all males finally gained the right to vote in many Western states by the end of the nineteenth century. However, despite such gains, the nearly complete formal abolition of slavery in the Western world, and the continued advocacy of workers and their fellow citizens, the specific claims of women's suffrage and colonial independence were largely ignored. The exploitation of domestic workers and colonies produced spectacular private and national wealth that fueled disputes among European states.

In the twentieth century, the League of Nations emerged between two devastating World Wars that resulted largely from these conflicts. Although it did not engender a "supranational entity transcending the interests of the more powerful states, as socialist envoys…hoped…, it embodied the victorious Allied powers' principle of collective security, in which all world states would join against any future aggressor." Significantly, the concurrently created International Labor Organization served as an affiliated group to "enforce labor standards, in part as a way to reduce the motives for war." (206) Additional ratified agreements ensured safer working conditions; the protection of children, women, and immigrant workers; and other liberal-socialist gestures. Yet once again, even though women won the right to vote, European colonial powers failed to live up to the principles they espoused, ignoring the claims of their colonies for independence.

Only after WWII did the current rights system come into being. The Universal Declaration and its supporting agreements represent explicit international statements of principles. Yet, as Ishay argues, the cold war presented the most significant obstacle to developing human rights fully. (228) For instance, the Soviet Union prioritized social and economic rights as well as "equivalent civic duties." The United States and its allies on the other hand "favored political and civil rights. Central to this controversy was a face-off between proponents of central planning and advocates of programs that provided some room for the 'invisible hand' to operate." (221) In this dispute, the Soviet Union, "[f]earing additional incursions into domestic politics, and given their minority status in the overall compositions of the United Nations in 1948, … insisted that the state should be left as the primary authority for securing human rights." (221,22) Consequently, the parties adopted two further, co-equal agreements: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic and Social and Cultural Rights. The former "focused more specifically on the civil and political dimensions of the Universal declaration. Pressed by the Soviet Union, it excluded, for instance, the right to property." The latter "expanded upon the few social and economic clauses stipulated in the Universal Declaration." The important difference between the two was that the rights enumerated in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights "would be protected immediately," while states should recognize the provisions of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and "implement them progressively, consistent with other specific

programs." (224)

The cynical, selective use of the human rights agenda's otherwise comprehensive emphasis on self-determination, socialism and liberal democracy stunted many of the United Nations' efforts. Both superpowers engaged each other through proxy wars and by propping up states that shared little semblance to either liberal democracy or state socialism-the regime types each professed to be defending. The demands of developing states and former colonies for self-determination and freedom from Western interference sprang out of this context as they realized among other things that post-independence aid and military assistance came attached to conditions that rendered them little more than pawns. The situation thereby further perverted the forums necessary for protecting human rights.

In our post-Soviet era, the dominance of global capitalism seems total. Yet, there remain the seething resentments of anti-modernist religious, ethnic and racial fundamentalists who, under the same flags of self-determination raised earlier, demand the right to return to or remain in premodern modes that often deny human rights. In a different way, progressive groups also seek strategies to deal with globalization that sometimes verge on isolationism. The divisions between rich and poor countries remain a critical challenge for international labor movements. Even in developed countries, conflicts between the shrinking number of unionized and the increasing non-unionized workforce persist alongside the downward pressure on salaries. Ishay notes that although it is true, as free-marketers claim, the rising tide raises all boats, the tide seems to be rising faster for the few at the top than the many below. (263) Under these conditions, Amnesty International along with labor activists and scholars suggested in 1998 that both the human rights community and labor union movements had much to learn from each other.

From this history it should be clear that the unfinished business of human rights cannot simply be blamed on underdeveloped or rogue states whose governments and military hide behind principles of sovereignty and self determination. In 1998, for example, the United States and Israel initially found themselves oddly in agreement with the likes of Yemen, China and Iraq's Saddam Hussein in opposing the Rome Statute that engendered the International Criminal Court. The shortcomings derive instead from a central problematic in human rights. For while these rights, being based in individual dignity and autonomy, possess independent justification, their realization is nonetheless materially dependent on institutions and procedures controlled by the group or state. Recursively, state or group power in this age of democratic supremacy is predicated on the extension of the initial, individualistic principle to the autonomous group. Hence the dispute over female genital cutting involves a whirlwind of controversy surrounding issues of gender, race, class, and national or group self-determination. Is the practice a defining cultural tradition or a way of controlling female social position and presence by way of limiting full female sexual expression? Are the concerns expressed by outsiders a new form of Western imperialism under the cloak of human rights? How does the practice affect or relate to the economic and social possibilities for women and the nation as a whole? Ishay notes that "[a]s globalization erodes national distinctions, cultural rights revive them, intensifying efforts to protect national patrimonies against waves of immigrants, foreign imports, or the overall

homogenization of the world into universal consumerism." (273) This reflects the concern with Westernization in particular, and modernization in generally. Ishay discusses the call for relativism from thinkers such as Richard Rorty and Dundes Renteln as well as feminists such as Jane Flax. She notes this relativism, however, "can lead one to overlook cases where culture is used to justify oppression of one group by another. … In short, cultural rights have little merit for internationalist defenders of human rights when women and the untouchables of this world are silenced and abused in the name of an imagined tradition." (276)

Ishay goes on to argue that important epistemological differences separate one interpretation of rights from another… liberal internationalists prefer an interpretation of rights endowing all people with the capacity to reason and shape their destinies; socialists favor a socioeconomic definition of universal rights to redress social inequity between individuals; post-structuralists, and oddly enough pragmatists, understand the importance of elevating particular cultural interests as a weapon against the manifold sources of domination, regardless of their basis of moral legitimacy; and communitarians celebrate the importance of an organic communal spirit in the face of an ever more impersonal and alienating world. (277)

These different approaches result from different questions that are asked and different problems identified in reaction to changing socioeconomic conditions in different contexts. Ishay appreciates that our world seems to be shrinking and bringing us together for good or ill. Together we must resolve these tensions while combating human rights abuses. A new global public sphere might provide the space to engage this struggle. The final chapter investigates further the emergence of the public spheres and its role in promoting human rights. It is the globalization of this civil society, then, that she finds critical. Nonetheless, we "cannot entrust the task of building such a civil society to the whims of history." (345) The claim is that the different "special levels" that the human rights community now spans, must attempt to reforge the progressive relation between labor rights and human rights and the role the state once played in ensuring this connection. Of course, strategically, the question that remains unanswered is how different groups are to form the necessary coalitions across space and values.

Reference:

d'Entrèves, Passerin Alexandre. Natural Law: An Introduction to Legal Philosophy. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996.