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The Silence of Words and Political Dynamics in the World Risk Society[†]

by
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September 11, 2001, will stand for many things in the history of humanity. Among these, no less for the failure, for the silence of language before such an event: "war," "crime," "enemy," "victory" and "terror"—the terms melt in the mouth like rotten mushrooms (Hugo von Hofmannsthal). NATO summed up the alliance, but it is neither an attack from the outside, nor an attack of a sovereign state against another sovereign state. September 11th does not stand for a second Pearl Harbor. The attack was not directed toward the U.S. military machine, rather, toward innocent civilians. The act speaks the language of genocidal hate that knows "no negotiation," "no dialogue," "no compromises," and lastly "no peace."

The notion, of "enemy" is misleading. It stems from an imaginary world in which armies conquer or get conquered and then sign "cease fires" and "peace treaties." The terrorist attacks are however neither just a "crime," nor are they a simple case for "national justice." The notion and institute of "police" proves to be just as inadequate for acts whose results resemble military attacks, just as the police are in no position to dismiss a cadre of perpetrators, who appear to fear nothing. Appropriately, the notion of "civil emergency services" seems to lose its meaning. We live, think and act according to zombie-like notions; according to notions that have died, but continue to rule our thinking and our actions. Yet if the military, trapped in its old notions, responds with conventional methods—such as surface bombings, for instance, then it is legitimate to fear these not only ineffective but also counterproductive: new Osama bin Ladens will be bred.

This is what makes suicide-bombings, even months or years after they have occurred, incomprehensible. The notions on which our worldviews are predicated and the distinctions between war and peace, military and police, war and crime, internal and external security; particularly between internal and external in general have been magnified. Who would have thought that internal security, even Germany's for instance, would have to be defended in

the remotest valleys of Afghanistan? "Defend!" Again, another false notion. Even the distinction between defense and attack does not hold up anymore. Can one can still say that the U.S. is defending its internal security on foreign soil, in Afghanistan and so forth? What if all of these concepts are false and if language fails in the face of reality? What has really happened? No one knows. But would it be braver to be silent about it? The destruction of the Twin Towers in New York was followed by an explosion of chatty silence and meaningless action. To quote Hugo von Hofmannsthal once more: "I succeeded no longer at grasping reality with the simplifying gaze of familiarity. Everything broke down into pieces for me, and those pieces again into more pieces, and nothing else would let itself be encompassed under one concept. Single words would swim around me; they ran into eyes that stared at me and that I stared back into."[1]

This silence of words must finally be broken. We can no longer afford to keep quiet about this. If we could at least succeed in naming the silence of single ideas, to name the distance between idea and reality to presume and to prudently break the bridges of understanding to the novel reality that stems from our civilizing actions, most likely not much, but something, could be gained. In this article I would like to clarify the notion of world risk society and within this context criticize and redefine a series of notions:

1. the concepts of *war* and *terror*
2. second, the concepts of *economic globalization* and *neoliberalism*
3. third, the concepts of *state* and *sovereignty*

What is a world risk society?

What do events and threats like Chernobyl, environmental catastrophes, discussions regarding human genetics, the Asian economic crisis and current threats of terrorist attacks have in common? I will explain what I mean with an example. A few years ago the U.S. Congress contracted a scientific committee to develop a language to elucidate the danger of America's permanent sites for radioactive waste. The problem to be solved was the following: How do concepts and symbols have to be constructed in order to convey a single, unchanging message ten thousand years from now?[2]

The committee was made up of physicians, anthropologists, linguists, brain researchers, psychologists, molecular biologists, archeologists, artists and so forth. It was supposed to answer the unavoidable question: Will the United States still be around in ten thousand years? For the government committee the answer was obvious: *USA forever*! To be sure, the central problem, as to how it is possible at a distance of ten thousand years to have a conversation with the future, gradually proved to be unsolvable. Scholars began searching for models among the oldest symbols of humanity. They began studying the construction of Stonehenge (1500 B.C.) and the pyramids, researching the history of the reception of Homer and the Bible and wanting the life cycles of documents explained to them. But in any case, these were only enough for looking back a couple of thousand, certainly not tens of thousands of years. The anthropologists recommended the symbol of the skull and cross bones. A historian remembered that to alchemists, the skull and cross bones meant resurrection. A psychologist performed an experiment with three year olds: When he pasted the skull and cross bones on a bottle, they frightenedly yelled "poison," if he pasted the same symbol on the wall, they animatedly yelled "pirates!"

Other scientists suggested literally plastering the ground around the permanent waste sites with ceramic, metal and iron planks that contained all sorts of warnings. However the judgment of the linguists was unambiguous: it would only be understood for a maximum of two thousand years! Precisely the scientific meticulousness, with which the committee proceeded clarified what the concept of world risk society implies, uncovers and renders understandable: human language fails before the task of informing future generations of the dangers that we inadvertently put into the world through the use of certain technologies. The modern world increases the worlds of difference between the language of calculable risks in which we think and act and the world of non-calculable uncertainty that we create with the same speed of its technological developments. With the past decisions on nuclear energy and our contemporary decisions on the use of genetic technology, human genetics, nanotechnology, computer sciences and so forth, we set off unpredictable, uncontrollable and incommunicable consequences that endanger life on earth.

What is then new about the risk society? Were not all societies, all people, all epochs always surrounded by dangers that prompted these societies to unite just in order to defend themselves? The concept of risk is a modern concept. It requires decisions and attempts to render the unpredictable consequences

of civil decisions predictable and controllable. When one says for example, that a smoker's risk for cancer is X amount high and the catastrophe risk of a nuclear power plant Y amount, then this means that risks are avoidable negative consequences of decisions that appear predictable through the probability of accidents and diseases and thus unlike natural catastrophes. The novelty of the world risk society lies in the fact that we, with our civilizing decisions, cause global consequences that trigger problems and dangers that radically contradict the institutionalized language and promises of the authorities in catastrophic cases highlighted worldwide (like in Chernobyl and now in the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington). The *political* explosiveness of the world risk society lies precisely in this fact. Its heart rests in the mass media, politics, and bureaucracy—not necessarily at the site of its happening. This political explosiveness does not allow itself to be described or measured in the language of risk, number of victims dead and wounded, nor in scientific formulas. This causes it to "explode"—if the metaphor is permitted—with responsibility, demands of rationality, legitimizations through reality checks; for the other side of the present danger is the failure of institutions that derive their legitimacy through a declared mastery of danger. For this reason the "social birth" of a global danger is an equally improbable as well as dramatic, traumatic, world-society shaking event. In the shock highlighted by the mass media it becomes evident for a second in the world, that the silence of words—or according to one of Goya's etchings—"the slumber of reason generates monsters."

Three layers of danger can be identified in the world risk society. Each one either follows a different logic of conflict, circles around or represses other topics, or crushes or empowers certain priorities: first ecological crises, second global economic crises, and third—since September 11—the risk of transnational terrorist networks. Despite the differences, all three possibilities of danger present a common pattern of political opportunities and contradictions within the world risk society: in an age in which faith in God, class, nation and the government is disappearing, the recognized and acknowledged global nature of danger becomes a fusion of relations in which the apparent and irrevocable constants of the political world suddenly melt and become malleable. At the same time, however, new conflict and political alternatives present themselves, which once again question the unity of the world risk society: How could these dangers be overcome within the limits of historical non-simultaneities of single nations and cultures?

This is how the horrific pictures of terrorism, these obscene images of a live mass murder and a live suicide, staged as a global television appearance, shook people worldwide and triggered a political reflexivity that contradicted all expectations. It was questioned and discussed over and over again: What could unite the world? The experimental answer is: an attack from Mars. This type of terrorism is like an attack from an "internal Mars." For a single historical blink of an eye, the disputed sites and nations stand united against the common enemy of global terrorism.

Precisely the universalization of terrorist threats against the nations of the world renders the battle against global terrorism a major political challenge in which opposing camps forge new alliances, regional conflicts are dammed, and the cards of world politics get reshuffled. Until recently, national arms reduction plans still dominated Washington's political actions and debates— now there is no more talk of this. Instead the view seems to have taken hold that not even a perfect arms reduction system could have prevented these attacks and that the way to ensure U.S. internal security is not by the U.S. acting on its own, but in a global alliance. Relations between former Cold War enemies, Moscow and Washington, play an outstanding role. U.S. unilateralism falls flat on its face in the world risk society and for national interests. It is not possible for the U.S. to arrest Osama bin Laden in an isolated action by the CIA and the Pentagon without the rest of the world. The world risk society requires a multilateralism of the sort in which Russia comes out of the role of the petitioner and switches over to the role of nation to be wooed. Russian president Vladimir Putin's decision to completely and unmistakably place himself on the side of modernity, civilized and attacked, opened up new power and opportunities for refashioning himself as an important partner in the multi-pronged balance of power in the global alliance. However, this certainly does not create the illusion that the war against terrorism can underhandedly expand into a war against Islam, that is, a war that doesn't conquer terrorism, but feeds and increases it; or a war that might reduce important liberties or renew protectionism and nationalism and demonize cultural others.

In other words, the global nature of the perceived threat has two faces: It creates new forms for a political risk society *and* at the same time regional inconsistencies and inequalities with regard to those who are affected by those dangers. The fact that the collapse of global financial markets or the change of climate in single regions, for instance, has diverse effects, does not change the fact that in principle *everyone* could be affected, and that overcoming

these problems in the present state necessitates global political efforts. Environmental problems such as global warming, the overpopulation of the world (of present and future generations) could promote the idea of a "community of common destiny."

However, this does not by any means occur without conflict. For example, when the question is raised as to what extent industrial nations have the right to claim that developing nations protect important global resources such as rain forests, while using a lion's share of energy resources for themselves. Yet, it is precisely these conflicts that form common ground by underlining the fact that global solutions need to be found and that these are to be brought about not through war but through negotiations.

However, this by no means implies that there is only *one* answer to the demands of the world risk society. The ways *into* the world risk society are for European and non-European nations and cultures just as different as the ways out of it can be. In this sense it becomes clear that in the future there will be *many* modernites. The debates surrounding an Asian Modernity or a Chinese, Russian, South American or African one are just beginning now. This type of discourse clears all doubt that the European monopoly on modernity is broken in the world risk society. Seen in such a manner, the radical critique of modernity in a non-European realm turns out to be one against "excessive individualism," against the loss of "cultural identity and worth," in short, against a "McDonaldization of the world," not as a straightforward rejection of modernity, rather far more as an attempt to test and try out *other modernities* that selectively hearken back to the western model of modernity.

The everyday realm of the "world risk society" does not come forth as a love affair between everyone and everything. It comes about and consists in the perceived necessity for global consequences to civilizing actions—regardless of whether or not these consequences create globality through information technology-networking, financial channels, natural crises, cultural symbols, the pending atmospheric catastrophe, or terrorist threats. Therefore, it is the relexivity of the world risk society that breaks the silence of words and allows globality to become painfully aware of itself in its own context and builds new approaches to conflicts and alliances. What has been shown for the modern nation-states is that they can only keep their vulnerability in check through constant communication—this has proved true even for the world

risk society. This brings me to my second question: How do the meanings of "terrorism" and "war" change in the context of the world risk society?

Terrorism and War

Even the notion of "terrorist" is misleading in the end when talking about the novelty of the threat because it creates the illusion of a familiarity with motifs of national liberation movements that do not apply at all to the perpetrators of suicide and mass murder. What is simply inexplicable to the western observer is namely the way in which fanatical anti-modernism, anti-globalism *and* modern global thinking and acting are interrelated.

Hannah Arendt coined the term "banality of evil" with the fascist mass murderer Adolf Eichmann in mind. In this vein, we can imagine absolutely evil technocrats that are family oriented, but not terrorists in the name of God, who marry in the west, earn engineering degrees in Germany, bear a fondness for vodka and quietly plan years in advance technically perfect group suicide murders as mass murders and execute them in cold blood. How is this at all rooted in modernity and to be simultaneously understood as the archaic selflessness of evil?

If up until now the military focused its attention on itself and other national military organizations and their defenses, now it is transnational threats from underground perpetrators and networks that challenge world governments. Just as earlier in the cultural realm, it is possible to experience the *death of distance* in the military realm as well, that is the end of the state monopoly on violence in a civilized world, in which everything can turn into weapons in the hands of a few decisive fanatics. The peaceful symbols of the civilized society could be converted into instruments of hell. In principle, this is nothing new but, rather, it is a critical experience that is omnipresent.

With the horrific scenes from New York, terrorist groups have established themselves as new global actors in competition with states, economies and civil societies in one swoop. The terrorist networks are similar to "violence NGOs." They act like Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in a non-territorially bound, decentered fashion—acting locally on the one hand, and transnationally on the other. They use the Internet. While Greenpeace, for example, uses environmental crises and Amnesty International human rights causes against national governments, terrorist NGOs increase their monopoly

on violence. This means that on the one hand, this type of transnational terrorism is not limited to *Islamic* terrorism. Rather it can align itself with any possible goal, ideology and fundamentalism. On the other hand, a distinction has to be made between the terrorism of national freedom movements that are nationally and territorially bound, and that of the new, transnational terrorist networks that act without any territorial affiliations and across national boundaries and manage, as a consequence, to cancel the national language of war and the military with one strike. Previous terrorists tried to save their lives after committing terrorist acts. Suicide terrorists create a monstrous destructive force through their intended surrendering of their lives. The suicide bomber is the most radical contrast to the *homo oeconomicus.* He is both economically and morally completely uninhibited, and for this reason, a bearer of absolute cruelty. In a strict sense, the act and the suicide bomber are one. A suicide bomber can neither commit a suicide attack more than once, nor can state authorities convict him. This singularity is marked by the simultaneity of act, confession and self-extinguishment.

To be exact, governments did not even have to search for suicide bombers in order to find them guilty of their crimes. The culprits have confessed to their crimes and turned their weapons on themselves. For this reason, the Anti-Terrorism Alliance does not want to capture the culprits of New York and Washington (these have pulverized themselves), rather they seek the alleged people behind them: the puppet masters or the state patrons. Whereas the culprits turn the weapons on themselves, the causalities dissipate and get lost. This means that states are indispensable for building transnational terrorist networks. But perhaps it is precisely this lack of government identification, this lack of functional government structures that offers the humus for terrorist activities. Perhaps the placing of responsibility on governments and on those behind the scenes who give the orders stems from military thinking and we are on the threshold of an *individualization of war*, a type of warfare in which wars are no longer conducted state against state, rather individuals against states.

The power of terrorist actions rises with a series of conditions: with the vulnerability of a civilization, with the global, mass media-informed presence of terrorist risk; with the U.S. president's assessment that "civilization" is under threat because of these culprits; and with their readiness to extinguish themselves. Finally, the risks of terrorism exponentially multiply with technological advancement. With the technologies of the future—genetic engineering, nanotechnology and robotics, we are opening "a new Pandora's

box" (Bill Joy). Genetic manipulation, communication technologies and artificial intelligence are all interconnected ways that can get around the government monopoly of violence and will wind up opening, if no international bar is placed in front of this, the door and gate to an individualization of war.

Thus a genetically engineered menace with long periods of incubation that threatens and targets specific populations—in other words, a genetically engineered miniature bomb—can be built by anyone without any tremendous effort. This is just to cite one of many examples. The difference between atomic and biological weapons is notable. It is based on scientifically-based technological developments that can be easily expanded and capable of revolutionizing themselves again and again. So much so that the possibility of government control and monopolies fail, as with atomic and biochemical weapons when they were given as specific materials and resources (weapon-convertible uranium, costly laboratories). *Politically,* this empowerment of individuals against governments could open a Pandora's box. Not only were the recent boundaries between the military and civil society torn down, but also the boundaries between innocent and guilty, between suspects and non-suspects, where jurisdiction up until now made sharp distinctions. If the individualization of war should continue to be a threat, then the citizen should *prove* that he or she is not dangerous; because under these circumstances every individual could come under suspicion of being a potential terrorist. Everyone has to put up with the fact that he or she, in the absence of any concrete reason, has to be checked "for security reasons." This indicates that in the end, the individualization of war can translate into the death of democracy. Governments would have to ally themselves with other governments against citizens in order to avert the dangers with which their citizens threaten them.

When thought through thoroughly, a world premise in the present discussion on terrorism, namely the distinction between "good" and "bad" terrorists crumbles. Nationalists are to be respected and fundamentalists are to be abhorred. If one wants to find justifications for such value judgments and distinctions in the age of the nationalistic modernity, they will become a moral and political perversion in the terroristic world risk society as well as in consideration of the possibility of an individualization of war.

Is a political response to this challenge at all possible? I would like to name one principle and that is that of the *law*. In a nationalist context, that which

infringes upon the legal sensibilities of the civilized world is the fact that the victims of the attempts assume the roles of persecutor, judge and executive power at once. This type of "self-justice" must also be overcome in international relations. Even if relations between the states are not fully ripe for it, the global alliance against terrorism has to be based on the law. Thus it follows that an international convention against terrorism must be discussed and ratified. It must be a convention that not only clarifies certain notions but also provides a legal basis for the intergovernmental prosecution of terrorists—in other words, this convention has to create a unified, universal space for the law to be executed. This, among other things, requires that the statute of the international courts of all nations, even those of the U.S., have to be ratified.[3] The goal would be that terrorism would be punished as a crime against humanity worldwide. States that refuse to adopt this convention would have to face combined sanctions from all states. Would this not be an interest that Europe and Russia, based on their historical backgrounds could espouse as their own in order to sharpen their political profile in the global alliance—to help in the battle against terrorism by building its own opposing military momentum to success? This brings me to my third question: How do the meanings of the concepts "economic globalization" and "neoliberalism" shift in the context of the world risk society?

Economic Globalization and Neoliberalism

Allow me to start with an anecdote. When I hear the word globalization, the following political caricature appears before my eyes: The Spanish conquerors. The Conquistadors appear in the New World in their shiny armor with horses and weapons. The thought bubble reads, "We have come to you to talk to you about God, civilization and the truth." And a group of bewildered native onlookers responds: "Of course, what would you like to know?"

This scenario can easily be transported onto the present. Economic experts from the World Bank, the International Monetary Foundation, corporate managers, lawyers and diplomats step off of intercontinental flights in post-Soviet Moscow. A thought bubble reads: "We have come to you to talk to you about democracy, human rights and the free market economy." A delegation of readers responds: "But of course, how else do the Germans go around spreading open violence against foreigners on their streets?"

Perhaps this caricature gives an idea about yesterday's situation, which is no longer valid today. The terrorist attacks and the anthrax scare raise a question that can no longer be swept under the rug: Is the triumph of the economy already over? Will the primacy of politics be rediscovered? Has neoliberalism's apparently unstoppable victory suddenly been broken? In fact, the outbreak of global terrorism resembles a Chernobyl of globalization. If with Chernobyl it was about taking the exaltation of nuclear energy to its grave, with September 11 it is about bidding farewell to the beatification of neoliberalism. The suicide bombers did not only uncover the vulnerability of western civilization, but have also at the same time given a taste of the sort of conflicts that are generated by economic globalization. In the world of global risks the mark of neoliberalism rapidly loses its credibility to substitute the state and politics through economics.

The privatization of airline security in the U.S. is particularly emblematic of the above point. Until now there has been quite a bit of reluctance to discuss this because the tragedy of September 11 was homemade, in part. Moreover, the U.S.'s vulnerability certainly has something to do with its political philosophy. America is a neoliberal nation through and through and is thus unwilling to pay the price for public safety. When it is said and done it was long known that the U.S. was a target for terrorist attacks. But in contrast to Europe, flight security was privatized and taken over by miracle-working, highly flexible part-time workers whose wages are lower than those of fast-food workers, meaning approximately six dollars an hour. Persons that go through very few hours of training and practice this profession for no more than six months occupy these important security positions. Before restricting the basic rights of all citizens to ward against terrorism and endangering democracy and an under rule of law state, efforts should be made toward making flight security government run and more professional. This is just one example of the many other improvements that could be made.

It is America's neoliberal concept of itself—its government penny-pinching on the one hand, and the triad of deregulation, liberalization and privatization on the other—that contributes to America's vulnerability to terrorism. The measure to which this realization catches on will break the hegemonic power that neoliberalism has gained in shaping its philosophy and actions in the past. In this sense the horrific pictures of New York contain a message that has yet to be deciphered: a state, a country can become neoliberal to the point of death.

The economic commentators of the big daily newspapers worldwide suspect this and insist that what was true before September 11 cannot after September 11 be false. In other words, the neoliberal model will persist even after the terrorist attacks because there are no other alternatives to it. But this is precisely what is wrong. This reveals a lack of alternative thinking. Neoliberalism has always been frowned upon for being a good weather philosophy that only works when blatant conflicts or crises arise. The neoliberal imperative insists that too much government and politics and the regulating hand of bureaucracy are the real causes for world problems like unemployment, global poverty and economic breakdowns. The success of neoliberalism relied on the promise that a free economy and that a globalization of markets would solve the problems of humanity. It championed the belief that by giving free reign to egoism, inequality could be battled against in accordance with global standards and that global justice could prevail. Instead, this belief of capitalist fundamentalists in the magic power of the market has recently proven itself to be a dangerous illusion.

In times of crisis neoliberalism is left standing without a single political response. The approach of increasing the dosage of bitter economic medicine even more radically when a breakdown is pending or comes full-circle in order to rectify the problematic consequences of globalization is an illusionary theory that only now begins to pay the price. On the contrary, terrorist threats make the simple truths that the neoliberal triumph had suppressed known again: That the separation of the world economy from politics is illusionary. There is no security without the state and public service. Without taxation there is no government. Without taxation there is no education, no affordable health care, no social security. Without taxation there is no democracy. Without the public, democracy and civil society have no legitimacy. And without legitimacy there is also no security. Thus it follows that without the shape and form of a legally regulated (meaning recognized and not violent) national settlement of conflict in the future and above all on the global level, there will also be no world economy in any form.

Wherein lies then the alternative to neoliberalism? Certainly not in national protectionism. We need an expanded concept of politics that is capable of appropriately regulating the potential of crises and conflicts. The Tobin Tax—being demanded more and more by political parties in Europe and worldwide—on the unbridled flow of capital is only a first programmatic

step. Neoliberalism insisted upon the economy breaking out of its nationalistic dwelling and building transnational rules for itself. At the same time it assumed that the government would keep on playing its old game and keep its national boundaries. After the terrorist attack, even the States recognized the power and possibilities of transnational cooperation, even if only for the scope of internal security. All of a sudden the opposite of neoliberalism, the importance of the state, becomes once again omnipresent and in its oldest Hobbesian variant: that of guaranteeing security. What was unthinkable up until recently—a European warrant of arrest that disregards the sacred national sovereignty of matters of the law and the police—is now within reach. But perhaps soon we will also experience a similar joining of forces in light of the possible world economic crises. The economy has to prepare itself for new rules and new circumstances. The times of "everyone to their best of their abilities and will" are certainly over.

The terrorist resistance to globalization has achieved in this sense the exact opposite of what it sought to achieve. It introduced a new era of globalization of politics and of the states—the transnational invention of the political through cooperation and networking. In this way the not yet publicly noticed strange natural law has proven itself that to resist globalization—whether you like it or not—only accelerates its engine. This paradox is enough to grasp that globalization is the name for a strange process, which gets realized on two opposite tracks: either one is for it or against it. All of those who oppose globalization not only share global communications media with those in favor of it—they also operate on the foundation of global rights, global markets, global mobility, and global networks. They also think and act in global categories which they create through their acts of global openness and global attention. One need only to think of the precision with which the terrorists of September 11 staged their acts in New York as a television worthy *live* catastrophe and *live* mass murder. They were able to count on the destruction of the second tower through a passenger aircraft transformed into a missile being transmitted *live* throughout the entire world through omnipresent television cameras.

Does globalization have to be the cause for terrorist attacks? Is it perhaps about an understandable reaction to a neoliberal steamroller, that as critics state it, seeks to flatten out every corner of this world? No, that is nonsense. No cause, no abstract idea, no God can justify or excuse these attacks. Globalization is an ambivalent process that cannot be reversed. Precisely smaller and weak states give up their politics of self-sufficiency and rush to

join the world market. How did one of the big daily newspapers title the news about the German Chancellor's visit to the Ukraine? "We forgive the crusaders and await the investors." In fact, there is just one thing that is worse than being steamrolled by foreign investors and that is *not* being steamrolled by foreign investors. It is necessary, however, to link economic globalization with a policy of cosmopolitan understanding. The dignity of people, their cultural identities, the otherness of others must be taken more seriously in the future. Wouldn't it make sense to build a new pillar in the alliance against terrorism? To build a cultural bridge so to speak, and foster a dialogue between the cultures on the inside and outside in relation with the countries in the Islamic world and also with the countries of the so-called Third and Fourth Worlds, that view themselves as victims of globalization? And couldn't a culturally extroverted Europe, and in particular a culturally extroverted Germany, play a leading role since it is less plagued by a colonial past, but still cognizant of its obligation because of the Holocaust?

This brings me to the fourth and final question: How and to what extent do the concepts of "state" and "sovereignty" change in the eyes of the world risk society?

State and Sovereignty

To get right to it, terrorist attacks reinforce the state, but cancel its central historical form, the nation-state. National security is, in the borderless age of risks, no longer national security. This is the biggest lesson from the terrorist attacks. Certainly, there were always alliances. The deciding difference is that today, global alliances are necessary not only for external but also for *internal* security. In the past it was accurate to say that foreign policy was a question of choice, not of necessity. Today, on the contrary, a new principle of this as well as that govern the scene; national security and international cooperation are directly linked with one another. The only way to have national security in the face of the threat of globalized terrorism (but also of financial risks, the downfall of organized crime), is transnational cooperation. The paradoxical principle is valid here: states need to *de*nationalize and *trans*nationalize themselves. This means that they need to sacrifice certain aspects of their autonomy in order to overcome their *national* problems in a globalized world. The acquisition of a new space for action and leeway, that is the expansion of political sovereignty and control has to be paid with "self-denationalization." The dismantling of national autonomy and the growth of

national sovereignty do not by any means logically cancel each other out. Rather they can reciprocally reinforce and expedite each other. The logic of the zero sum game that was valid for empires, superpowers, colonialism economic and cultural imperialism, independent nation-states and military blocks loses its power of justification.

In this sense it is crucial to introduce the difference between sovereignty and autonomy. The nation state was based on the equation of sovereignty with autonomy. Viewed in this light, economic independence, cultural diversification, and military, legal and technological cooperation between states automatically lead to loss of autonomy and sovereignty. Though if one measures sovereignty by political creative power and fixes it on the question of to what extent a state succeeds at gaining power and influence on the stage of world politics and increases its citizens' security and prosperity, it follows that an increasing interconnection and cooperation leads to a loss of autonomy and to a *gain* in sovereignty. In other words, the worth of a state like Russia in the world is no longer measured on its potential for confrontation, as it was during the Cold War, but on its *cooperative* potential and art, that is, on its ranking in the networked states of the world and the world market as well as on its presence in supranational organizations. That is separated and united sovereignty does not reduce this, on the contrary, it increases the potential for single state sovereignty. In this sense, not only the global terrorist threats but also the world risk society in its entirety opens a new era of transnational and multilateral cooperation.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia notably led to a large number of nationally defined successor states in which ethnic, national and civic identities in part find conflictual overlap with one another and in part exclude one another. This newly awakened national consciousness in the countries and states of Central and Eastern Europe seems at first glance to be in conflict with the discovery and development of cooperative transnational states in the face of the challenges placed by the world risk society. The opposite is true. These challenges can contribute toward taming the borderless national and ethnic tensions in the post-Soviet states. If these countries concur in defining their position such that they can be confronted with common historical challenges, then it will be possible and necessary to find political frames and coordinates to vote on national solutions and demands on sovereignty under transnational conditions. This is now being experienced and spelled out in geopolitical questions of borderless "internal security" of states that overlap one another both ethnically and

nationally. In any case, this can be transferred onto questions regarding regional world economic cooperation, the curbing of global financial crises, the impending atmospheric catastrophes and environmental dangers, poverty and last but not least, human rights. In other words, in the recognized and acknowledged threats of the future there may even be a key to lessen the historical experiences of violence cooperatively.

Two ideal types of transnational cooperation among states emerge: "surveillance" states and "open world" states, in which national autonomy gets reduced in order to renew and expand national sovereignty in the world risk society. Surveillance states with their cooperative power threaten to become fortress states in which security and the military will be writ large and freedom and democracy writ small. The word is already out that western societies accustomed to peace and prosperity lack the necessary measure of friend or foe thinking and the readiness, the advantage that the marvel of human rights had up until now, to give up the now necessary measures of resistance. This attempt to build a western fortress against the cultural others is omnipresent and will surely increase in the coming years. A policy of state authoritarianism that behaves adaptively in foreign relations and authoritarian in domestic affairs could stem from this. For the winners of globalization, neoliberalism is appropriate; for the losers of globalization, it stirs up terrorism and xenophobia and administers doses of the poison of racism. This would resemble a victory of the terrorists because the nations of modernity rob themselves precisely of that which that make them attractive and superior: freedom and democracy.

In the future, it will mostly come to posing the following question: What are you fighting for, what are we fighting for if it is about fighting transnational terrorism? An open world state system based on the recognition of the otherness of others holds the answers to this.

Nation-states, whether their borders are internal or external, can possess ethnic and national identities that overlap and exclude one another or have not grown together peaceably. Open world states, on the other hand, emphasize the necessity of self-determination with the responsibility toward others and uniting foreigners within and beyond national borders. It is not about denying self-determination or damming it in—on the contrary, it is about freeing it from national tunnel vision and connecting it with an openness toward world interests. Open world states not only fight against terrorism, but also against the *causes* of terrorism in the world. They gain and

renew the powers of creation and persuasion of the political by solving pressing global problems and problems that seem insolvable by single national initiative.

Open world states are founded on the principle of the state's national indifference. Similar to the Westphalian peace that had been able to end the 16th century religious civil war through separation of church and state—which is the crux of the argument here—the world national (civil) wars of the 20th and early 21st centuries are also addressed with a separation of church and state. Similar to how the irreligious state renders the practice of different religions possible, open world states have to provide this for border-crossing closeness of ethnic, national and religious identities through the principle of constitutional tolerance.

I am coming to my conclusion. It is almost superfluous to pronounce it, but I am hopelessly rooted in the tradition of the Enlightenment, even if self-critically applied. With this in mind I have attempted inadequately and provisionally to trace how a political handbook, which is seemingly composed for perpetuity, gets dissolved and reshaped. Perhaps it has astounded you as much as it has me that the fear of danger that paralyzes us also succeeds in obstructing our view of the very broad political perspectives that are opening up. I have hinted at three of these only seemingly paradoxical opportunities that the world risk society has to offer.

First, it seems possible and necessary to me to create an *international legal foundation* for the alliance against terrorism. It would entail an anti-terror-regime that regulates issues like tax investigation as well as the extradition of perpetrators, the authorization of armed forces, the jurisdiction of courts and so forth; only in this way can the long-term challenge in shifting historical and political contexts really be met.

Second, it would be necessary to base the promise of the alliance not only on military means but to base it on a credible *policy of dialogue*—first of all with regard to the Islamic world, but also toward other cultures who see their worth as threatened through globalization. Only in this way can what military actions provoke in helping terrorists to succeed in allying themselves worldwide with the Islamic populations be prevented. Perhaps the more culturally and in foreign policy more dialogue-experienced Europe is better equipped to do this than the culturally-introverted America?

Third, the dangers of the world risk society could be transformed into opportunities in order to create regional structures of cooperation between *open world multinational states*. Let me end with a quote from Immanuel Kant: "To think of oneself as a member of a cosmopolitan society in compliance with state laws is the most sublime idea that man can have about his predicament and which cannot be thought of without enthusiasm."

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† *This article is based on a talk given to the Russian Duma in November, 2001 and was translated from the German by Elena Mancini.*

Notes

[1] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Der Brief des Lord Chandos*, Stuttgart 2000, p. 51f.

[2] See Gregory Benford, *Deep Time: How Humanity Communicates Across Millenia*, Avon 1999 as well as Frank Schirrmacher, "Ten Thousand Years of Isolation" in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nr. 209 of September 2000, p. 49, whom I have to thank for this example.

[3] Baltasar Garzón, "Die einzige Antwort auf den Terror" ("The only answer to terror") in *Die Zeit*, Nr. 44, October 25, 2001, p. 11.

September 11 and Terror War:
The Bush Legacy and the Risks of Unilateralism

by
Douglas Kellner

On September 11, 2001, terrorists seized control of an American Airlines flight from Boston to Los Angles then crashed it into the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York City followed by a second hijacking and collision into another WTC tower minutes later. During the same hour, a third commandeered jetliner hit the Pentagon, while a fourth hijacked plane, possibly destined for the White House, went down in Pennsylvania, perhaps crashed out of harm's way by passengers who had learned of the earlier terrorist crimes and were trying prevent another calamity.

The world stood transfixed by the graphic videos of the WTC buildings exploding and discharging a great cloud of rubble. Subsequent images depicted heroic workers struggling to save people, and then themselves becoming victims of the unpredicted collapse of the towers, or shifts in the debris. The WTC towers, the largest buildings in New York City and a potent symbol of global capitalism, were down, and the mighty behemoth of American military power, the mythically shaped Pentagon, was penetrated and on fire. Terrorists celebrated their victory over the American colossus, and the world remained focused for days on the media spectacle of "America Under Attack" and reeling from the now highly feared effects of terrorism.

The Bush Administration and Terrorism

For some weeks after the September 11 attacks there was ferocious debate and intense speculation concerning the U.S. response. On October 7, 2001, George W. Bush announced the beginning of a military campaign in Afghanistan to destroy the Al Qaeda terrorist network and the Taliban regime that was hosting them. Within two months, the Taliban was in retreat and Afghanistan entered a highly uncertain stage. While the media and public have generally accepted that the Bush administration's policy was a

success, I want to argue, by contrast, that its terrorism policy is highly flawed and potentially disastrous in its short and long-term effects.

I will attempt to show that the policies of the Bush administration and the Pentagon in the Afghanistan war were poorly conceived, badly executed, and are likely to sow the seeds of future blowback and reprisal. Hence, while the overthrow of the Taliban regime and the assault on the Al Qaeda infrastructure were justifiable and a salutary blow against global terrorism, the Bush administration and Pentagon campaign in Afghanistan was arguably misconceived and in many ways unsuccessful. In my view, terrorism is a global problem that requires a global solution. The Bush administration's policy, however, is largely unilateral and its military response is flawed and has hindered more intelligent and potentially successful efforts against terror networks, while quite possibly creating more terrorists and enemies of the United States. A global campaign against worldwide terror networks will require multilateral and coordinated efforts across many fronts: financial, legal-judiciary, political, and military. On the financial front, the Bush administration has failed to adequately coordinate large-scale efforts to fight terror networks, and domestically there is criticism that fights between the Treasury, Commerce, and Justice Departments have hampered coordination even in the United States. The Bush administration had systematically pursued a deregulatory policy toward financial markets and has not been able to successfully regulate the flow of funds supporting either the terror networks or other global criminals or corporate allies of the Bush administration that prefer to secure and launder their funds in off-shore banks.

On the legal and judicial front, the Bush administration has also failed to construct a lasting and active international alliance against terror. Whereas many foreign countries have arrested and broken up terror networks in Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Singapore, and elsewhere, the U.S. Justice Department has not been successful in breaking up any major U.S. terrorist networks and the Bush administration has failed to adequately coordinate global anti-terrorist activity with other countries. On the whole, the U.S. has alienated itself from most of its allies in the war against terror by its arrest of suspects that have been held in detention camps without legal rights and forced to face military tribunals and death penalties. In particular, the detention center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, has generated worldwide controversy and driven many European allies to question cooperation with

the U.S. because of the conditions of the incarceration of suspects, the proposed military trials, and threatened use of death.

The Bush administration chose not to criminalize bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network, preferring a largely military solution, and thus has not been able to develop a worldwide political and judicial campaign to shut down the terrorists. Many countries are reluctant to send terrorist suspects to the U.S. because of the secret military courts, lack of standard legal procedures, and dangers of capital punishment that are banned in much of the world. Moreover, the Bush doctrine that maintains "you are with us or against us," —and that constantly expands its "axis of evil"—has positioned the U.S. as a strictly unilateralist force carrying out *its* war against terror, and has thus undermined developing a more global and multilateral campaign against terrorism. In particular, threatening war against Iraq has alienated the U.S. from both its European and moderate Arab allies, while the Bush administration's escalating threats against other countries are isolating the U.S. and making multilateral coalitions against terrorism extremely difficult.

There is also a sense that the U.S. is losing the struggle for the hearts and minds of Arabs and Muslims because of its bellicose nationalism, aggressive militarism, often-uncritical support of Israel, and failure to improve relations with Muslim nations and peoples. The excessive bombing of civilians, the lack of a decent U.S. humanitarian program or plan to rebuild Afghanistan, and the unsuccessful propaganda efforts have perhaps produced more enemies than friends in the Arab and Muslim world, and thus have increased the potential for the rise of future terrorist Islamist cadres against the U.S.[1]

This situation is especially aggravated as hostilities exploded between the Israelis and Palestinians in 2002. In much of the Arab world, the U.S. is seen as the major supporter of Israel and the inability of the Bush administration to mediate growing conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians, combined with the Bush administration's neglect of the problem during its first fifteen months, has helped create an explosive situation in the Middle East with no solution in sight. In addition, the lack of ability and will of the Bush administration to moderate the aggressive Israeli responses to suicide bombings and terror acts against Israel in 2002 have created more hatred of the U.S. in the Arab world and a growing tendency to equate Israelis and Americans, Jews and Christians, as the main enemy of Islam.

Thus, the goals of creating better images of the U.S. in the eyes of the Arab, Islamic, and global world, and improved relations between the U.S. and Arab world, have failed miserably. The incapacity to enhance U.S. and Western relations with Islam is largely the result of the botched military campaign, an inept ideological strategy, and the failure to engage in a fruitful dialogue with Arabs and Muslims. Thus, Bush administration policy is inhibiting the creation of coalitions for peace and the rebuilding of devastated parts of the Arab world like Afghanistan. Part of the goals and justification for the Afghanistan war was to not only eliminate Al Qaeda terrorist forces, but to forge more creative relationships with Arab and Islamic countries, and this goal remains unrealized and unrealizable under Bush administration unilateralist policy.

A successful campaign, then, would communicate the message that the U.S. respects the Islamic world, wants to carry out more productive activities with it, and desires dialogue, peace, and better relations. But this project has not succeeded, in part, because of the violent and destructive military campaign, with the Bush administration and Pentagon putting military priorities over beginning the reconstruction of Afghanistan well into 2002. In addition, the propaganda efforts undertaken by the Bush administration have been extremely crude and have mostly backfired, losing more hearts and minds than were gained, as I will document in this article. Later historians of the Afghanistan war and its propaganda campaign, I would submit, will find Bush administration policy in the propaganda war embarrassingly inept and unsuccessful, pointing to another serious deficiency in its handling of its war against terrorism.

From a strictly military standpoint, I would argue that major goals for the Afghanistan war were not achieved and that the deeply flawed campaign will be costly and consequential in its later effects. In particular, the Afghanistan campaign is at best a partial success because of the failure to capture, or destroy, key Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership and cadres. This was largely due to a refusal to effectively use ground troops to deal with the Al Qaeda and Taliban leadership and their major fighting forces. The Afghanistan campaign, like the Gulf War, Kosovo war, and other U.S. military interventions in the past decade, relied largely on bombing at a distance and the refusal to use U.S. ground troops, following the "zero casualty tolerance" policy of the past years. The result was that in the decisive battles of Kandahar and Tora Bora, significant numbers of Al Qaeda and Taliban

forces escaped, including their leadership and perhaps Osama bin Laden himself.

What is needed, then, is an international and multilateral mission in Afghanistan and elsewhere that combines military, police, humanitarian, and reconstruction efforts. The U.S. has said it will train an Afghani army, but not use U.S. forces for police or security action. In fact, given the chaos in Afghanistan, it is unwise to separate military and police forces. Thus, a multilateral coalition should combine police, military, and humanitarian efforts. Likewise, a multilateral force of European Union countries, the U.S., Arab, and other countries should train an Afghani military as they police and patrol the country, fight remnants of Al Qaeda and Taliban, and rebuild the country. The Bush administration policy, by contrast, has not adequately dealt with humanitarian, security, or the socio-political needs of the country, rather focusing primarily on military action against Al Qaeda and Taliban forces.

The primarily military and unilateral strategy of the Bush administration in its response to terrorism constitutes is the major Achilles' heel of its policy with its decision not to engage a multilateral approach to international terrorism. The unilateral U.S. policy has produced an excessive militarizing and inadequate criminalizing of the problem of dealing with terrorism, and Bush administration policies are increasingly isolating the U.S. from potential allies in a global campaign against terrorism. Moreover, such unilateral policies are more than likely to position the U.S. and its citizens as the targets of future terror attacks. Increasingly, Bush administration foreign policy is being resisted in much of the world, and it is encountering mounting hostility from allies and enemies alike. This is especially so since Bush's "axis of evil" speech and the intensification of the Israel and Palestine conflict, generated in part by the Bush administration's failure to successfully mediate it.

By contrast, a multilateral campaign would make it clear that in a worldwide struggle against terror it is the combined forces of civilization that are allied against international terror networks. Such a campaign would rely on global forces on political, judicial, economic and military fronts, rather than privileging the militarist solution of war. Indeed, since December 2001, the Bush administration has expanded the front of its war against terrorism, sending U.S. troops to the Philippines, Pakistan, and a whole ring of Central Asian countries, while threatening military action in Somalia, Indonesia,

Yemen, and the infamous "axis of evil": Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. The list was expanded in May 2002 to include Syria, Libya, and Cuba. George W. Bush has declared that an unrelenting war against terrorism is the major focus of his administration and the Pentagon has discussed developing smaller nuclear weapons to be used against terrorist forces, as well as other high-tech weapons, ruthless bombing, and covert assassination.

In addition, the Bush administration manipulated the September 11 terror attacks to push through a hard right domestic agenda that constitutes a clear and present danger to U.S. democracy. As Governor of Texas, George W. Bush consistently performed favors for his largest contributors, like the Enron Corporation and oil and energy companies, and as president he has done the same. Since September 11, the Bush administration has exploited the fear of terrorism to push through further bailouts of corporations that contributed to his campaign, and the center of its economic program has been to create tax breaks for the most wealthy, while cutting back on liberal social programs and environmental legislation, and carrying out the most right wing law and order domestic policy in U.S. history.

On the foreign policy front, the Bush administration made use of the September 11 tragedy to renounce arms treaties it had already opposed and thus jettisoned the idea of arms control on a worldwide scale. It also used the September 11 attacks to legitimate an increased military budget and series of military interventions, to test and build new nuclear weapons, to threaten countries like Iraq and Iran with military attacks, and to abandon multilateralism for an unilateralist "America First" approach to foreign affairs. In June 2002, the Bush administration proclaimed a dangerous "first strike" policy, saying that henceforth it would engage in "preemptive strikes," abandoning the containment policy and diplomatic strategy for dealing with crises and adversaries in the post-World War II era.

Consequently, the Bush administration claimed repeatedly that "World War III" had started and that the Cold War was being succeeded by a dangerous and long-term period of Terror War. I use the term "Terror War" to describe the Bush administration's "war against terrorism" and its use of aggressive military force and terror as the privileged vehicles of constructing a U.S. hegemony in the current world (dis)order. The Bush administration has developed its war against Islamic terrorism into a policy of Terror War where they have declared the right of the U.S. to strike any enemy state or organization presumed to harbor or support terrorism, or to eliminate

"weapons of mass destruction" that could be used against the U.S. The right wing members of the Bush administration seeks to promote this Terror War as the defining struggle of the era, coded as an apocalyptic battle between good and evil. My studies will attempt to disclose the dangers of such policies and worldviews, and to depict how Bush administration Terror War played out in the Afghanistan war and subsequent military adventures.

The Bush Administration and its Failure
to Detect and Stop the September 11 Terrorist Attacks

The likely result of the Bush administration's Terror War is that in a global world the U.S. will become ever more isolated and will continue to be the major source of international anger and terror attacks. Not only is the Bush administration's foreign policy dangerous and reckless, but the administration has demonstrated stunning incompetence on the domestic front in the so-called "war against terror" and were highly negligent by allowing the U.S. to become vulnerable to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the first place. On May 15, 2002, a political uproar erupted when CBS News broadcast a report that the CIA had briefed George W. Bush when he was vacationing at his ranch in Texas, about bin Laden's network's plans to hijack airplanes on August 6. There was immediately an explosion of controversy, raising questions for the first time in a public debate, about what the Bush administration knew about possible terrorist attacks pre-September 11 and what they had done to prevent them. Also, during May 2002, a year old FBI memo from the Phoenix, Arizona, office was released that warned of the dangers of Middle Eastern men going to flight school in order to gain the skills necessary to hijack planes, and of the dangers of the Al Qaeda network carrying out such hijackings. Moreover, the arrest of Zacarias Moussaouri, the alleged 20th Al Qaeda hijacker, in Minnesota in late August 2001, who had also been taking flying lessons and acting suspiciously, should have raised warning signals.

Over the summer of 2001, there had been reports that there were dangers of an airplane terrorist attack on the G8 economic summit in Genoa that George W. Bush attended. There were purportedly so many intelligence reports circulating in the of summer 2001 of the dangers of imminent terrorist attacks on the U.S. that government official Richard Clarke, the National Security Council's counterterrorism coordinator, warned FBI, the FAA, INS, and other crucial government agencies to be on the highest alert

and not to take vacations during a six week period over the summer. John Ashcroft, U.S. Attorney General, was ordered to take government jets instead of commercial airlines and the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) passed down several alerts to the commercial airlines.

It was also well known in political circles that in 1994 the French had foiled a terrorist airplane attack on the Eiffel Tower, while in 1995 arrests were made of terrorists who allegedly planned to use an airplane to attack CIA headquarters. Philippine police subsequently warned the U.S. that Ramzi Yousef, who had helped plan the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, had schemes to hijack and blow up a dozen U.S. airliners and was contemplating taking over and crashing a plane into the CIA headquarters. Thus, in the light of all of this information, it is scandalous that the Bush administration did not take stronger anti-terrorist actions. Senate Intelligence Committee Vice-Chair Richard Shelby stated: "There was a lot of information . . . I believe, and others believe, that if it had been acted on properly, we may have had a different situation on September 11."

Furthermore, there had been a whole series of U.S. government reports on the dangers of terrorism and need for a coordinated response. A 1996 report by the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, headed by Al Gore, developed a report on dangers of airplane hijacking that was never acted on. A 1999 National Intelligence Council report on terrorism specifically warned that bin Laden's Al Qaeda network might undertake hijacking planes and using them against U.S. targets; the report noted that members of the Al Qaeda network had threatened to do this before and that the U.S. should be alert to such strikes. Perhaps most significantly, blue ribbon commission reports by former U.S. Senators Gary Hart and Howard Rudman, and by the Bremer National Commission, highlighted the dangers of a domestic terrorist attack against the U.S. and the need to develop appropriate protective measures. The Hart-Rudman report recommended consolidating U.S. intelligence on terrorism and organizing federal responses to prevent and fight domestic terrorist attacks on the U.S.[2]

Hence, the Bush administration failed to act on warnings of imminent terrorist attacks and the need to provide systematic government responses to coordinate information and attempt to prevent and aggressively fight terrorism. Moreover, it halted a series of attempts to fight the bin Laden network that had been undertaken by the Clinton administration. Just after the September 11 attacks, a wave of revelations came out, ignored completely

in the U.S. media, concerning how high-ranking officials in the Bush administration had neglected threats of terrorist attacks by the bin Laden network and even curtailed efforts that had been initiated by the Clinton administration to shut down the terrorist organization.

An explosive book published in France in mid-November, *Bin Laden, la verite interdite* (2001), by Jean Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquie, claimed that under the influence of oil companies, the Bush administration initially blocked ongoing U.S. government investigations of terrorism, while it bargained with the Taliban over oil rights and pipeline deals and handing over bin Laden. This evidently led to the resignation of an FBI deputy director, John O'Neill, who was one of the sources of the story. Brisard and Guillaume contend that the Bush administration had been a major supporter of the Taliban until the September 11 events, and had blocked investigations of the bin Laden terror network. Pursuing these leads, the British *Independent* reported on October 30: "Secret satellite phone calls between the State Department and Mullah Mohammed Omar and the presentation of an Afghan carpet to President George Bush were just part of the diplomatic contacts between Washington and the Taliban that continued until just days before the attacks of 11 September." Furthermore, Greg Palast had published a FBI memo that confirmed that the FBI was given orders to lay off the bin Laden family during the early months of George W. Bush's rule.[3]

The U.S. media completely ignored these and other reports concerning how the Bush administration had shut down or undermined operations against the bin Laden network initiated by the Clinton administration. An explosive article by Michael Hirsch and Michael Isikoff entitled "What Went Wrong," published in the May 28, 2002, issue of *Newsweek*, however, contained a series of revelations of how the Bush administration had missed signals of an impending attack, and systematically weakened U.S. defenses against terrorism and the bin Laden network. According to the *Newsweek* story, the Clinton administration national security advisor Sandy Berger had become "'totally preoccupied' with fears of a domestic terror attack and tried to warn Bush's new national security advisor Condoleezza Rice of the dangers of a bin Laden attack." But while Rice ordered a security review, "the effort was marginalized and scarcely mentioned in ensuing months as the administration committed itself to other priorities, like National Missile Defense and Iraq."

Moreover, *Newsweek* reported that John Ashcroft, U.S. Attorney General, was eager to set a new right wing law and order agenda and was not focused on the dangers of terrorism, while other Bush administration high officials also had their ideological agendas to pursue at the expense of protecting the country against terror attacks. Ashcroft reportedly shut down wiretaps of Al Qaeda-related suspects connected to the 1998 bombing of African embassies and cut $58 million from a FBI request for an increase in its anti-terrorism budget (while at the same time switching from commercial to government jets for his own personal flight). On September 10, when Ashcroft sent a request for budget increases to the White House, it covered 68 programs, none of them related to counterterrorism. Nor was counterterrorism in a memorandum he sent to his heads of departments stating his seven priorities. According to *Newsweek*, in a meeting with FBI chief Louis Freeh, he rebuffed Freeh's warnings to take terrorism seriously and turned down a FBI request for hundreds of additional agents to be assigned to tracking terrorists.[4] In the *Newsweek* summary:

> It wasn't that Ashcroft and others were unconcerned about these problems, or about terrorism. But the Bushies had an ideological agenda of their own. At the Treasury Department, Secretary Paul O'Neill's team wanted to roll back almost all forms of government intervention, including laws against money laundering and tax havens of the kind used by terror groups. At the Pentagon, Donald Rumsfeld wanted to revamp the military and push his pet project, NMD. Rumsfeld vetoed a request to divert $800 million from missile defense into counterterrorism. The Pentagon chief also seemed uninterested in a tactic for observing bin Laden left over from the Clinton administration: the CIA's Predator surveillance plane. Upon leaving office, the Clintonites left open the possibility of sending the Predator back up armed with Hellfire missiles, which were tested in February 2001. But through the spring and summer of 2001, when valuable intelligence could have been gathered, the Bush administration never launched even an unarmed Predator. Hill sources say DOD [Department of Defense] didn't want the CIA treading on its turf.

A *Time* magazine cover story later in the summer by Michael Elliot, "The Secret History" (Aug. 4, 2002), provides more detail concerning how the Clinton administration had planned a program to attack Al Qaeda in November 2001, when the contested election battle in Florida was raging.

The Clinton administration was not able to implement the plan, however, because "with less than a month left in office, they did not think it appropriate to launch a major initiative against Osama bin Laden." Clinton administration officials claim that Bush's National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was fully informed of this plan, and that Clinton National Security Advisor Sandy Berger stressed the need for a major initiative against bin Laden and Al Qaeda, but nothing was done. Moreover, the head of anti-terrorist operations in the Clinton administration, Richard Clarke, who stayed on for the Bush administration, had himself drawn up the plan and urged its implementation when the Bush team took office. Unfortunately, fighting terrorism was not a priority in the Bush administration, and so the plan for attacks on Al Qaeda went through the usual layers of bureaucracy, finally reaching Bush and his inner circle in early September, too late to prevent the September 11 attacks.

As these revelations unfolded in the summer of 2002, Democrats and others called for blue-ribbon commissions to study intelligence and policy failures that made possible the September 11 terrorist attacks. Republicans, led by Vice President Dick Cheney, predictably attacked the patriotism of anyone who ascribed blame to the U.S. government concerning the September 11 attacks. Moreover, according to Democratic Senate Majority leader Tom Daschle, Cheney had repeatedly urged him not to hold hearings on U.S. policies or failures that led to the September 11 attacks. Bush administration spokespeople attacked as well California Senator Dianne Feinstein who retorted in a memo:

> I was deeply concerned as to whether our house was in order to prevent a terrorist attack. My work on the Intelligence Committee and as chair of the Technology and Terrorism Subcommittee had given me a sense of foreboding for some time. I had no specific data leading to a possible attack.
>
> In fact, I was so concerned that I contacted Vice President Cheney's office that same month [July 2001] to urge that he restructure our counter-terrorism and homeland defense programs to ensure better accountability and prevent important intelligence information from slipping through the cracks.
>
> Despite repeated efforts by myself and staff, the White House did not address my request. I followed this up last September

> 2001 before the attacks and was told by 'Scooter' Libby that it might be another six months before he would be able to review the material. I told him I did not believe we had six months to wait.[5]

This is highly shocking and calls attention to the key responsibility of Vice President Dick Cheney in failing to produce an adequate response to the dangers of terrorism. A year previous, in May 2001, the Bush administration announced that "Vice President Dick Cheney is point man for [the Bush] administration . . . on three major issues: energy, global warming, and domestic terrorism." On a May 19, 2002, episode of *Meet the Press*, Cheney acknowledged that he had been appointed head of a Bush administration task force on terrorism before September 11, and claimed that he had some meetings on the topic. Yet Cheney and others in the Bush administration seemed to disregard several major reports that cited the dangers of terrorist attacks, including congressional reports by former Senators Gary Hart and Howard Rudman in early 2001 that had called for a centralization of information on terrorism, but it appeared that the Bush administration failed to act on these recommendations. Obviously, Cheney concentrated on energy issues to the exclusion of terrorism and should thus be held in part responsible for the Bush administration's ignoring pre-September 11 terrorist threats.[6]

Crucially, plans to use airplanes as vehicles of terrorist attack should have been familiar to the intelligence agencies and to Cheney and the Bush administration. Furthermore, there were many other reports circulating from foreign and domestic intelligence services provided just before the September 11 terror attacks that the U.S. had reason to fear terrorist attacks from the bin Laden network.[7] Thus, there should have been attempts to coordinate intelligence between the various agencies, warnings to the airlines industry regarding potential hijackings, and security alerts to the public to be on the lookout for potential terrorist attacks.

Consequently, serious questions should be raised to the Bush administration, and to the head of their anti-terrorism Task Force Dick Cheney, concerning what they knew and did not know, and what they did and did not do in response to the reports from domestic and foreign intelligence concerning the likelihood of Al Qaeda airplane hijackings and terrorist attacks on the U.S. As head of the Bush administration task force on terrorism, Dick Cheney should be held especially accountable, but so far the media and Democrats

have not raised this issue, and Cheney himself is aggressively attacking anyone who raises such issues as an unpatriotic enemy of state. Obviously, there was no apparent coordination of information on terrorist threats in the Bush administration and if Cheney was head of the task force that was supposed to deal with terrorism, it is disgraceful that he did not establish a group to centralize information, focus more on the dangers of terrorism, and do more to prevent the September 11 attacks.

It therefore appears as I write in summer 2002, that top officials of the Bush administration did little or nothing to protect the U.S. against domestic terror attacks. When confronted with reports that Bush had been advised of impending terror attacks and had not acted on them, Bush was highly indignant, attacking those who criticized him for "second guessing" and engaging in partisan politics. He shrilly retorted that had he known exactly what was to happen, he would have prevented it. This was not, of course, the issue, but rather that of the failure of the Bush administration to take seriously the threats of terrorism and to develop an anti-terror policy. In fact, Bush was on an unprecedentedly long one-month summer vacation at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, when he was briefed on the dangers of looming Al Qaeda attacks, and no one could expect the highly unqualified president-elect to "connect the dots" and see the need to organize the country against domestic terrorist attacks.

Yet the media is also to blame for not focusing more intently on problems of terrorism over the previous decade. During the 1980s, terrorism emerged as a major problem and there were frequently news reports, specials, documentaries, and media discussion of the problem. Yet in the 1990s, the corporate media became increasingly tabloidized, focusing on the O.J. Simpson trial, the Clinton sex scandal, and the other obsessions of the moment. As noted above, major reports on the dangers of terrorism were released without media scrutiny. The Hart-Rudman "Road Map for National Security: Imperative for Change," warning of dangers of a terrorist attack on the U.S., had been released in January 2001 and was ignored by much of the mainstream media, as well as the Bush administration.[8] Instead, there was an obsessive focus on tabloid stories during pre-September 11, 2001 in the mainstream media, such as the disappearance of intern Chandra Levy and her affair with Congressman Bill Condit.

Not surprisingly, many elaborate conspiracy theories emerged alleging U.S. government complicity in the September 11 terror attacks since there were

many unexplained strange elements of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon—and because the Bush administration and military establishment was the main beneficiary of the terror attacks. Additionally, the shocking history of the Bush family to engage in daring and major conspiracies may have contributed to the widespread circulation of allegations concerning U.S. government involvement in the September 11 terror attacks. There are, in fact, three major possibilities to explain Bush administration responsibility or complicity in the September 11 terror attacks: 1) either the Bush administration was completely incompetent and too focused on pushing through its right wing agenda to detect the obvious signs of impending Al Qaeda terror attacks that I have just outlined above; 2) the Bush administration may have known that attacks were indeed coming but welcomed them as a chance to push through its stalled right wing and militarist agenda; or 3) the Bush administration, or rogue sectors of the U.S. government, were actively involved in the conspiracy.[9] As of now, it is impossible to confidently affirm the precise responsibility of the Bush administration for the September 11 attacks, but obviously this is a matter of grave concern and should be thoroughly investigated.

The Bush administration's surprise June 6, 2002, call for a new cabinet-level Homeland Defense agency, however, was seen by critics as an attempt to deflect attention from investigations of Bush administration and intelligence failures. There have been widespread fears that it would increase bureaucracy and even provide the apparatus for a Gestapo-type police state. Indeed, the "USA Patriot Act" pushed through by the Bush administration following September 11 already was erecting the powerful trappings of a police state. It included allowing the government the right to eavesdrop on all electronic and wireless communication, to arrest individuals without specific charges and to hold them indefinitely, to monitor conversations between lawyer and client, and to carry out secret military trials of suspected terrorists.

Moreover, the Bush administration's assault on civil liberties has weakened constitutional democracy and the rule of law in the United States. On August 15, 2002, Human Rights Watch released a report that claimed: "The U.S. government's investigation of the September 11 attacks has been marred by arbitrary detentions, due process violations, and secret arrests." Human Rights Watch discovered that over 1,200 non-citizens were secretly arrested and incarcerated and that "the U.S. government has held some detainees for prolonged periods without charges; impeded their access to counsel; subjected them to coercive interrogations; and overridden judicial orders to

release them on bond during immigration proceedings. In some cases, the government has incarcerated detainees for months under restrictive conditions, including solitary confinement. Some detainees were physically and verbally abused because of their national origin or religion. The vast majority are from Middle Eastern, South Asian, and North African countries. The report describes cases in which random encounters with law enforcement or neighbors' suspicions based on no more than national origin and religion led to interrogation about possible links to terrorism."[10] Yet not only has the Bush administration dangerously undermined the U.S. constitutional order, but their economic policies have produced almost unparalleled economic crisis, scandal, and corruption.

The Bush Reich

The consequences of the Bush administration's failed Terror War policies and domestic policy outrages are frightening. The Bush Reich seems to be erecting an Orwellian totalitarian state apparatus and plunging the world into ongoing war that could generate military and police states domestically and abroad. In his prophetic novel *1984*, George Orwell engaged a grim condition of total warfare in which his fictional state "Oceania" ruled its fearful and intimidated citizens through war, police state terror, surveillance, and the suppression of civil liberties. This constant warfare kept Oceania's citizens in a perpetual situation of mobilization and submission. Further, the Orwellian state controlled language, thought, and behavior through domination of the media, and was thereby able to change the very meaning of language ("war is peace") and to constantly re-write history itself.[11]

Orwell's futuristic novel was, of course, an attack on the Soviet Union and therefore a favorite of conservatives over the years, but it uncannily describes the horrors and dangers of the regime of George W. Bush. Orwell's totalitarian state had a two-way television screen that monitored its citizens' behavior and a system of spies and informers that would report on politically incorrect thought and activity. Bush's police state has its "USA Patriot Act" that enables the state to monitor the communications of e-mail, wireless, telephones, and other media, while allowing the state to arrest citizens without warrants, to hold them indefinitely, to monitor their conversations, and to submit them to military tribunals, all of which would be governed by the dictates of the Supreme Leader (in this case, a dangerously demagogic figure-head, ruled by right wing extremists).

The Bush administration also has its TIPS (Terrorist Information and Prevention System) program that would turn citizens into spies who would report suspicious activities to the government and would recruit truck drivers, mail carriers, meter readers, and others who would "report what they see in public areas and along transportation routes," thus turning workers into informants. In addition, John Ashcroft, U.S. Attorney General, has proposed concentration camps in the U.S. for citizens that he considers "enemy combatants."[12]

With their Orwellian-sounding Office of Homeland Security, proposed Office of Strategic Information, Shadow Government, and "USA Patriot Act," the Bush administration has in place the institutions and apparatus of a totalitarian government. Since the elections in 2000, the Bush clique has practiced a form of Orwellian "Bushspeak" that endlessly repeats the Big Lie of the moment. Bush and his propaganda ministry engage in daily propagandistic spin to push its policies and to slime their opponents, while showing no regard whatsoever for the canons of truth and justice that conservatives have traditionally defended.[13]

To keep the public in a state of fear, Bush and his administration have repeatedly evoked the specter of renewed terrorist attacks and promised an all-out war against an "axis of evil." This threatening "axis," to be defined periodically by the Bush administration, allegedly possesses "instruments of mass destruction" that could be used against the U.S. Almost without exception, the mainstream media have been a propaganda conduit for the Bush administration Terror War and have helped generate fear and even mass hysteria. The mainstream corporate media have thus largely failed to advance an understanding of the serious threats to the U.S. and to the global economy and polity, and to debate the range of possible responses to the September 11 attacks and their respective merits and possible consequences.

The Bush administration Terror War raises the specter that Orwell's *1984* might provide the template of the new millennium, as the world is plunged into endless wars, as freedom and democracy are being snuffed out in the name of freedom, as language loses meaning, and as history is constantly revised (as Bush and his scribes constantly rewrote his own personal history). There is thus the danger that Orwell's dark grim dystopia may replace the (ideological) utopia of the "information society," the "new economy," and a prosperous and democratic globalization that had been the dominant

ideology and vision of the past decade. Questions arise: Will the Bush administration Terror War lead the world to ruin through constant war and the erection of totalitarian police states over the façade of fragile democracy? Or can more multilateral and global solutions be found to the dangers of terrorism that will strengthen democracy and increase the chances for peace and security?

There is indeed a danger that Terror War will be a force of historical regression, and the motor of destruction of the global economy, liberal polity, and democracy itself, all to be replaced by an aggressive militarism and totalitarian police state. It could well be that Orwell will be the prophet of a coming New Barbarism with endless war, state repression, and enforced control of thought and discourse, and that George W. Bush and his minions are the architects of an Orwellian future.

It could also be the case, however, that the Taliban, bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and the Bush administration represent obsolete and reactionary forces that will be swept away by the inexorable forces of globalization and liberal democracy. The opposing sides in the current Terror War of the Bush administration reactionaries and Al Qaeda could be perceived as representing complementary poles of an atavistic and premodern version of Islam and nihilistic terrorism confronted by reactionary right wing conservatism and militarism.[14] In this scenario, both poles can be perceived as disruptive and regressive forces in a global world that need to be overcome to create genuine historical progress. If this is the case, Terror War would be a momentary interlude in which two obsolete historical forces battle it out, ultimately to be replaced by more sane and democratic globalizing forces.

This is, of course, an optimistic scenario and probably, for the foreseeable future, progressive forces will be locked into intense battles against the opposing forces of Islamic terrorism and right wing militarism. Yet if democracy and the human species are to survive, global movements against militarism and for social justice, ecology, and peace must emerge to combat and replace the atavistic forces of the present. As a new millennium unfolds, the human race has regressed into a New Barbarism unforeseeable prior to September 11. If civilization is to survive, individuals must perceive their enemies and organize to fight for a better future.

Consequently, I argue that Bush administration militarism is not the way to fight international terrorism, but is rather the road to an Orwellian future in

which democracy and freedom will be in dire peril and the future of the human species will be in question. These are frightening times and it is essential that all citizens become informed about the fateful conflicts of the present, gain clear understanding of what is at stake, and realize that they must oppose both international terrorism and Bushian militarism and an Orwellian police-state.

Conclusion

September 11, the subsequent Terror War, the Enron scandals and other often-Bush-Cheney-related corporate scandals that emerged during these events and the ongoing misadventures of the Bush administration constitute what I am calling "the New Barbarism." It was scandalous that civilized countries tolerated the Taliban and allowed the bin Laden Al Qaeda network to develop, while the Bush Terror War unleashed new forces of barbarism now evident in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and elsewhere in the world. The term "New Barbarism" denotes frightening historical regression in an era of highly uncivilized and violent behavior. While one would hope that the New Millennium would signal a chance for progress and historical optimism, instead the human species is moving into a situation where the universal values of the Enlightenment, the institutions of democracy, the global economy, and the earth and human species itself are faced with challenges of survival.

As a response to the September 11 terror attacks, the Bush administration has answered with an intensified militarism that threatens to generate an era of Terror War, a new arms race, accelerated military violence, U.S. support of authoritarian regimes, an assault on human rights, constant threats to democracy, and destabilizing of the world economy. The New Barbarism also describes Bush administration practices of providing political favors to its largest corporate and other supporters, unleashing unrestrained Wild West capitalism (exemplified by the Enron scandals), and a form of capitalist cronyism whereby Bush administration family and friends are provided with government favors, while social welfare programs, environmental legislation, and protection of rights and freedoms are curtailed.

The corporate media, especially television, are part and parcel of the New Barbarism, spewing forth almost unopposed propaganda for the Bush administration, fanning war fever and terrorist hysteria, while cutting back

on vigorous political debate and varied sources of information as it produces waves of ideologically conservative talk shows and mindless entertainment. I have been closely tracking the media and the crisis of democracy for over a decade now and the current crisis marks the low point of U.S. media performance. The U.S. corporate media at first fanned the flames of war and hysteria, and then became a conduit for Bush administration and Pentagon propaganda rather than a forum of reasoned debate, serious discussion, exposure of the dangers and failures of Bush administration responses to terrorism, and the exploration of more sane alternatives.

In view of the enormity of the events of September 11, and their frightening aftermath and consequences, it is now appropriate to reflect on what happened, why it happened, and what lessons we can learn as we seek to apply such insights to the crisis that we now find ourselves in. It's a time for intelligence, not knee-jerk reaction, a time for thought and not for hysteria. It's a time for reflection, figuring out what went wrong, and for informed and intelligent action that will get at the source of our problems. It's also a time for stock-taking, taking account individually and collectively of our views of the world, and our everyday behavior. A situation of crisis provides an opportunity for positive change and reconstruction, as well as barbaric regression. Thus, now is the time for reflection on such things as democracy, globalization, and the flaws, limitations, and fallacies in our individual thoughts and actions, as well as problems with U.S. institutions and leadership.

Momentous historical events, like the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the subsequent Terror War, test social theories and provide a challenge to give a convincing account of the events and their consequences. They also provide cultural studies an opportunity to trace how political and ideological discourses, propaganda, and mythologies play themselves out in media discourse and representations. Major historical events and media spectacles also provide an opportunity to examine how the broadcast and other dominant modes of communication perform or fail to perform their democratic role of providing accurate information and discussion.

Quite possibly we will never know exactly what happened in the Afghanistan war. I published one of the first books on the Gulf War (Kellner 1992), largely based on Internet sources, the newspapers of record, press conference transcripts, and other government material available on the Internet. I followed closely subsequent memoirs of military participants in the war,

journalists providing first-person accounts, and other studies. But no definitive history of the Gulf War has yet emerged, and we still do not know all of the shadowy details of relations between George Bush and Saddam Hussein, of why Iraq invaded Kuwait and what knowledge the U.S. did or did not have of Iraqi plans, how the U.S. orchestrated the Gulf War, or what actually happened. Yet it is always possible to expose the fallacies and holes in official accounts, to expose lies and disinformation, and to provide contextualization and interpretations of major historical events like the Gulf War, the September 11 terror attacks, and the Afghanistan war.

I would argue that a combination of critical social theory and cultural studies can help illuminate the September events, their causes, effects, and importance in shaping the contemporary moment. Certainly, the terror spectacle of those events is one of the major media and political events of our day and interpreting the affair and its aftermath provides crucial insight into the dynamics and conflicts of the present era. The subsequent Terror War appears to be the major ongoing spectacle of the new millennium that the Bush administration is using to promote its agenda and to build up the U.S. military as a hegemonic force, creating the "new world order" that George Bush had wanted to create at the end of the Gulf War. As envisaged by the second Bush administration, Terror War is projected as the defining feature of the new millennium for the foreseeable future.

Notes

[1] While the Bush administration propaganda war was immensely successful at home, garnering support for its Afghanistan war from 85-90% of those polled, a number of polls done in the Arab and Muslim worlds revealed a striking lack of support for U.S. policies, and the majority polled did not even believe that Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network were responsible for the September 11 terror attacks. However one explains this, it is clear, as I will attempt to show in this study, that the Bush administration failed miserably in its efforts to communicate and improve relations with the Arab and Muslim world. For a variety of polls on Arab attitudes toward the U.S. pre- and post-September 11, see http://www.zogby.com/main.cfm. For the 2002 Gallup Poll on the Islamic world, see http://www. gallup.com/poll/summits/islam.asp. For a PEW poll that cites growing European criticism and distance from Bush administration policies, see the PEW institute's report "Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Foreign Policy Issues" that concludes: "The survey revealed considerable European support for taking a more independent course in security and diplomatic affairs. Majorities in France, Germany and Italy think Western Europe's partnership with the United States should not be as close as it has been in the past. People in Great Britain are divided on the question. European support for a more independent approach is not especially linked to negative reactions to recent U.S. policies, such as the steel tariffs. Rather, it is more associated with general criticism of President Bush, the feeling that the United States has ignored allied interests in conducting the war on terrorism, and general disapproval of U.S. policies in the Middle East" (see http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=153).

[2] For the Gore report, see http://www.fas.org/irp/threat /212fin~1.html; for the Hart-Rudman report, see http://www.nssg.gov/News/news.htm and for the Bremer National Commission on Terrorism report, see http://w3.access.gpo.gov/nct. See also "1999 Report Warned of Suicide Hijack," *Associated Press*, May 17, 2001.

[3] See Greg Palast, "FBI and U.S. Spy Agents Say Bush Spiked bin Laden Probes Before September 11." *The Guardian* (Nov. 7, 2001). Palast's article is collected on his home page that has a lot of other interesting reports on Bush administration activities; see http://www.gregpalast.com. See also "U.S. agents told: Back off bin Ladens" at http://old.smh.com.au/news/0111/07/world/world100.html.

[4] In "Ashcroft Knew," Bruce Shapiro names Ashcroft "the official responsible for the most dramatic failures of September 11" (*Salon*, May 23, 2002). Ashcroft will indeed emerge as one of the villains of this article, in part because of his stunning incompetence and failures to address the dangers of terrorism due to his fanatic obsession with pushing through a right wing law and order agenda. But Ashcroft also carried out the most systematic assault on civil liberties in U.S. history and emerges as a clear and present danger to constitutional democracy. Yet in my reading, it is the collective responsibility of the Bush administration that failed to heed warnings of imminent terror attacks and its systematically carrying out policies that made them more likely.

[5] The Feinstein memo is found at http://www.senate.gov/~feinstein/ Releases02/attacks.htm.

[6] See *CBS News*, "New Terror Task Force. Cheney To Lead at Terrorist Threats to U.S.," May 8, 2001. A June 30, 2001, CNN report headlined: "Cheney is point man for administration," noting that Cheney would be in charge of task forces on three major issues:

energy, global warming, and domestic terrorism." On May 11, the website http://www.disasterrelief.org also posted a report that states: "Bush asked Vice President Dick Cheney to lead the task force, which will explore how attacks against U.S. citizens or personnel at home and overseas may be detected and stopped." To prevent future terror attacks on the U.S., it would thus be highly important to see exactly what Cheney did or did not do and address the problems revealed.

[7]The *Frankfurter Allgemine Zeitung* reported on September 14 2002that German intelligence sources had gathered warnings from the Echelon spy system that Middle Eastern terrorists were "planning to hijack commercial aircraft to use as weapons to attack important symbols of American and Israeli culture" and had passed the warnings to the U.S. government. On Israeli intelligence warning the U.S. of terrorist networks sneaking into the U.S. for attacks, see "Officials Told of 'Major Assault' Plans," *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 20, 2001. Carolyn Kay has assembled scores of material from Russian, Israeli, German, U.S. and other intelligence sources warning that a major domestic terrorist attack was about to unfold against the U.S., but Cheney, the Bush administration, and the national security apparatus failed to respond or prepare for the impending attacks, see http://makethemaccountable.com/whatwhen/index.html; see also Russ Kirk, "September 11, 2001: No Surprise" for an analysis of a myriad of sources signaling the September 11 terror attacks (http://www.loompanics.com/Articles/September 11.html).

[8] See Harold Evans, "What We Knew: Warning Given . . . Story Missed. How a Report on Terrorism Flew Under the Radar," *Columbia Journalism Review* (Nov-Dec. 2001). Evans points out that the Bush administration blocked planned Congressional Hearings on the Hart-Rudman report in May 2001, instead "forming its own committee, headed by Dick Cheney, who was expected to report in October." Even former Republican House Majority leader and conservative ideologue Newt Gingrich concedes, "The [Bush] administration actually slowed down response to Hart-Rudman when momentum was building in the spring."

[9] For previous accounts of Bush family conspiracies, see Kellner 1990, 1992, and 2001. Major conspiracy sites for September 11 include Michael Rupert's http://www.fromthewilderness.com; the Emperor's Clothes site at http://www.tenc.net, and the compendium of conspiracy theories collected at the Global Research site at http://www.globalresearch.ca. The best-selling French conspiracy book by Thierry Meyssan was reportedly being translated into English as *9-11, the Big Lie*.

[10] See Human Rights Watch report, "Presumption of Guilt: Human Rights Abuses of Post-September 11 Detainees," at: http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/08/usdetainess081502.htm.

[11] For a discussion of Orwell's prophetic novel, see Kellner 1990; in the light of the Bush administration projected Terror War, however, it could well be Orwell and not Huxley and Marcuse, as I argue in the article cited here, who provide the most prescient templates of the future present.

[12] See Jonathan Turley, "Camps for Citizens: Ashcroft's Hellish Vision." *Los Angeles Times* (Aug. 14, 2002). U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft was awarded the annual 1984 award for "Worst Government Official" by Privacy International. The watchdog group said the top U.S. law enforcement officer "is responsible for a massive increase in wiretapping of phones and other electronics and for the imprisonment without charge of as many as 1,200 people in the United States after the Sept. 11 attacks on America." See Reuters (April 19, 2002).

[13] See Kellner 2001 for documentation and systematic critique of Bushspeak.

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[14] Tariq Ali captures this dialectic in his book *The Clash of Fundamentalisms* (2002), whose cover pictures George W. Bush shading into the visage of Osama bin Laden, two fundamentalists whose families had long been linked in shady business practices and who personally represented the competing fundamentalisms of the ongoing Terror War.

Stanley Aronowitz

Class Rules: Utopia On Hold

by
Stanley Aronowitz

"Nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history"

Walter Benjamin

History and Memory

History is written by the victors. They define what counts as history, what is remembered and what is forgotten, what is important and what is not and, most crucially, what is usable for informing the relationship of the present with the future. As Walter Benjamin has noted, an important element in the class struggle is to reclaim history for the excluded by capturing historical memory from the rulers. What is worth remembering in the first place, are the "crude struggles" for material things: "The class struggle . . . is a fight for the crude and material things without which no refined and spiritual things could exist. Nevertheless it is not in the form of spoils which fall to the victor that the latter make their presence felt in the class struggle. They manifest themselves in this struggle, as courage, honor, cunning and fortitude. They have retroactive force and will constantly call in question every victory, past and present, of the rulers. As flowers turn toward the sun, by dint of a secret heliotropism, the past strives to turn toward the sun which is rising in the sky of history."

From the perspective of the rulers, framing the past by focusing on events and personalities removes movements from below from consideration. Thus we conveniently talk of the "framers" as the "great men" of the American constitution and virtually identical with the rise of the American nation. Playwrights and historians tell the story of the French Revolution in terms of the conflict between the Crown and the "third" estate, an unspecific conglomeration of commoners, but speak of the days of the first Republic as an internal conflict of two great revolutionary leaders: Robsepierre and Danton; in turn, the post-revolutionary decades in France are called the

"Napoleonic" era, and our image of the period is intimately bound up with the personality of its main protagonist.

Most historians capture the essence of the Civil War by referring to Lincoln's heroic act of freeing the slaves and, as we have already seen, "Roosevelt's" New Deal is grasped as the context for Depression-era reform. Ronald Reagan's rise to the presidency helps explain the "Reagan Revolution" of the last two decades of twentieth century when the doctrine of minimum federal government disguised the fact that his administration was one of the most profligate spenders in recent American history. Hans Zinnser noted that biography replaces social commentary—in fact it is the preferred form of any political discourse—and also displaces the novel as the main literary genre that illuminates the social and historical roots of our time. Of course the rulers rarely speak for themselves; their perspective is filtered through the political directorate and the intellectuals who rewrite history. The relation between them is not one of command but elective affinity. For it is intellectuals who elaborate the "imagined community" of the nation-state and history is among their main weapons.

The elite universities are the incubators of the "organic" intellectuals of ruling classes as well as the opposition. The intellectual opposition contests the main narrative on several planes: among them it proposes a different past than that promulgated by the leading institutions of collective memory, chiefly the book, the school and popular media. And they elaborate a cultural and social imagination that contradicts prevailing common sense. So in the last half of the twentieth century, radical democrats have, through meticulous archival investigation, attempted to demonstrate that history was made from below, and made a large difference in the way we live now. The degree to which their effort succeeds depends less on the talent of the historian or the uncovered facts than on the whether the subordinate classes are contesting power.

Flushed with victory over its ideological as well as economic and military opponents, rulers and their ideologists are prone to declare that their regime stands at the end of the evolution of human societies. Just as Voltaire satirized Pangloss who declared pre-revolutionary France the "best of all possible worlds," Francis Fukuyama's declaration of "the end of history," arriving on the heels of the collapse of the Soviet Union and its client states, is surely one of the most significant intellectual events of the 1990s. (Even before the collapse his celebrated article published in 1989 provided

economic liberals and political conservatives with a Grand Narrative which, despite its conservative worldview, refuses to succumb to ordinary left-bashing.) On the contrary, as Jacques Derrida observes, his account of the demise of "actually existing socialism" of the Soviet variety is a form of mourning insofar as, under the sign of liberal democratic capitalism, the future is bound to have the characteristics of everyday banality.

For Fukuyama, Communism was more than an "evil empire" in Ronald Reagan's simplistic terms. Although as a force of evil it endowed humankind with the gift of undergoing an epochal struggle worthy of Hegel's fight to the death between the dominator and dominated. Fukuyama's essay set the terms of the debate: What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such; that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western Liberal Democracy as the final form of human government.

In place of theories that separate capitalism from liberal democracy he makes them indissoluble: the traditional distinction between economics and politics—the inside/outside separation that often propels significant social change—is denied. In conjoining capitalism and democracy, the "others" of the now-eclipsed revolutionary epoch—the radical left, the Third World, the permanently wretched of the earth—have disappeared before the ideological as much as the economic hegemony of the capitalist market. For Fukuyama, hegemony justifies erasure. History need not record the persistence of mass unemployment, widespread poverty and spreading diseases that afflict billions. Although still striving for the Good Life, those who were in full-throated rebellion against colonialism and capitalism just thirty years ago now vie for favors from the institutions of world capitalism and are rewarded to the extent they agree to open their nations to private investment and trade and impose austerity on their citizens so long as their country is in debt to Western banks. But Fukuyama's blithe assumption that liberal democracy is an entailment of markets grates against the stark reality that the planet is littered with nations which have adopted capitalist economic relations which are supported by repressive states. The new world order does not require that states agree to evolve into liberal democracies and one of its traditional entailments, human rights—witness the recent admission of China into the WTO.

Mixed in with exhilaration, Fukuyama judged the twentieth century's communist revolutions as well as its ideological inspiration, Marxism, as a massive failure. In concert with earlier prophets of endings, notably Daniel Bell, whose influential *End of Ideology* announced the eclipse of class and ideological politics. Fukuyama acknowledges that there are still conflicts, but no contradictions; present and future battles have no historicity. Social formations will fight for greater shares of the expanding pie and cultural differences will endure. Some societies will remain mired in backwardness owing to the strength of their premodern cultural traditions such as religious fundamentalism and the patriarchies that sustain them, and are doomed to dwell outside the modern world. What is forever gone are the epochal revolutionary struggles that punctuated almost the entire twentieth century that vowed to abolish capitalist social relations and establish collective or, more accurately, state ownership of the means of industrial and agricultural production.

But even before the collapse of the Berlin Wall it was evident to many that the dream of a communist utopia had given way to dystopia. As the Soviet system entered its long descent, many who had been inspired by its early triumphs recognized that the present did not forecast a different future for humanity. Instead of hope for a better world, we are condemned to go through life without "impossible" dreams. By the dawn of the twenty-first century, even if some parties calling themselves Communist remained in power, their "experiment" in the abolition of private property, state-owned means of production, and largely non-market modes of exchange have, in a large measure, given way to private property and the capitalist market. And the dream of radical democracy, in which the major institutions of society would be controlled by committees elected by workers and other citizens in the workplace and in the neighborhoods, and enjoyed a flicker of life in the Paris Commune of 1871, reinforced by the formation of workers councils in the 1905 Russian revolution, and was the benchmark of many general strikes from Seattle in 1919 to the May events in France almost a half century later, seems to belong to a bygone era. No organized force—except the growing battalions of anarchist, anti-globalization activists—maintains even the dream of a radical democratic future.

China's embrace of capitalist market modernity initiated in 1978, a few years after the death of Mao, has been only partial: as it entered global markets, opening its doors to foreign private investment, downsized its state-owned industrial and agricultural enterprises and created a huge private capitalist

sector. And as recently as 2001, the Communist Party considered admitting private employers into its ranks, a proposal that was finally thwarted by the whisper of a dying tradition that only workers, peasants and intellectuals can belong in the party. But in China, liberal democracy, let alone radical democracy, remains a distant shore. One-party rule, the policy of large-scale enclosures in the countryside that have driven more than 100 million peasants from their ancestral lands, state imposed human rights violations such as the suppression of the student protest at Tiananmen square, continued imprisonment of vocal dissenters, and severe press and media restrictions, attest to the persistence of authoritarian rule.

Russia, by far the largest nation in the former Soviet orbit, has experienced a precipitous decline of living standards. Under the influence of Harvard and Chicago neo-liberal economists, its first post-Soviet president, former-Moscow Communist leader Boris Yeltsin swiftly dismantled many state enterprises and handed them over to ex-communist managers who have, characteristically, milked their assets for private gain. Meanwhile, plagued by poverty, rampant alcoholism and heavy pollution—the legacy of Soviet-era industrialization distortions—infant and adult mortality rates have skyrocketed. Russia's infant mortality is the highest in Europe. An average Russian man can expect to live 55 years, a drop by ten years since the Soviet collapse. Income inequality between the new capitalist class created with government support and the impoverished working class approaches that of the United States, but without the lure of consumer society to allay popular anger. As a result, the Communist Party which, in the immediate aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union had been discredited, regained considerable ground in the last half of the 1990s and is today the largest party in the Duma, although its program dare not speak the name of socialist revolution. In effect, the party has, at least for the time being, accepted the political framework of liberal democracy, as have the leading socialist and communist parties of Europe, Japan and Latin America.

The core of Fukuyama's theory is his appropriation of Hegel's philosophy of history. For Fukuyama, no less than Hegel, the end of history is an imaginary resolution of the dialectic of labor for it posits what remains to be shown: that in liberal democratic societies, at the workplace as much as civil society, employer and worker, citizen and ruler, are placed on a sufficiently equal footing to assure mutual recognition. Marx criticized Hegel for

bringing history to an end: on the one hand, Hegel correctly describes the dialectic of labor which brings the worker to the point of consciousness but refused to remain faithful to his own dialectical logic which demands the overcoming of the contradiction between lord and bondsman. On the other hand, Marx's critique extended to Hegel's conception of the state. Fourteen years after the *Phenomenology*, Hegel published his second version of the end of history, *The Philosophy of Right*, whose main thesis is that the contradictions within the family and civil society—between men, women and children, and between owners of commodities (including capitalists and workers)—are incapable of resolution within their respective spheres; the state arises to resolve their contradictions on the basis of the self-recognition by citizens that they cannot bring harmony to human affairs without the negation of their sovereignty by a higher power.

Even as he celebrates the end of utopia, that is, of creative history in which the idea of a revolutionary future informs the present and inspires people to take action against hierarchy and domination, Fukuyama exhibits not a little nostalgia for the years when capitalism trembled at the prospect of socialist revolution and, during the Cold War, devoted most of its economic, political and ideological energy to "containment" of the perceived Soviet threat to western capitalism. Now that Communism has been defeated, what remains is to clean up the debris left by premodern and antediluvian regimes. Accordingly, this debris includes the arduous tasks associated with bringing liberal democracy to totalitarian and authoritarian Third World societies like those that are strewn throughout Africa and the Middle East.

Fukuyama interprets the Gulf War and the post-September 11 United States' anti-terrorist campaign that began with overthrow of the Taliban government in Afghanistan not as a repudiation of the end of history thesis, but a vindication; but only if these states evolve into capitalist democracies from their recent totalitarian past, an eventuality that, even for the most devout conservatives, is highly dubious. Answering his critics who claim that the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, refute his claim, Fukuyama insists that "modernity is a very powerful freight train that will not be derailed by recent events, however painful. . . . We remain at the end of history because there is only one system that will dominate world politics, that of the liberal democratic west."

Judging from post-communist and postcolonial experience, the burden of proof is on those who celebrate the triumph of the West and claim that

capitalism is an entailment of liberal democracy. Certainly any concept of economic democracy is missing from most capitalist countries. For capitalism without democracy seems as prevalent as the conservative claim that they are mutually dependent. The easy refutation is to adduce evidence that gross inequality remains in much of the world. Reliable statistics show that a third of the global working population is unemployed or underemployed. Billions suffer poverty and hunger and this condition is especially widespread among children. In dozens of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America the mortality rate among children of all ages in far larger than in Russia and the gap between life expectancy in the North is much larger than in the global South. Workplaces in most of what are termed "developing" countries are often marked by physical coercion of workers, long working hours, unsafe working environments and abysmally low wages. Workers subjected to these conditions have responded by staging mass strikes in Korea, Mexico, Brazil, China and many other countries. Some strike leaders have been murdered or imprisoned for attempting to withhold their labor.

But factual refutations have failed to penetrate public discourse for Fukuyama, who is often invited to address global financial organizations such as the World Bank and IMF, who has crafted an ideology that has become the new common sense. Ideological hegemony trumps facts, which lacking the weight of political resistance, empirical counterclaims are ignored. If those who control the means of information and public communication have determined that resistance to global neo-liberalism and its practical consequences is only residual, rear guard action by desperate people destined to be brought into the liberal capitalist camp, even when reported as news, is rarely given the significance accorded to a genuine opposition

It does not matter that few in the general population even know who Fukuyama is. What counts as political truth is the embrace of his concepts. He is an organic intellectual of the new world order; his constituency is, in the first place, the managers of the global ruling bloc and then his fellow intellectuals of whatever persuasion. And the measure of its dissemination is the degree to which those who would oppose his motives have, nevertheless adopted the line of "endings." Left intellectuals such as Russell Jacoby confirm this common sense when they write, ruefully, of the "end" of utopia. Other erstwhile intellectual radicals, notably Sean Wilentz, Paul Berman, Michael Kazin, Todd Gitlin and many others who are resigned to the prevailing framework, would vehemently deny their complicity with the "end" ideology or of history, but spare few occasions to bash those who refuse

to recognize the ineluctability of the liberal consensus or, more exactly, to the populist faith in electoral or statistical majorities. Thus, some of these writers condemned their fellow intellectuals who supported the anti-corporate 2000 presidential campaign of Ralph Nader on the grounds that, in Florida and a few other states, his votes had defeated the Democrat and, in effect, elected George Bush. This is not the place to rehash the issues in that event. I invoke the controversy merely to indicate the degree to which the conception of anti-utopian liberal democracy frames the political strategies of a growing number of left intellectuals whose oppositional fire has been tempered by political pessimism.

Has the distinction between inside and outside been overrun by modernity? Put another way, has the "other" of modern societies upon which a possible radical future is always based, disappeared? Fukuyama assumes, as did all modernity theorists of the Cold War era, that actually existing socialist countries could not withstand the "freight train" of an economically and politically superior liberal capitalism. That is, once having embarked on the road to industrialization which entails technological innovation, mass consumer society and broad educational opportunities that enables a substantial portion of the population to attain class mobility, these societies could not long resist the inevitability of the capitalist market and of liberal democracy. The events of the last fifteen years appear to confirm this judgement. The fabled popularity of Calvin Klein jeans, television, e-mail and other ornaments of American culture in the most economically starved Third World nations seems to attest to the inevitability of capitalist culture, if not freedom. If consumer culture is present, can the economic and political relations that sustain and follow from it be far behind?

Or does the new global context portend new forms of struggle which may lead to new institutions and social arrangements? While it is typical of modernity boosters to code terrorism as "premodern," it is more plausible to view its rise as a symptom of the incompleteness of modernity or even as a sign of its failure. Perhaps we may understand terrorism, which is always the strategy of the weak in the face of a global system that ratifies economic and political domination, as a wake-up call. Surely there is no justification for acts of terrorism that punish innocent civilians for the calumnies perpetrated by transnational ruling classes in alliance with local and regional despots. But it is unlikely that military reprisals, however legitimate they may be for an aggrieved nation to undertake, will solve more than the surface of the issues that produced terrorism in the first place. A mighty military machine may be

able to smoke Osama bin Laden and his associates from their holes or crush thousands of Palestinians into the dust. The more urgent question is whether Western powers and their allies in the developing world have the capacity to take measures to overcome the blatant inequalities that mark the world system and have fomented forms of resistance, including terrorism, that often emanate from religious fundamentalism throughout the developing world as well as the metropoles—the leading nations and corporations that rule the empire.

There is mounting evidence to show that new challenges face a triumphant West not only from the Southern and Eastern world where development problems and economic and social inequality have become nearly intractable, but also from semi-peripheral societies where economic crisis is born, in part, from their own relatively successful but distorted development, which can be attributed to the effects of their subordination to globalization. In many of these semi-peripheral societies such as Argentina and Brazil, the economic and political crisis is already tearing at the social fabric and threatening political stability. The late 1990s were marked by a resurgence of both left and right movements which emphatically denied the ideology of endings. The emergence of new social movements and those of so-called "anti-globalism"—really the resistance to the attempt to establish the new world order—is grounded in the widespread perception and well as scientific evidence that the planet's ecosystems are in serious trouble, that capitalist globalization has sharpened inequality, not only in economic and political systems but in the everyday lives of masses of people, and that the predominant western style of "tinkering" is simply failing to adequately address the apocalyptic implications of the situation.

In power, at least temporarily, the right in the United States has responded to the interlocking economic and social crises of the system by testing the limits of liberal democracy. Congress lost no time after September 11 passing the Patriot Act which severely restricts immigrant rights and extends these restrictions to citizens who may criticize the war policies of the government. After two months of investigation seeking a tie to Islamic terrorism or to Saddam Hussein, the villain of the Gulf War, American security agencies concluded that the anthrax attacks in the aftermath of September 11 had been conducted not from central Asian terrorists but probably from elements of the American right. Bombings and threats to legal abortion clinics, anti-Semitic defacements and intimidation of native and immigrant residents of

Middle Eastern and Central Asian citizens and residents were indications that despite early White House pleadings, anti-immigrant sentiment was rising.

The Ideology of Endings

The fundamental defect of the ideology of endings whose explicit assumption is that class and class struggle are relics of a bygone era, lies not only in the action-critique posed by social movements to this mode of reasoning, but in the view that history has a fixed definition that precedes its making. Like the preponderance of Marxist thinkers, Fukuyama agrees that history consists exclusively of epochal change. And epochal change means a transformation in ownership of productive property and the political and juridical relations that emanate from the economic infrastructure. Given the sweep of Fukuyama's concept of history and its finality, anything short of revolution that seizes and holds state power in the image of great evolutionary transformation from one stage to another is consigned to modernity's housekeeping. There will always be "hotspots," military action to discipline or topple rogue regimes will continue to be part of the new world order's police-keeping function, but capitalism, according to this thinking, has overcome all threats to its existence.

Here I advance the idea that through their practices, "history" is constantly being made by humans, and not necessarily in terms that can be identified with the idea of progress. History is made when, through self-constitution, the subordinate classes succeed in changing the mode of life in significant ways. That these changes rarely involve transformations in the ownership of productive property does not disqualify them from being historic. Moreover, rulers make history when they are able to abrogate previous gains made by insurgent social formations and return to some previous time. In this sense Nietzsche's comment that nothing disappears but, instead, returns to bite us, is entirely vindicated by current events. The form of the return is never identical to its previous incarnation but it is recognizable as the past. Whether lurking or not, it is not ordained that history proceeds in cycles, as Arnold Toynbee and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. have claimed. Making history is a creative act, but is constrained, in part, by conditions already in existence. Since change is self-generated by social formations, it is always different in many respects; it is always new.

What is at issue is: What counts as "history?" Are the innumerable changes that occur in everyday life wrought by the actions of people creating their own environments or struggling to preserve their self-created forms of association that are frequently disrupted by political decisions over which they have little control, by war and war preparations, and by changes in the economic conditions, historical? Thus, when feminist and black freedom movements lay claim to have "made" history by changing the terms of political, social and cultural relations, especially in law and everyday life, these are viewed by theorists of modernity—left as well as right—as reforms that "correct" certain inequalities but fail to change things in any fundamental way? Do the vast changes that have occurred in the technologies of information and communications which have transformed much of industrial production, business administration and, equally striking, the everyday lives of hundreds of millions of people over the last half of the twentieth century amount to real history? Scientifically-based technological innovations such as the computer, laser technologies, genetic engineering and new modes of organization linked to them, constitute nothing less than an historical break with the past.

Geographic vertigo has become a way of life for many among us. Moreover, the idea that we are born, raised, raise our own families, and work in the same city or town or even region for most of our lives, is rapidly becoming an expectation of fewer people. For it is not only rural China or Mexican and Brazilian peasant regions that are in upheaval: the whole of humanity, including those in the United States, are frequently obliged to leave their dwellings and consequently are experiencing a loss of the sense of place.

Social and biographical time is different, as well. In contrast to a half century ago when, typically, a child spent eleven to thirteen years in school and only a small fraction attended college, more than half of the young people in the United States attend school for as much as twenty years. We enter the full-time paid labor force as adults later than in the past, and for this reason, remain unmarried and often without children longer. While many of our predecessors became parents before age 20—and some people still do—the age of parenting is older than at any time in history. It is not uncommon for women to have their first child in their late 30s or early 40s, a condition that reduces the chances they will be able to retire from paid labor before reaching seventy. Perhaps equally important— since we can't earn a living performing only one job, or working eight hours a day, more of us take on two jobs; industrial workers accept all the overtime they can get just to pay the bills, so

that life is experienced as work without end. Many professionals and managers take their work home and spend the time once reserved for "rest"—the necessary duration of reproduction of our physical and mental capacities—working into the night. As a result, we have become a nation of pill poppers because many of us suffer from severe stress due to overwork born of mounting bills amid job insecurity

Of course this brief catalogue of temporal and spatial anxiety still requires explanation. The optimism of modernity theory is belied by its performance on the ground. And from the rise of religious fundamentalism, at home as well as abroad, to its rejection by some societies and cultures, the events of September 11 have revealed how profound is the discontent fomented by modernity's new form, globality. We can no longer remain indifferent to what is happening thousands of miles beyond the water's edge. Some will interpret this imperative to mean that we must reconcile ourselves to permanent war, to long-term sacrifice in our public goods and our living standards, to indefinite surrender of our liberty. Others, notably the leader of the AFL-CIO, are not convinced that workers should surrender their living standards in the corporate interest. Speaking at the AFL-CIO convention in December 2001, its president John Sweeney, condemned these assumptions. While praising U.S. foreign policy in the war in Afghanistan, he said: "In the months ahead, we must take the offensive in a war here at home. President Bush and his administration are doing an excellent job of waging war on the terrorists and we commend them for that. But at the same time, he and his corporate backers are waging a vicious war on working families . . . and we condemn them for that."

Sweeney called on organized labor to resist the administration's austerity policies, including severe cuts in education and health care. But if the past is any guide, these sentiments will be expressed mainly in electoral rather than direct action.

Are populations destined to permanent migration? Is a life without genuine and enduring social ties to be endured as the inevitable price of capitalism's economic viability? There are still parts of the world where the whole population treasures long periods of social time away from paid labor. For example, from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic and Aegean seas large sections of the nations of Southern Europe and of North Africa have held fast

to cultural traditions that provide two or three hour lunch periods, strictly prohibit most Sunday store and factory labor and have enacted laws that mandate five or six week annual vacations for the whole working population. That this culture of self-controlled time is under assault from global capitalism testifies to one of its fundamental aims: to break social practices that resist accumulation, social practices that safeguard workers' health, preserve the elements of conviviality and maintain a measure of horizontal social relationships that are independent of capital's logic and sometimes constitute the glue for collective action against capital investment that results in the destruction of cities and towns and destroys the ties of community life. The idea of progress is supplemented by that of cost containment. While those whose admiration for modernity is unconditional may snort that sentiment must not be permitted, to stand in the way of progress and point out that the old ways tend to perpetuate material deprivation, it must be pointed out that predictions to the contrary notwithstanding, capital has not succeeded in melting "all that is solid . . . into air."

The United States is, perhaps, the leading society, organized almost entirely according to capital's logic. Not the least of its accomplishments is to have turned work from a necessity for life, into a way of life. Capital's once severely contested historic doctrine of boundless work-time has overtaken the efforts of the labor movement and of workers themselves to institute a different ethic. The fifty-year struggle, begun in the 1880s for shorter hours, exemplified in the American labor movement's pioneering fight for the eight-hour day, was once a beacon to labor throughout the world. Through mass strikes, demonstrations, and public statements Labor urgently called upon Congress and employers to accede to labor's demand. Finally, after rejecting the Black Bill which mandated a six hour day introduced by Alabama Senator Hugo Black and passed by the Senate, Congress enacted the wages and hours law in 1938 which embodied a severely modified version. It provided for time and a half pay after forty hours but did not extend this regulation to the working day. It was left to collective bargaining agreements to improve on this framework.

Still, the concept of limits on working time had been established. By the 1980s, this stricture was in ruins. The labor movement was no longer the bastion of shorter hours, as a combination of coercion and cultural shifts prompted many to climb aboard the non-stop workhouse. Indeed, we are in the throes of "24/7"—the sign of work without end—where everyone is always on call. Many people walk around all day, every day with beepers and

cell phones. This is the era of the 24-hour supermarket, of Sunday store openings. If the law provides for six national holidays, they are honored in the breach as much as their observance and nobody protests.

But labor's acquiescence was not secured mostly by persuasion. After the onset of world economic instability in the 1970s, capital launched an offensive which still reverberates today. With the "Reagan Revolution," capital openly threatened labor with joblessness in the form of capital flight to greener domestic as well as foreign venues when workers struck or otherwise protested against its demands for "flexibility," a key precept of neo-liberal economics. Flexibility entailed wage and benefits cuts, enforced overtime, relaxation or repeal of hard-won work rules to facilitate the reorganization of the labor process by piling more tasks on workers. To this must be added the efforts by conservatives to roll back the once formidable welfare state or social wage. After nearly two decades of retreat, at the turn of the twenty-first century, despite indications that some in organized labor, among movements of the aging, and in the black freedom movement, were gearing up for battle, it is plain that a new culture of subordination had taken root.

The culture was grounded more in fear than in the so-called work ethic. For the love of labor has never been prevalent among working people; the idea of work as a redemptive activity is the imposition of a quasi-religious morality from the state and its ideological apparatuses, especially schools and the media, and of their intellectuals. The heavy hand of neo-liberal economics was felt widely after Ronald Reagan fired 11,000 striking air traffic controllers in August 1981. This bold stroke was followed by a series of employer demands for concessions from union and non-union workers. At first many locals resisted these demands: in the mid-1980s, Stacey, Caterpillar, and American Home Products workers in Decatur, Illinois, struck to preserve their gains. In Austin, Minnesota, Hormel's meatpackers struck when the company demanded wage reductions, a measure that was supported by their international union. Continental Airlines management took a long strike by unionized workers but succeeded in breaking the union for fifteen years. In nearly all instances where they stood up against concession bargaining, union militants were defeated in part because their national unions were unprepared for the intensity of the employer offensive and intimated by the conservative political climate, and for these reasons became habituated to granting concessions to the employers.

Meanwhile, the class struggle raged unabated: employers still fiercely opposed union organization and capital flight left many communities bereft and hopeless. The boom didn't deter neo-liberals from welfare state dismantling, and they forced Bill Clinton to repeal income supports for the long-term unemployed when he signed the Welfare Reform Act in the face of the 1996 election. And, for the overwhelming majority, concession bargaining and betrayal still fresh in memory, risk-taking was not on their agenda. Wages stagnated as the long economic boom of the 1990s was not accompanied by a concomitant rise in real wages. Month by month, year after year, the conservative chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, Alan Greenspan gloated that wage restraint acted to moderate inflation and keep interest rates lower than would have been necessary if workers had done what they nearly always did before—initiate a wave of mass strikes to take advantage of the boom. Stricken by fear, many raised their incomes by putting in fifty, sixty even seventy-hour work weeks where, at least in durable goods such as auto, steel and electrical industries, their gross pay often approached $80-100 thousand a year.

During the 1980s and 1990s, America was at work. Women entered the paid labor force in record numbers; by the end of the decade, more than two thirds of adult women were holding part or full-time jobs or were looking for paid work. Some men said they were happy to be making enough money to pay bills and send their kids to college, and a few preferred the comradeship of the shop floor to the tensions they found at home. But the unpaid labor of homemaking and child rearing did not abate. What Arlie Hochchild termed the "double shift" became a new source of discontent among women. Of course, noting the burden that women have been obliged to assume does not speak to the conservative call to return women to the home. In addition to economic necessity, women entered the paid labor force in the quest for financial independence and to have the opportunity to acquire technical and professional credentials. Women who have the means to support themselves and their children are less likely to submit to the unreasonable demands of their husbands because they have freed themselves from dependency. Moreover, that more than half of American women hold jobs strengthens their argument that household tasks be shared by their partners. It has also resulted in a rising divorce rate and placed women in a better position to resist male violence in the household because they have the option to exit.

The conjunction of recession and war in the fall of 2001 accelerated the attack against workers' rights and hard-won gains. When 1,000 teachers struck for pay and to preserve their health benefits in Middletown, New Jersey, parents sided with the courts which quickly jailed more than 100 teachers for violating a state law prohibiting strikes by public employees. The teachers and their union were severely criticized for conducting militant action in a time of national emergency, a refrain often heard under these circumstances in American history. As a result, the strike was broken. In Hartford, the huge Pratt and Whitney corporation, one of America's leading producers of aircraft engines and spare parts, announced it would reduce health benefits for its workers in order to save money. Workers and their union prepared for a strike and succeeded in holding the line. In the wake of the World Trade Center disaster, after reconciling himself to the Bush administration's broken promise to provide aid to the city and Congress's dawdling, New York's outgoing mayor Rudolph Guiliani announced a fifteen percent budget cut for all city agencies except police, fire and Board of Education, a reduction that would inevitably lead to significant layoffs and cutbacks in services. This order was issued at a time when the city was facing a major health crisis as the Mayor and his Health Department were forced, after initial denials, to admit that the World Trade Center rubble had produced serious environmental problems in far flung areas. Meanwhile, there were no real plans by federal and state governments to address the hardships suffered by nearly 80,000 employees whose jobs disappeared with the destruction of the WTC or the 70,000 workers who made their living from the decimated tourism industry now reduced to three and four day weeks. By spring 2002 the official national jobless rate rose to 6% while workers braced for new assaults on wages and benefits as employers sought to transfer the burden of the recession on their backs.

Since the early 1970s when conservative economic doctrine ruled politics and policy, western nations have experienced little economic and social reform and have slowed the pace of cultural transformation, signified principally by the advances made by women, immigrants, and minorities against flagrant discriminatory practices in employment, personal security and everyday relationships. The weakness of the social movements, including the trade unions, to maintain the tempo of social reform that marked the 1960s, resulted in a thirty year hiatus, even in the ability of the ecological movements to protect safeguards to air and water they had previously won against the ravages of industrial development. The 1990s witnessed a desperate struggle, not to extend ecological law, but to prevent the neo-

liberals from rolling back regulation in the name of the free market. Combined with the collapse of Communist societies and their transformation into neo-liberal poster children, the stalling of reform has given rise to a new surge of radicalism that has, for the first time since the mid-1960s, raised the question of whether capitalism itself is subject to substantive reform. But a new generation of social activists—chiefly students and younger trade unionists—have framed their protests in distinctly anti-capitalist terms. While rhetoric still exceeds genuine strategies of change even after September 11, conferences as well as militant demonstrations at sites of world economic institutions have resumed and taken on new urgency.

Testing the Limits of Liberal Democracy

Long working hours, the breakup of long-term personal associations, and most important, the disappearance of women from neighborhoods during the day, have accelerated the decline of civil society, the stuff of which the amenities of everyday life is made. In the 1980s and 1990s, membership in voluntary organizations such as the PTA, veterans' groups and social clubs declined, but perhaps more to the point, many of them lost activists, the people who kept the organization together. Labor unions, whose membership erosion was as severe as it was disempowering, became more dependent on full-time employees to conduct organizing, political action and other affairs as rank and file leaders disappeared into the recesses of the non-stop workplace. The cumulative effects of this transformation is the hollowing out of participation and democracy where it really counts, at the grass roots. For the democratic polity cannot alone be defined and measured by the percentage of eligible citizens who exercise their vote. Indeed, since less than half of eligible voters turn out for state and local elections and only half participate in presidential polls, the United States has chronically lagged behind other capitalist democracies. As Benjamin Barber, Robert Putnam and others have argued, the measure of democracy is the degree of participation by ordinary citizens in the social, cultural as well as the political institutions of society. A vital liberal democracy is one in which representatives are selected in an electoral process that is the outcome of a series of intense discussions and debates over issues that affect the polity at every level of social rule. This would apply to the workplace, school boards, the leadership of voluntary organizations as well as national and international institutions that control or otherwise regulate economic and political life.

The democracy of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries bears little resemblance to how democracy worked in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the 1920s, John Dewey's rueful meditations on the decline of the public still held out hope for its revival. Reflecting on his own late nineteenth century Vermont upbringing, Dewey recalled the tradition of direct democracy and argued that our social arrangements and political jurisdictions needed to be scaled down in order to implement democratic aspirations. But almost eighty years after his *The Public and its Problems* appeared, in the era of mass democracy, concepts such as direct participation in the decisions affecting the collective life are no longer in our political vocabulary. The town meeting in which all members of the local polity makes the decisions affecting the community survives in some New England villages and small towns, but at best, "participation" in cities and suburbs is confined to testimony at public hearings conducted by elected councils, boards—of education, of energy and other locally-based utilities—and in voting. While a relatively small fraction of the underlying population participates in various institutions of local government, and a larger group participates mostly through their membership in voluntary organizations such as parent associations, the social programs of churches and other charitable agencies, chambers of commerce, or unions, for tens of millions of Americans, democracy consists almost exclusively in the ritual of voting; only opinion surveys mitigate, to an extent, our sense of distance from the process of political decision-making. The texture of life is as different today as was everyday life in the nineteenth century from the years when almost everybody was a farmer or connected to agriculture in some way.

But however weak is liberal democracy, the United States has by no means tested its institutional limits. In fact, of the leading capitalist societies, our political system is, perhaps, the least democratic. Undoubtedly influenced by religious objections, Tuesday rather than Sunday is the conventional voting day. The president is elected by an electoral college in which—because members are selected on the basis of who wins the popular vote in a given state and gives disproportional weight to states with smaller populations—may give rise to an outcome in which the victor—in 2000, George W. Bush—receives a minority of the popular vote. And unlike some other countries whose constitution and practices are to insure representation by minority parties in legislative bodies, the United States is dedicated to a "winner take all" system of representation which, for all intents and purposes, excludes minor parties which, in some states and localities, receive as much as 15-20% of the vote, a showing which is not uncommon in recent elections.

State and federal election laws provide that the party winning a majority or plurality of the votes has been elected to office and the other parties are excluded from governance.

The same system has informed the development of a self-perpetuating bureaucracy in the unions as well which only a system of term limits can hope to remedy. But term limits only restrict the prerogatives of individuals, not self-perpetuating ruling parties. Even where majorities are required to elect an office seeker most statutes mandate a runoff between the two top vote getters. As a result, a substantial minority of citizens are routinely deprived of representation and this situation militates against pluralism in the electoral and legislative process. The mantra of electoralism is that voters should not "throw their votes" away by selecting the candidate(s) of parties which have no chance of winning. As a result, we are saddled with "lesser evil" politics. Faced with the prospect that one's vote for someone who holds political views close to or identical to our own might, in close races, elect a candidate whose views are entirely unacceptable, we tend to hold our noses and vote for the least objectionable candidate.

Imagine an electoral system based on proportional representation (PR). Like many other countries such as Italy, Israel and Germany, Congress and state legislatures would be more broadly representative, and the major parties would be obliged to form coalitions in order to rule. While some argue that European systems introduce instability into politics—this is especially the case in Italy—a little uncertainty would make social reform more likely, even if not inevitable. In any case, PR, a system that insures representation for minorities who achieve a minimum percentage of the popular vote, might energize those who have decided that the narrow differences between the two major parties do not warrant exercising their franchise, let alone participating in the political process in other ways.

It is fairly rare to hear calls for "radical" democracy in this era in which power seems ever more concentrated at the top of our economic and political systems. By radical democracy political theorists connote a system of governance where power is widely shared among the citizenry and institutions are controlled in direct ways from below. Put another way, radical democracy would change relations of power so that those who are partially or entirely excluded from participation in civil society under representative forms and are unable to influence, let alone share, power over the key decisions affecting their own lives, gain entrance. Many political

observers have noted the passivity of Americans in the wake of the enormous changes that have swept through the institutions of the economy and government, but especially those that have transformed everyday life which have conspired to widen the economic and political inequalities of power. I would deny that the word "passivity" or, in another vocabulary, "consent" let alone "consensus," adequately describes the current situation. But we may not discern the signs of discontent in the usual places and among the traditional radicals.

As Jean Baudrillard has perceptively argued, abstinence from the shriveled institutions political and governance may signify neither apathy nor consent but may be coded as a form of resistance. The "silent majorities" who fail to go to the polls or to participate in a rigged civil society are neither left nor right in their sentiments but have determined, often tacitly to be sure, that the institutions of liberal democracy, including unions and many voluntary organizations which, in the end, are extensions of the state, are irrelevant to their lives, or worse, impediments to their interests. Indeed if it can be shown that the fabled "deadlock" of democratic institutions has produced very little to advance the general welfare in the last thirty years, if Congress and European parliaments are subsumed under a centralized executive authority that in turn is deeply beholden to the network of transnational corporations and international bureaucratic economic institutions, the act of voting simply legitimates the swindle that "representatives" are accountable to their constituents at least on matters that affect their modes of life.

While Baudrillard may have overstated the case for abstinence as a form of resistance, many young people and a considerable fraction of the poor share the assessment that given the alternatives provided within the electoral system, their participation simply legitimates a process that does not serve them. These views may be mistaken. But unless we accept the theory according to which legislative bodies are generally responsive to active constituents, a theory which is unable to explain the disparity between a high level of trade union and middle class liberal voting and the gross indifference to their needs and their views of Congress and most state legislatures, the abstainers act not only out of indifference but also skepticism.

During times of emergency many Americans seem prepared to concede more authority to the executive which hastens to suspend the autonomy of representative institutions and, as Eric Foner has shown, tends to "shred the constitution." The Bush administration is not alone in this regard: the Alien

and Sedition Laws, enacted during John Adams's presidency, the federal government's jailing war opponents during World War I, its internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II and the McCarthy era's attack on labor and radical movements, which received the approbation of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, all circumvented the constitutional rights of individuals and organizations in the name of national security. We may learn from Benjamin's remark: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception, but the rule. We must attain a conception of history that is on keeping with this insight."

The new movements directed against capitalist globality, but also the new libertarian right have adopted elements of the analysis that liberty under liberal capitalist democracy is fragile and while frequently protected by courts, democracy itself is chimerical. There are signs that a new wave of activists is changing the political map.. While the traditional left is generally programmatic, the new opposition is issue-oriented and is not content to use the familiar tactics of petition and lobby to achieve its aims. The new activism is discontinuous with the social reformism of the social democratic and liberal organizations for which seeking legislative remedies are the typical form of participation. Instead it has a distinct direct action orientation that was recovered from the feminist, gay and lesbian, and black freedom movements, and in the mid 1990s by the anti-AIDS movement, ACT-UP. Reflecting their suspicion and even disdain of the tools of liberal democracy, direct action rather than petition and legislation has been the hallmark of the anti-globalization movement as well, and this strategic shift is evident in campus-based anti-sweatshop groups who have used the labor and civil rights tactic of the sit-in in college presidents' offices to replace entreaties to academic authorities to change their procurement policies.

These differences may be dismissed on the ground that the resistance has not advanced to alternative; the opposition rarely proposes new arrangements that depart substantially from reform. In fact, many environmental protesters who engage in direct action still hope that nations will come to their senses and enact a series of treaties to remedy global warming and other ecological hazards. Moreover, the discrediting of socialism and Communism has left a huge vacuum in alternative, let alone utopian, thinking. If there is a crisis of the intellect, it resides in the bereft imagination. Collectively we are still unable to imagine a qualitatively different future. Indeed, radical democracy itself lacks contemporary specification. The Soviet constitution, which

promised a new form of social rule, was betrayed by its own authors, and contemporaneous with the events, John Dewey could offer only a rural miasma of democratic participation. Since the New Left's notion of participatory democracy achieved a degree of influence, especially more widely in the black freedom movement, radical democracy has been largely an intellectual discourse.

Put simply, utopia is on hold with the partial exception of the imagination of social ecologists who have proposed bio-regionalism, where agriculture and manufacturing would be integrated within a restricted geographic space, and radical democratic municipalism to replace the prevailing centralist business-oriented metropolitan governments whose development policies are destructive of natural and urban environments. Social ecology has gone beyond the slogans of libertarian Marxism to propose alternatives, but thought is not equal to its practical challenges. In the near future we are likely to see concepts of decentralization, economies of "human scale," demands to ban vehicular traffic except buses, taxis and trucks—but only for limited hours—from large cities, and varieties of neighborhood governance jurisdictions to encourage broader participation. Given the American way, we are not likely to see these proposals attain practical urgency until another disaster befalls and even then with our penchant for denial and forgetting there is no assurance that the climate will be favorable to changing our poisonous environmental practices.

Yet what is entirely new is the perception (curiously reinforced by the Gulf and Afghanistan wars)that even though they are worth preserving, appeal to the institutions of liberal democracy within the nation-state is no longer the exclusive context for politics and class struggle. One of the effects of the protests at Seattle, Washington, Quebec and Genoa was to "smoke" international economic organizations which affect the global population out of their secrecy. Monetary and economic policy in general is no longer the sovereign function of nation-states, especially in the global south and east, but neither is it in the West. For this reason, what happens to labor in, say, Mexico or Korea, is the concern of workers in the United States. That the American labor movement has not yet fully grasped this development detracts neither from the salience of the fact of interdependence nor what seems the likelihood that, eventually, labor and other movements will recognize the multinational context of their struggles. If North American labor is still mired in the necessary, but incomplete step of trying to limit imports in order to protect its dwindling jobs, surely the next step is to adopt

the only viable strategy, movement toward global equality in living standards, including wages and social protections Upon this platform we can expect instances of coordinated direct action on a global scale that will be based on the recognition that living standards in all countries will continue to deteriorate as long as the bulk of humanity is held in economic and political abjection.

An equally urgent task is to reflect on the forms of power itself. How can the opposition address the subordination of the vast multitudes of humankind, the hollowing out of the state's social functions, and its reduction to a fortress of national security? Beyond individual liberties, certainly worth protecting for the ability to speak without fear, to act without police intimidation, to assemble without incarceration, and to think beyond the prison-house of the politics of the possible, is the necessary condition of forming a democratic society. The sufficient condition is to establish the basis for freedom. Beyond liberty, how can the elusive goal of freedom be pursued? At the outset it must be recognized that the libertarians on the right more than the statist left has been concerned with this question. Libertarians have distinguished themselves from conservatives by defending abortion rights, opposed draconian drug laws and sometimes advocated legalization of these controlled substances and, during the recent war, were vocal in their opposition to the Bush administration's attempt to restrict civil liberties for domestic as well as immigrant groups. Their defense of liberty has, on the whole, been more forthright than any other ideological tendency.

But the major flaw in the doctrines of right wing libertarians is that they insist, with Adam Smith, that only a market unfettered by state regulation, can guarantee freedom. Like Fukuyama and other neo-liberals, they accept the oxymoron, the phrase "free market." The market for commodities and ideas is never really free but is lopsided in favor of those who own and control the preponderance of productive property. Like Anatole France's bitter quip that the law in its majesty forbids, equally, the rich and the poor from sleeping under bridges, paraphrasing A. J. Liebling, the market, like the press, is free for those who own one. When the economy is in recession and many small businesses face ruin because of declining demand, their alternative is often to "choose" bankruptcy. But when the airline or auto corporations face declining profits, they can and do seek partial protection from the market's vicissitudes by securing subsidies from the federal government. When the small independent farmer is plagued by lower prices imposed by processors or wholesale corporations, he sells the farm to a real estate developer. When an

agricultural corporation is faced with rising costs and stable prices, it appeals to the government for subsidies or invests in technology to reduce its labor costs. Competition among equals is generally confined to property owners, but small businesses confronting large corporations and those whose only property is their skills and credentials only occasionally enjoy an advantage over the buyer. For the most part, the small proprietor is either forced out of business or, if the holder of a patent is obliged to allow himself to be absorbed by the larger competitor. As for the worker, even in so-called good times only collective organization is usually capable of giving her or him some edge and, as we have seen, even this weapon is not always sufficient.

But freedom is not identical to liberty or to the exercise of human rights such as speech and assembly. As an individual I cannot achieve freedom, if by that concept we mean the ability to control the conditions of life by making those decisions that affect it. Freedom cannot be legislated and liberal democratic institutions are hostile to its precepts because they rest on formal representation by organized political parties which are beholden to economic and other powers. Freedom is the outcome of the direct exercise of autonomy by individuals and groups, and in the self-constitution of institutions and practices that form social arrangements. Freedom is therefore an effect of collective self-creation and presupposes a break from the social and historical context of its institution. To be sure, nothing is forever. Since the context within which labor and other social movements operate is generally hostile to direct, radical democracy, and the political environment can, in relatively short term, turn one hundred eighty degrees, in order to save themselves movements tend to become institutions controlled from above. These organizations often adopt systems of representative governance, hire staffs who effectively control their programs and the leadership becomes more or less completely severed from the activist base. Whence, as often as not, rumblings from below explode in either of two forms: internal revolt against the leadership, as in the rank and file union caucuses; or breakaways such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee which, in the early 1960s, rejected the legalistic, go slow policies of organizations such as the NAACP.

There are many instances of such creativity where people generate alternative institutions, usually on a relatively small scale, but these innovations are often not in the public eye. For example, dissatisfied with the local school or available day-care options, a group of Brooklyn parents and teachers start their own institution that adopts a somewhat different curriculum and hires

teachers who care about pedagogy. Moreover, for a substantial time the school is jointly run by parents and teachers who, on the basis of criteria they have a voice in establishing, select the director. In most instances parent-teacher run schools must address the constraints of law and of established practices. Before they are able to operate they must procure licenses from Health, Buildings and Education departments. These documents entail undergoing inspections and, the case of education, credentials and curricular reviews which usually involves a prolonged series of meetings, sometimes confrontations, with the authorities who are prone to protecting their turf. When they win approval it is often at the expense of their autonomy, although the extent of victory depends on the extant political and cultural environment. Nevertheless, more often than not something new is created that does not depend on the initiative of the bureaucracy.

Dissatisfied with their union's bureaucratic, top-down practices, workers may form a caucus that seeks to replace the existing national or local leadership in favor of a more democratic union that attempts to share power broadly among rank and file members. Rather than remaining an organization dominated by full-time officials it decentralizes functions and power to make decisions. Like their educational counterparts, the victorious slate invariably faces the problem of reconciling their intentions with the hide bound rules and practices of the established international union leadership and staff but, perhaps more urgently, the constraints of law which has turned unions from autonomous movements into apparatuses, ideological and political, of the state. The extent to which they are able to pursue their own star depends on a variety of factors, the most important of which is how far they are willing to go to defend their principles. Risk is the rock against which innovation falters. But all over America there are local unions and even some national unions for which rank and file participation is both an end and a means. We have the rich experiences of the feminist, ecology and black freedom movements of the late twentieth century. These movements were largely self-created, advanced their own leaders and, at least until they were integrated into mainstream politics in the 1980s, were much more democratic than traditional voluntary organizations. It is important to continue to reach into the deep recesses of repressed memory and be prepared to conduct the class struggle on the terrain of historiography.

While the moment of September 11 seems to have temporarily foreclosed the possibility of a new class politics, we have seen these traditions live in movements which recreate them, sometimes consciously drawing from the

experiences of earlier generations. The impulse to freedom, however feeble in some historical moments, is inextinguishable. For centuries this impulse has driven the struggles of insurgent classes against entrenched power. For since it consists in imposing constraints, enforcing established rules and punishing those who insist on challenging authority, power is always inimical to freedom. And there are no guarantees that having been subordinated for generations, the powerless in power will not reproduce the conditions of domination, both of their own and of their adversaries. The failsafe, whether making history issues from a new institution or political insurgency, is that the unconscious, which has a welter of historically induced scars, is made an object of reflection by the insurgencies and that the past and present are subjected to ruthless critique. This would entail adopting a notion of education, not as the transmission of ideologies and other received truths, but as a process of constant examination of social practice, in the institutions of governance and of everyday life.

What are the prospects for the formation of a class alliance that can contend for social and political power? By "class alliance" I refer to social formations which, because of their economic, political and cultural exclusion from power organize into movements that seek to change the conditions of life. That social formations and the movements emanating from them have historicity signifies that in every space of social time some will be more crucial for challenging prevailing authority than others. In this respect there is always the possibility that one or more insurgent movements of the past will be made part of the hegemonic power bloc while others will remain on the "outside" and form an opposition. Within the vast multitudes of those whose interests coincide with social and political transformation, only a specific constellation of social forces is likely to put these tasks on the historical agenda. But the agents of a new alliance must be identified in a global, rather than national context. The uneven development of an alliance between some factions of the labor movement, and those of women, blacks, youth and ecologists will remain an enduring feature of the coming period. That is to say, we are not on the verge of a new, stable "Grand Coalition" on a global level. To ask the question of "prospects" is to assess the possibility that the opposition will at any time soon go on the offensive, an eventuality that presupposes a fairly long period of refusal and resistance to prevailing power and debate about alternative futures not only among intellectuals but among activists as well. We live in a time when the traditional left is exhausted, intimidated by the rightist surge, or has joined the anti-utopian consensus and the new activist legions are still in the midst of defining resistance as the

farthest horizon of politics. For the time being it is likely that the alliance will continue to take the form of global combinations of trade unionists, sometimes supported by official labor federations, students, the growing number activists who gave life to social movements and remain committed to direct intervention, and radical intellectuals.

So this is a time for analysis and speculation as much as organization and protest, a time when people have a chance to theorize the new situations, to identify the coming agents of change without the illusion that they can predict with any certainty what will occur, and by whom. It is a time to speak out about a future that is not yet probable, although eminently possible. The new venues for discussion will be found on-line, complemented by print journals, magazines and newspapers. Moreover, the complexity of issues and the novelty of the situation demands new ideas that traditional lefts seem incapable of providing But some parties of opposition will become tribunes of new thought. These ideas will be labeled "utopian" by those who have determined that power is too overwhelming to rethink their options and, for this reason, have decided either to abstain or to become loyal supplicants of liberal democratic regimes in the hopes of reducing their venality. And it is surely a moment for political organization, stretching the limits of electoralism without relying on liberal democratic institutions to provide the vehicles for change. Having said this as the events in Seattle in December, 1999, Genoa in 2001 and the struggles to come attest to the fact that people have a way of creating history without much preparation and setting new conditions for political struggle. As the opposition matures it will find the new paths not only of resistance but of alternatives.

A Criticism of Intellectual Critics

by
Nadia Urbinati[†]

The emergency measures passed by the American government on October 25, 2001, after the terrorist attacks that razed the Twin Towers and a wing of the Pentagon to the ground, known as the *United States Patriot Act*, give the executive branch enormous discretionary power to enforce all measures of security that the President deems necessary to protect the *salus rei pubicae* in this time of emergency (a time that, due to the peculiar character of the "enemy," could extend itself into a future of imprecise duration). These measures thoroughly violate the Bill of Rights on "due process" and the rights of individuals as much as they do the Constitution, which does not give any organ of the state the power to declare a state of emergency or enforced exceptional laws. Article II, Sect. 3 states that the President shall "recommend to their [the two Houses] to their consideration such measure as he shall judge necessary and expedient." The limits of 'necessity and expedience' are carefully defined in Article First of the Bill of Rights. That notwithstanding, for several months after its endorsement, the *Patriot Act* has not provoked substantial criticism neither from Congress (where it received only one dissenting vote in the Senate and seventy six votes against in the House) nor in public opinion. Like Italy in the 1970s when Parliament approved the "special emergency legislation" against terrorism, after September 11, the politics of national solidarity in the United States were endorsed and pursued with conviction by everyone: citizens, the opposition party, the media, and the intellectuals.

This unilateral conviction should come as no surprise. Although contemporary democratic constitutions do not have provisions for a state of emergency, and do not confer the power to violate the fundamental rights of citizens for reasons of necessity to any constituted power, democratic states are not negligent in the defense of the life and security of their citizens. Though the liberal democratic form of government does not condition the respect of its principles on reasons of prudence, democratic politics are not indifferent to evaluations of a pragmatic nature and, in any case, the dualism

between normativism and consequentialism is poorly placed because, as Jürgen Habermas explains, democratic deliberation consists precisely in a fair marriage of these two perspectives.

What democracy absolutely does not tolerate is the suspension of dissent and the politics of secrecy in public issues. For this reason, the special measures adopted by the American government have been judged, for the time being, as necessary, but have not delayed rousing criticisms from the part of informal "keepers" of democratic freedom, or rather the newspapers and various forms of expression of ideas that grow in civil society. It is correct, therefore, to say that the existence of public debate and criticism of the government is the measure of democracy. Even in democratic regimes the executive branch can indulge in autocratic temptations; the century-old idea that threats to freedom come mainly from the majority is a sketchy one at best. This idea derives from the fact that the elected majority has the power not only to make laws but to enforce them as well. The origins of the degeneration of free government lie in executive power, as we are told by liberal democrats like John Locke or non-liberal democrats like Rousseau. It is the sure and free presence of the other powers (that of the legislative, public opinion and political movements) that denotes democracy in its fullness. In the United States after the early months of support for the Bush administration (until the end of the bombardments in Afghanistan), unanimity was shattered from the inside of these powers.

There are two issues that define the criticism from the beginning of 2002. The first concerns the powers of the president; the second, the violation of rights. Before examining these two topics, it is appropriate to briefly summarize the contents of the *Patriot Act.*

As it exists, the *Patriot Act* contains measures that restrict the civil liberties sanctioned by the Bill of Rights on the basis of a vague and broad definition of terrorism and of those who help terrorists—either directly or indirectly—with words or financial and logistical support. The definition is not all that different from the one adopted in the 1970s in Italy, but unlike that definition, this one has a range of applications that is global and that reflects, predictably, the imperial role of the United States, a role which American intellectuals are aware of.[1]

The power to decide if an individual is suspected of terrorism or supporting terrorism in some form, direct or indirect, rests with the executive branch, that is with the President or the people in power in the Department of Justice and the public officials under their jurisdiction. If the executive power decides that there is a "reasonable basis" for suspecting someone of terrorism, the suspects can be detained without disclosing to them the reasons for their detention; without permitting publicity of the process; and, ultimately, without allowing the accused to freely choose a defense lawyer or to confer freely with an appointed lawyer. Furthermore, mere suspicion is sufficient to justify detention, proof is not necessary, and the duration of the preventive detention can vary from six months to a year or as long as the government deems it necessary for reasons of national security. Also, the procedural hearing is military, not civil, which means that the President can intervene directly and at his discretion in the outcomes of the trial (the military sphere being directly under his command) and he can contest, annul, or change the verdict of a jury. Ultimately, the detainee could in theory remain incarcerated for an indefinite period of time since the verdict is in every case subject to concerns of public security and the end of a kind of war—the "war on terrorism"—that does not have, in and of itself, a clearly defined end. In addition, the forces of law and order and secret services are given a vast power of legal search, of monitoring correspondence, travel, telephone and electronic communication of all those who live and travel on American soil. Finally, the fact that there are military tribunals to judge the terrorists entails two things: first, that it is vital for these processes to be conducted behind closed doors; and, second, that the judgment of juries, when it concerns capital punishment, can be handed down with a majority of two thirds of the votes of the jury (the American penal code calls for unanimity in the case of imposing the death penalty). As Ronald Dworkin has written, "this is the kind of 'trial' we associate with the most lawless of totalitarian dictatorships."[2]

Ultimately, it is American citizens of Arab origin and Muslim religion as well as foreigners who are the targets of this vast discretionary power. The politics of "profiling" (widely adopted towards African Americans and beforehand with "communists" and those suspected of anti-American activities) have been widened to include those who are in some manner close to countries, cultures and religious traditions associated with the perpetrators of the terrorist acts in September. In essence, as political theorists know, the

individual right to privacy diminishes in proportion as the government privilege of privacy increases.

We now turn to examine the first kind of critical argument, that relative to the power of the President. How can we define the prerogatives that President Bush has claimed? Is it correct to speak of a "dictatorial power," as was done in *The New York Times*?[3] If by dictatorial power one means the power (conferred by the Constitution) to decide on exceptional measures in order to meet exceptional circumstances, then, as Andrew Arato has reminded us, it is very questionable to define the powers of the Bush administration as a case of dictatorship, if for no other reason than because in the Western political and judicial tradition, dictatorships have a very specific meaning and entails a specific set of rules.

In the constitutional tradition of the Roman republic that codified it, dictatorship was defined as much by the criteria that were necessary to institute it as in the form of implementation and ultimately its duration which was carefully specified and limited. This is not actually the case in America today, which should instead be defined as a true and actual case of the President's arbitrary power. Since the Constitution of the United States does not have provisions that establish and regulate the suspension or violation of regular procedures and the law by the President (the very power to declare a war is the prerogative of Congress, not the President), the measures adopted by Mr. Bush are clearly the fruits of an arbitrary decision.[4]

It is true that there are precedents in American history that can be used (and have been used) to justify the *Patriot Act*. President Lincoln suspended *habeas corpus* during the Civil War; President Franklin Roosevelt interned Japanese Americans in concentration camps after the attack on Pearl Harbor and, during the Second World War, he eventually tried German spies captured on the U.S. coastlines (who were orchestrating a submarine attack) by a military tribunal that condemned them to death. Indubitably, the decisions of President Bush reintroduce similar measures, and yet they cannot be justified in the same way those of Lincoln and Roosevelt can because those were taken in a state of actual civil war or a declared war. To be sure, President Bush justified his exceptional measures by appealing to a state of war (the "war on terrorism"). However, this war represents an evident breach of the international conventional definition of a war, even if this does not entail the

rhetoric of war is powerless. The "war on terrorism" is a normative phantom endowed with the power of creating a normative reality of its own. One might say that the *Patriot Act*'s decrees have given an actual reality to the symbolic reality (the war on terrorism) that was used to justify them. In a circular movement that mimics Hegel's phenomenology, the virtual and the symbolic are made real by reflection, and receive concrete life from their own real outcomes.

Not only does the "war on terrorism" not have a declared and recognizable beginning, it doesn't have a foreseeable end. It is a war fought against an enemy that is unknown by recognizable international conventions. Not identifiable with a collective moral person (the state) inhabiting a specific and internationally acknowledged territory, this new enemy is ubiquitous and the war against it must also be ubiquitous. The impossibility of delimiting the space and location of the enemy entails the impossibility of circumscribing the war against it in time, manners and duration. For all these reasons, the present case is neither comparable nor justifiable with past cases. The exceptional measures of the Bush administration are arbitrary as much as the normative entities they entail. Arbitrary is the suspension of *habeas corpus*, the interment of "enemy combatants" in the concentration camps in Guantanamo Bay, and, ultimately, the decision to subject them to military proceedings. And this arbitrariness is manifest precisely in the form with which President Bush announced these measures: "*I* have determined that a national emergency exists for national defense purposes" (my italics).

The second kind of question pertains to the *purposes* of the *Patriot Act*. As I mentioned above, these measures were not subject to immediate criticism. For several months the politics of emergency have suspended and obscured political dissent, and at the same time the pettiness of the Bush administration, a pettiness that Islamic terrorism has contributed to obscuring. Only in the early months of 2002 has the criticism of these liberticidal and anti-constitutional measures has become more current and open. Dissent has grown proportionate to the knowledge of the inefficiency of government agencies and the organs of security, of their responsibility for not having prevented, when they could have, the terrorist attacks. Above all, it has grown and continues to grow proportionate to the number of American citizens implicated at various levels in the terrorist organization of Al Qaeda, which then leads to general criticism of the purposes of the

arbitrary measures of the *Patriot Act*. The crisis of confidence in the honesty of the President and the Vice President, concurrent with the bankruptcy of Enron and the financial scandals, adds more fodder to the loss of credibility of the Republican government notwithstanding the care that critics use to keep issues of security separate from domestic politics, and use the former to conceal the latter. The elections that will be held in November are becoming a catalyst for dissent, even if the hope that this will finally put the Democratic party (practically mute and absent after September 11) back into the mix and able to devise its own distinctive political agenda is meager.

What interests me here, however, is the dissent of intellectuals. This was given an important mark by Ronald Dworkin, a scholar traditionally active in denouncing the abuse of rights and the poor decisions of the Supreme Court. On this occasion, he has been the most outspoken authoritative liberal intellectual in the entire American academic panorama, an area singularly passive and silent for several months on this issue. Compared to the campaign for the rights of minorities, the evasion of politics by liberal intellectuals has been quite shocking: apparently the rhetoric of security does not only appeal to non-acculturated lower middle class Americans. To the populist patriotism of the hoisted flags adorning doorways of houses was added the timidity of the well-educated, embarrassed to share company with the "masses," yet so eloquent in their silence. Also for this reason, Dworkin's role was extremely important. His two articles published in *The New York Review of Books*, on February 28 ("The Threat to Patriotism") and April 25, 2002 ("The Trouble with the Tribunal"), were signs that the rhetoric of national solidarity was far from convincing. Since the early months of 2002, *The New York Times* has also progressively sharpened the tones of its criticism toward the Bush administration concerning rights and security.

Security is, and remains, a problem. No one contests the necessity to protect the life of citizens from unpredictable and awful terrorist madness. Nevertheless, the argument of necessity is no longer seen as valid to justify the undiscussed monopoly of the "prerogatives" of security that the government has taken on, and the dissenters no longer risk being silenced by defeatism or anti-patriotism, as occurred the weeks after the terrorist attacks. Laurence H. Tribe, Professor of Law at Harvard, has criticized the measures that limit *habeas corpus* and the right to fair trial that the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution guarantees to *all*, be they American citizens or not, or,

rather, to "human beings" who find themselves on American soil. The Bush administration, Tribe has argued, is mistaken when it advocates that all citizens and non-citizens can be detained indefinitely as "enemy combatants" on the basis of definitions (of enemy combatants) that the President creates.[5]

Let us analyze the character and style of the criticism put forth by the intellectual critics. Dissent and criticism have appeal not to "human rights," but to the American normative context. This aspect is of extreme interest especially if one pays attention to the fact that starting in particular from the bombardments of Belgrade and the intervention of NATO in Kosovo, American international politics was mobilized and ennobled with the argument of human rights. What is in question now is the violation of human rights on the part of the United States. Yet American critical intellectuals do not appeal to human rights to make their case against the liberticidal politics of American government (and its grave violations of the Geneva Convention). Even Dworkin, in his scathing criticism of the Bush administration, prefers to appeal not to human rights, but to the Bill of Rights and to the Constitution, even when those who are subject to Bush's measures are not American. The argument that the critics use is implicitly that the appeal to universalism is redundant in this case because in the fundamental documents of the United States there is, incorporated and asserted, the same philosophy of human rights. In short, universalism, in America, is part of the normative context. As Dworkin recalls, the right to fair trial is guaranteed by the American fundamental law to all "human beings" who happen to be on American soil, whether they are citizens or not.

There are two principles that guide normative criticism; one universal and one contextual. To the first principle, liberal American intellectuals are not of course unfamiliar and they resort to it whenever they criticize the violations of human rights that occur elsewhere or when they want to justify humanitarian military interventions in "hot" areas across the planet. These same intellectuals resort to the second principle when they shift their critical arguments to American politics. Universalism seems to stop at America's borders, inside of which the grounds of universalism hold little weight in comparison to contextualism. The appeal to the national judicial tradition seems to retain the capacity to lend criticism since it already incorporates the universal values of the dignity and liberty of the individual.

This contextual method, to which Michael Walzer has traditionally attributed an efficacy that abstract universalism does not seem capable of possessing, nevertheless shows its precise feebleness in this case, that of international terrorism, and of the instruments to face and defeat it. In the first place, the contextual method induces one to consider the United States as the only enemy of terrorist madness and, therefore, to think of terrorism as a national enemy. But this is exactly what liberals should avoid doing if they want to give efficacy to their criticism since the emergency politics of the Bush administration is founded precisely on a nationalistic perspective. In essence, the critics of the Bush administration are as much prisoners of the local or national dimension of the political and normative discourse as the Bush administration is.

Furthermore, the principle of the context foresees or implies solutions that are national, while this brand of terrorism has a decisively international dimension. Starting from the local does not allow liberal critics to envisage or formulate solutions consonant with the "universal" dimension of this terrorism and the culture of rights. If it is necessary to do justice and bring the terrorists before a court of justice, if it is preferable to use the weapons of laws than those of the military, then we should transcend the American jurisdictional sphere and uphold and promote the International Criminal Court. Only from a "universal" perspective is it possible to develop a consistent criticism of the politics of President Bush, which, not by chance, has modeled itself precisely on a violation of international laws (the Geneva Convention) in the name of national interests.

To give effectiveness to their criticism, American critical intellectuals should use "universal" reasons rather than resting anchored on contextual ones exclusively. If, in fact, the principle of due process is indubitably a universal principal translated into American laws, it is likewise true that potential "enemies" that should benefit from due process can strike wherever and whomever, not only in the United States and not only American targets. In essence, the "war" on terrorism, besides not being a "war," is not exclusively an American affair and cannot be fought by the United States as though it were because this necessarily entails the violation of international laws (in the name of national interests), and ultimately an outcome and practice that, in the long run, could reveal itself to be counter-productive precisely for those countries that are targets of terrorism since it is they who have eroded the

international conventions that support not only peaceful coexistence but also the condemnation of terrorism. The "terrorists," wrote Iris Young and Daniele Archibugi, should be judged by a court that does not respond to national interests.[6]

For that matter, if the sphere of American security is the preferred horizon, and if the Bill of Rights is the only normative sphere of reference, then it is inevitable that the weapons of the law will be used not *in place* of military ones, but along with them, and in fact subsequent to them. Criticism grounded in the Bill of Rights neither concerns itself with, nor actually contests what the American government does outside national boarders or military encampments, that is to say with what happens before justice enters the scene. This kind of criticism is essentially concerned with what the American government does inside its own borders and what it will do after the military action is over. The war and intervention in countries suspected of "fostering" or "harboring" terrorism is not substantially contested, but rather accepted as the means for "smoking out" and "arresting" suspected terrorists and bringing them to justice. Conservatives and liberals are distinguished at the moment in which it is about to be decided what kind of justice the captured suspects will be subject to. For this reason, the criticism of intellectual critics, as important as it is, remains limited and is never as strong as it could be were it formulated on the basis of a universalist perspective. The challenge that the defenders of rights should accept is to understand that in order to "protect" the laws and rights contained in the Bill of Rights, American politics should be judged according to universal criteria.

Notes

[†] *This article will also appear in the Italian journal* Contemporanea*, vol. 5 # 4 and was translated by Greg Tuculescu.*

[1] The problem with the American empire, writes Todd Gitlin, is that American government is not aware of the character of an empire, and acts more often like a state with imperialistic policies than the guarantor of an imperial world order of security and peace; "Empire and Myopia," *Dissent*, Spring 2002, 29-26.
[2] Ronald Dworkin, "The Threat to Patriotism," *The New York Times*, February 28, 2002.

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[3] William Safire in *The New York Times*, November 5, 2001.

[4] Andrew Arato, "Minima Politica after September 11," *Constellations*, 9 (2002), p.51.

[5] Laurence H. Tribe, "Citizens, Combatants and the Constitution," *The New York Times*, June 16, 2002.

[6] Daniele Archibugi and Iris Young, "Towards a Global Rule of Law," *Dissent*, Spring 2002, p.28.

West Bank Settlements Obstruct Peace:
Israel's Empire State Building[*]

by
Marwan Bishara

Why is it so hard to make peace in the Middle East? The greatest barrier is the Israeli settlements—these are both the motivation and engine of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Three decades of objections from the United States and Europe have achieved nothing. The rapid expansion of Israeli settlements—all illegal—has undermined Palestinian attempts at nation building. If they continue to spread, they will end the Israel that its founders envisioned.

As Israel makes more incursions into the Palestinian cities, it has placed new restrictions on the movement of their people and goods, stifling the economy. Oslo has ended. And still Israeli settlements increase and expand, in violation of all international resolutions. The settlement drive and its ideology have become a cornerstone of modern Israeli national identity. The policy of settlements and the current violence they are breeding have transcended the country's ethnic and religious divides to create a new Israelism based on a new Jewish nationalism. The setters and their allies are recreating Israel in their own image: as a theocracy in permanent conflict. Under the government of Ariel Sharon and with the explicit support of President George W. Bush, this process is becoming a destructive self-fulfilling prophecy.

These new settlers are nothing like their predecessors of the pre-1948 generation who founded Zionism and formed the state as a secular, socialist and mainly European enterprise. The post-1967 settlers are predominantly religious, conservative, Reagan-style neo-liberals. And unlike their predecessors, their settlement activity is state-sponsored by Israel. The new Zionists (or post-Zionists) believe that for their Greater Israel nationalism project to succeed, another campaign of ethnic cleansing will be necessary. Many members of Sharon's cabinet are already speaking about "transfer"—the collective expulsion of the Palestinians.

Worse, former general Efi Eitam, a newly appointed minister and leader of the National Religious Party, is a supporter of settlements. Though Eitam was once a Labor supporter, he has now said that transfer is politically "enticing," though not realistic without war. In that case, he says: "Not many Arabs would remain." And Eitam has in fact called for war on Iraq and Iran through Israeli pre-emptive strikes.[1]

Sharon has admitted that without the settlements, the army would have left long ago. But the settlements have a great advantage: they enable Israeli leaders to convince ordinary people that their military is not a foreign army ruling a foreign population. In 1977, when Sharon chaired the ministerial committee for settlement affairs, he oversaw the establishment of new Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. He planned to settle 2 million Jews there. A quarter of a century later Sharon remains adamant that Israel has a "moral right" to transform the demography of these territories. Since his election in January 2001, Sharon has built 35 new settlements.[2]

In the second half of the 1970s, during the transition from a Labor to Likud government, Sharon emerged as a leader capable of realizing the dream of a Greater Israel beyond Israel's internationally recognized borders. Shimon Peres's encouragement to Israelis to settle everywhere in the occupied territories strengthened Sharon's drive to implement the program of the influential bipartisan (Likud/Labor) Greater Land of Israel movement, which foresaw an Israel spreading from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean.

The number of settlers in the occupied territories outside East Jerusalem has increased from 7,000 in 1977 to over 200,000 in 2002—plus 200,000 others in East Jerusalem. Their 200 settlements take up 1.7% of the West Bank, but they control 41.9% of it.[3] Many of these settlers are armed and dangerous fanatics with a shoot-to-kill license from the Israeli army. Over the years, settlers' death squads have attacked unarmed civilians, gunned down elected officials and tortured and killed many other Palestinians.

During the Oslo peace process, Israel doubled its settlements, tripled its settlers and connected them with a network of bypass roads and industrial parks, ensuring their domination over the Palestinian territories. As the minister of infrastructure in the Netanyahu government, Sharon concentrated Israel's investment programs in the occupied Palestinian lands. The Rabin and Barak governments were no less active. There was an orgy of settlement building during the Barak government under the supervision of

Yitzhak Levy, then leader the National Religious Party and minister for the settlements.[4]

When the time came to end this at the Camp David summit in July 2000, the negotiations stumbled and eventually failed because of Israel's insistence of holding onto the settlements and 9% of the West Bank. The Palestinians were asked to sign a final agreement based on a promise of a quasi-state divided into four separate regions, surrounded by Israeli settlement blocs. Determination to retain the settlements has undermined attempts to end the occupation and compromised peace efforts.

After the Camp David summit failed and the *intifada* broke out, the internationally commissioned Mitchell Report insisted that the settlements issue should go hand in hand with a peace accord. The commission recommended a freeze on Israeli settlements as a requirement for a cease-fire and a resumption of peace talks. Instead, Sharon's cabinet approved an extra $400 million for the settlements.

Today 7,000 settlers remain in control of 30% of the 224 square kilometers of the Gaza Strip—home to 1.2 million Palestinians, most of them refugees. They cannot travel without passing fortified settlements with their swimming pools and basketball courts, built in the heart of this sandy, overpopulated land where water is scarce and land precious. Israel demolished 400 Palestinian homes in the Gaza Strip during the first year of the *intifada*, to protect the nearby settlements.

When the army asked Sharon to remove a number of distant settlements and regroup them within closer, better defended settlement blocs, he refused; he vowed not to dismantle a single settlement while in office. He then brought in two new ministers from the National Religious Party, which forms the core of the settlements' leadership, and made them members of his security cabinet, which deals with the occupied territories. The new geography of the settlements is like carving a map of the West Bank out of Swiss cheese. The small black holes, disconnected and empty, are the Palestinian cantons, called autonomous regions, and the surrounding continuous rich yellow parts are the Jewish settlements.

There are two laws in Palestine: one for Jewish settlers and another for Palestinians. The settlers have the freedom to move around, build and expand; the Palestinians are cooped up in 200 encircled cantons. Israelis have

access to the land and expropriate more of it; Palestinians have less and less. In recent years Israel has increased its closures of the Palestinian areas, hermetically imposed either locally or throughout the territories, to allow easy travel for the settlers. According to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, these closures have caused more damage to the Palestinian economy and its nation building than any other factor.[5] They have made Palestinians' lives impossible.

Friends of Israel in the West like the journalist Thomas Friedman, say that if the logic of the settlers wins, Israel will become an apartheid state. The former Israeli Attorney General, Michael Ben-Yair, thinks the logic of the fundamentalist settlers has already won since Israel has already "established an apartheid regime in the occupied territories."[6]

The settlers do not see it this way. General Eitam, the rising star of the religious right, sees a Greater Israel as "the state of God; the Jews are the soul of the world; the Jewish people have a mission to reveal the image of God on earth." He sees himself as standing "in the same place that Moses and King David stood" where "a world without Jews is a world of robots, a dead world; and the State of Israel is the Noah's Ark of the future of the world and its task is to uncover God's image."[7]

Low and middle-income families and new immigrants have been enticed to the settlements by offers of cheap housing and financial rewards, at times using U.S. aid money. But as the promise of better living turned into a colonial nightmare, the pragmatic settlers have tilted toward the right. More than 94% voted for Binyamin Netanyahu, and then Sharon in the last elections. Today, the fundamentalist settlers dominate the council that oversees the settlements, and they exercise a formidable influence over decision-making in the Israel government. Almost 1 out of 10 members of the Israeli Knesset are settlers. Three settlers have served as ministers in Sharon's cabinet and two are now serving as deputy ministers.

Although they are extra-territorial entities in the judgment of the international community, the settlements are the hotbed of pan-Israel nationalism. Unlike those Israelis who seek an internationally recognized Jewish state within sovereign borders, the new zealots insist that their homeland is the Land of Israel and not the State of Israel: they will therefore not allow the emergence of another state between the Jordan and the Mediterranean.

The power of the settlers goes beyond their electoral influence. Over the last quarter of a century, with the exception of the short-lived Rabin and Barak governments, the religious settlers' influence increased rapidly as the hard political core of the Likud-led coalitions. They are a threat not only to Palestine and the normalization of Israel, but to the whole region.

Think-tanks in the settlements show a war-driven style of thinking that taps into new U.S. concepts such as the war on terror and the "axis of evil," as well as new missile systems and the worst, most sensationalist literature produced by the Pentagon. As they dream of U.S.-style wars, the settlers do not think about such things as coexistence with their next-door neighbors. This is not surprising since they believe that Israel is the hope of the world and Palestinian moral savagery is organized to prevent this.

Paradoxically, the latest wave of Palestinian suicide bombings has played into the settlers' hands. Their erroneous claim that the Palestinians want not only removal of the settlements, but that of Israel, has relieved the pressure on the settlements—seen until then as an obstacle to peace—and radicalized ordinary Israelis. Israel's settlement policy, continued regardless of signed agreements, has created a new geography of conflict. Millions of Palestinians and Israelis live in fear on account of illegal settlers who are plunging the area into communal and colonial war. If Israel continues the expansion of its settlement activity at the rate it did during the peace process, the settlers will soon reach a million. If that happens, separating Palestinians from Israel and its settlers will be impossible without ethnic cleansing.

That would compromise the future of a Palestinian state and also the chances for maintaining a Jewish state over the long term, since the Jewish majority will diminish in mandatory Palestine (Israel, the West Bank and Gaza). In 10 years, the Palestinians will become the majority—one that will grow. And the millions of Jews and Arabs will become increasingly inseparable.

Sharon and his settlers will continue to sustain a state of permanent conflict and war in Palestine and the Middle East. Unless the international community intervenes, the settlements' logic will eventually lead to the same stand-off as on the eve of the 1948 war: either accept a bi-national state or attempt another ethnic cleansing. That would be a dramatic strategic error for Israel.

Notes

* This article also appeared in a French Translation in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 2002.

[1] *Ha'aretz*, Tel Aviv, 12 April 2002.

[2] *New York Times*, 27 April 2002.

[3] See B'tselem, "Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank," Tel Aviv, 13 May 2002 at: http://www.btselem.org/English/Publications/Summaries/Land_Grab_2002.asp.

[4] The Fourth Geneva convention, which Israel and the US signed, stipulates that: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." The convention is legally binding on member states.

[5] Conversation with Osama Kina'an, coordinator of the West Bank and Gaza desk at the IMF.

[6] *Ha'aretz*, 3 March 2002.

[7] *Ha'aretz*, 28 April 2002.

Interview with Daniel Ellsberg

with Kurt Jacobsen

D aniel Ellsberg is as good a candidate as any for the role of patron saint of whistle blowers. In the spring of 1971 Ellsberg and Rand Corporation colleague Anthony Russo smuggled out, photocopied, and released a 47-volume internal Defense Department review chronicling thirty years of systematic deception of the American public as to the real nature, motives, and depth of the Vietnam debacle. Nixon, who saw everything in conspiratorial terms, rapidly unraveled his own administration in the frantic course of harassing Ellsberg and anyone else who might inform the citizenry or Congress of anything the imperial president didn't want known or leaked. Nixon's infamous "plumbers" rifled the office files of Ellsberg's psychiatrist looking for dirt long before they exercised their imperfect burglary skills at the Watergate hotel. The White House tapes on the day of the publication of excerpts in the *New York Times* reveal an appalled chief aide H.R. Haldeman commiserating with Nixon about this heinous act, which ruined the "infallibility" of the president—a hitherto handy thing to wield. They were grieving over the grave of public gullibility which the Bush administration so ardently wants now to resurrect.

Ellsberg was born in Chicago in 1926. He attended Harvard where he earned a doctorate in economics. Not many hawkish intellectuals or politicians today can say that they started Marine Corps boot camp the day after defending their thesis. After three years of service he joined the think tank Rand Corporation in 1958 as a specialist studying ways of averting accidental nuclear war. In 1964 he became special aide to the Assistant Secretary of Defense, John McNaughton, whose brief included Southeast Asia. Ellsberg volunteered to go to Vietnam as a civilian State Department employee in 1966 and 1967 where he came to realize the futility of the intervention. And, he concluded, that the war was an immoral enterprise when he participated in the Pentagon Papers project, commissioned by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, and read the whole uncensored history of indefensible decisions. The public, he decided, had a right to know too. After acquittal at his 1973 trial, when it came to light that the government tapped his lawyers' phones

and tried to bribe the judge with an offer of the FBI directorship, Ellsberg went on to participate in anti-nuclear and anti-interventionist movements, accumulating a very long rap sheet.

This conversation took place by telephone in late September 2002 as Ellsberg was preparing for a book tour for his book *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and The Pentagon Papers* which was published in October. The book itself ranges well beyond the papers episode, including intriguing and unsparing, and often surprising portraits of many key figures. (For example, Ellsberg's account of super-spook Edward Lansdale—the model for the naively malevolent advisor in Graham Greene's classic *The Quiet American*—raises the piquant question whether Greene was taken in by the country boy pose Lansdale liked to strike.) Apart from the book, we talked a good deal about his disturbing sense of *deja vu* as he beholds George W. Bush.

* * *

Q: Here is a book, *Secrets*, describing a bright, red-blooded, John Wayne-loving American shedding all the nice lies that he was taught to believe, but not all his ideas. A lot of Americans who grew up in the '60s especially can relate to that thorny experience.

Ellsberg: I grew up during the Second World War with the notion that we were fighting aggression. We were unquestionably the good guys, believing in the ideals in the Atlantic charter. At my trial in 1973 Howard Zinn quoted words from the Atlantic charter about self-determination and tears came to my eyes. I was crying at the thought of [what happened to] what we believed in. There was a kind of innocence then. That is what I thought we were fighting for.

We could have avoided Vietnam if we only had been true to that Wilsonian ideal of self-determination, which of course, Wilson ignored when Ho Chi Minh raised it in 1919 at Versailles. Certainly the British, or Churchill, never meant what they said about self-determination for British colonies. So FDR did not carry through on self-determination for French colonies, lest that be a bad precedent for British colonies. There we go back to 1945. But then I believed what our government was saying about the Soviet Union and became very anticommunist. The fallacy there was equating Stalin to Hitler

in the same way that Saddam is compared to Hitler by Cheney and Bush today.

Q: Why is it a fallacy?

Ellsberg: All these people—Stalin, Mao, Saddam—are quite comparable to Hitler in ruthlessness, and conceivably in megalomania. But Hitler was very different in his reckless military pursuit of his megalomania. Hitler could not be deterred and that it was not productive to negotiate with him. The equation that Stalin can't be contained either is the argument for preventive war. Still, our leaders did on the whole understand there was a difference from Hitler and that containment and deterrence was not only possible but preferable to preventive war. The military chiefs toyed with the idea of preventive war more than we knew.

Q: How secure are secrets? You say that the glib bromide that Washington can't keep significant secrets for long is wrong. Is this an Oliver Stone universe we are peeking into?

Ellsberg: Secrecy enabled governments to carry out neo-imperial and colonial policies without opposition. The American public thinks of itself as anti-imperial. Most Americans assent to this image of ourselves, to the proposition that we stand above all for freedom and independence everywhere. The idea that we placed high priority on democracy in underdeveloped countries—the plantations of the world, in effect, where what we wanted was natural resources or cheap labor—has always been a fraud. It was not just that we put up with dictatorship instead of communism. We chose dictatorship rather than liberal regimes or social democratic regimes or welfare regimes or anything that put any restraint on our economic control.

Q: A motivated researcher can find those sordid stories in their public library. What about secrets only the chosen few know?

Ellsberg: I'll give a very current example. Bush and Cheney rely on the image of Saddam as a brutal dictator, which he is. He conducted chemical warfare and can be counted on to do it again. They refer to its use against Iran but particularly against the Kurds, who allied with Iran in that area in 1988. Only secrecy enabled them to conceal the fact, until the [*New York*] *Times* revealed it a month ago—that Rumsfeld and others, while in Reagan's administration, were reopening diplomatic relations with Iraq in 1984–1985, supplying them with the chemical research for weapons, and covertly

giving them satellite coordinates and reconnaissance photos when we knew they were using this information to make chemical attacks. Those were, to all effect, American attacks, American-supported attacks.

Saddam was extremely ruthless. Our leaders covertly were just as ruthless. We continued to give trade credits to them—in some cases illegally—and to turn a blind eye to their nuclear program. What it illustrates is that our leaders by virtue of widespread discipline on secrecy have made allies of some of the worst dictators for reasons that have nothing whatever to do with anticommunism, and to do this very consistently in Guatemala, Iran, Indonesia, Vietnam, around the world.

Q: How do you sift personal interest from national interest when deciding what is worth keeping secret? Whose purpose does this secrecy serve?

Ellsberg: It's certainly not purposes they are willing to expose for open debate as to whether these are truly in the national interest. In terms of what they perceive as the American interests, and in terms of their sense of what means are allowed so long as they can be secret, our leaders don't yield anything to anyone in terms of ruthlessness. I'd like to believe that they couldn't get away with some of this stuff if it had been in the open.

Q: Another theme you bring up is that domestic democracy and an autocratic foreign policy cannot coexist.

Ellsberg: If you want to run a large part of the world, and these people do, they think it cannot be done without military means and threats that the public would reject in terms of dangers and values. If you want the empire, you have to protect these operations from democracy, and secrecy is the way you do it. Bush "junior" knows that he has got to make up reasons for this war. He's got to manipulate, got to deceive. His blatant reasons are not the real reasons. That was the case for Vietnam, and that is the case now.

Here are some questions I learned to ask from my experience. When was the Patriot Act, this several hundred page document, put together? Was it after September 11? I think it was a matter of waiting for the appropriate moment to be enacted. We've learned that they had every reason to expect major acts of terrorism from Osama bin Laden. I assume they did not know exactly when and exactly where. All we are told they did about it is to have John Ashcroft stay off commercial airlines, which is kind of a minimal reaction. I think they did more than that. They drafted the Patriot Act, and had in

writing the enabling legislation that they passed on September 14—a broad resolution passed by Congress to do whatever needed to be done, which the president tried to say was enough to authorize an invasion of Iraq, which is blatant but not more than Lyndon Johnson did.

The analogy to the Tonkin Gulf resolution is very close. I am sure there is planning right now for going further than the Patriot Act, and for exploiting the next terrorist act if there should be one. The president will make use of that to get an authorization out of Congress, a blank check as Johnson consciously did to use the Tonkin Gulf incidents, especially the second Gulf incident, to get the Tonkin Gulf resolution. They'll follow that analogy to the letter. My experience of the government leads me to assume that they are preparing themselves for that and with very positive expectations of pulling it off.

Q: Let me get the conspiracy question out of the way or on the table. What do you think of a recent French bestseller alleging that U.S. security agencies were behind the September 11 attacks? Could this conceivably be concealed? How much can these agencies pull off?

Ellsberg: That is a degree of competency that I don't really give them. I have to say I would be amazed if we have a government agency that is capable of doing that. There was an incident in the Vietnam War just before the election between Ky and Thieu in 1967. One helicopter supposedly misfired a rocket that went into a room in Cholon and knocked out six or seven of General Ky's major supporters in the port authority and dope trade. Every Vietnamese assumed the CIA had done it to destroy Ky as a rival to Thieu. I was still in Vietnam and gave no credence that the CIA could accomplish that, knowing precisely when those people would be there and hit them with one rocket. It didn't make sense with the level at which we operated. I just don't see us pulling off the collapse of the World Trade Center. But might we be capable of knowing that something like that is going to be done and letting it happen because we feel it would be useful to us? Possibly.

Q: You paired up in Vietnam over 1966-67 with John Paul Vann, the maverick soldier, whom Neil Sheehan used as a fascinating iconic figure in his Vietnam book, *A Bright Shining Lie*, made into an HBO movie not long ago. When did you come to disagree with Vann, who was killed in 1972?

Ellsberg: Where we did disagree on a major premise is that by 1968 or 1969 he continued to believe that it would be very damaging to our credibility if

we suffered defeat in Vietnam. He did not believe we could win, but he did believe we could keep going at much less cost by building up ARVN [forces] and so forth, and that it was worth doing. That's where I, more or less, was at up to 1965. Once we committed air power and ground troops there I went through about a year of believing we had to try very hard to make something out of this. By 1967 I no longer felt that the cost of this [intervention] in human lives was justified even by those objectives.

Q: How did Vann stack up against Sheehan's portrait?

Ellsberg: The book is a masterpiece in many ways. I admire it, especially his description of the early years. Sheehan was about twenty years younger and didn't know Vann very well. He started on the book after Vann died. Vann as a person did not come through. John was a very funny guy. From the book you might think he was a humorless fanatic. But he was a terrific companion, a very good friend, and very generous.

Remember, like Vann, I had a military background, three years, and some limited combat experience, and my idea of Vietnam initially had been shaped by that. I was not a pacifist. I believed in just wars, that the cause was just and the means proportionate—until it became clear to me that the thing got way out of control. Vann continued to believe in it because of the notion that the U.S. had to be a central pillar of world order. He was a cold warrior who had to serve in a just cause, justly conducted. You have to consider soldiers who don't want a war of aggression, a war against women and children.

Q: That's how we want to believe American soldiers behave, as if they're concerned with decency and justice.

Ellsberg: A lot of American soldiers are. I'm extremely critical of Bob Kerrey not just for what he did [in the Mekong Delta village slaughter in 1969] but for implying that was what all soldiers did. What Kerrey was part of at that time was an operation called "speedy express," which was part of the Phoenix Program. John was totally critical of the Phoenix Program. He recommended that these things be stopped, although there was not a chance. He saw no justification. He was against the use of air power and artillery and the "reconnaissance by fire"—ninety percent of it unjustified—that killed civilians.

Q: There did not seem to be such a solid rationale for going into Afghanistan either.

Ellsberg: My own view has changed a bit. My first impression was that Al Qaeda paid a kind of ransom or bribe to the Taliban to operate there. Peter Dale Scott showed me some evidence that the Taliban government was providing an operational base, and was collaborating very strongly. So that there was more of a rationale for attacking the Taliban than I perceived.

Q: So you approve of the Afghan military campaign?

Ellsberg: No, strictly speaking, I did not approve of it. In retrospect it was not necessarily the best thing to do but that there was a rationale for it that does not exist in the case of Iraq. I think the attack on Afghanistan, even though it was conducted more prudently and in a more limited way than I foresaw. I still say that the risks involved in doing that war were unjustified even though the risks were not entirely realized.

But an attack on Iraq is in great competition with the war against terrorism. It's close to abandoning the unified coalitional struggle against terrorism just as the war on Afghanistan amounted to abandoning the war on drugs; it led directly to a vast increase in opium production there. The war on drugs has been thrown overboard. Look at Columbia. That's another part of it. We are backing the major drug traffickers because they are going against the so-called revolutionary forces there. We are exacerbating the cocaine problem by our policies, not lessening it.

Q: Did you imagine that Afghanistan would become a new Vietnam?

Ellsberg: I was very worried. What little I did know suggested that at the time the administration intended to send a large number of troops to the occupation of Afghanistan. You have to give this administration credit for stopping short of that, and pretty much where the Russians ended up, in mainly occupying the cities. So Afghanistan did not turn out as badly as I thought it would.

Afghanistan was an exceptional case. There is very little scope for military action. What you need is a climate for cooperative measures among governments against terrorism. Both our Israeli policy in Palestine [sic] and this impending war against Iraq, separately and especially together, are likely to make it impossible for Arab states and Muslim states in Philippines and Indonesia and so forth to cooperate with us in the face of public outrage at what we're doing.

I thought the Gulf War would be more costly to the Americans because I expected that they would move on to Baghdad. Bush "senior" had turned against it with the advice of Powell. I give Powell credit and I do not agree that he should have gone on. So, what we are facing now is that the very people who believed it was a mistake then, including Cheney, are in power and proposing to correct what they see as [George W. Bush's father's] error, even cowardice, in having been bound by the UN and by the coalition objectives and by public opinion.

Q: Do you see a parallel here to your Vietnam era scenario of escalation going nuclear?

Ellsberg: The senior Bush kept that thread open a dozen years ago with the threat of nuclear weapons against chemical or biological attack. The very refusal to rule nuclear weapons out constituted a threat, and so constituted a use of the weapon. You use a weapon when you point it at somebody, whether you pull the trigger or not. Moreover, they feel that threat was effective and it encourages them to use it again. Bush "junior" absorbed that lesson and has shown a greater willingness to use the threat of nuclear weapons than we have seen since Nixon. Nixon did it covertly.

Q: This sounds like a throwback to the cheerful nuclear weapon theorizing of Herman Kahn—thinking about the unthinkable.

Ellsberg: Herman Kahn was a Rand Corporation consultant who wrote from the outside, but he was elaborating what the Secretary of State was doing with massive retaliation policies from 1953, which is relying on nuclear brinkmanship. Unfortunately, it led to a generation of Joint Chiefs who based a lot of planning on it. Now we've got a president who is a throwback to that era of openly threatening nuclear war. There is less public resistance than there would have been 15 years ago because of the ending of the Cold War. People no longer see that threat as leading to an all-out nuclear war with the Soviets. They're a lot more tolerant.

Q: A point you stress in your book is that the highest policy circles knew very well what the consequences were of getting into Vietnam. We might assume that Bush "junior" knows all the negative aspects too. Is this *déjà vu* for you?

Ellsberg: I do have the feeling that our country is reliving the situation in 1964 and 1965. We have a president who is determined, for reasons of his own, in engaging in an aggressive war that the country as a whole does not

see as necessary. He will make every effort to manipulate Congress, the public, and UN opinion so as to get a minimal degree of support. He is moving toward renewed Tonkin Gulf resolution, a broad bank check, a delegation of power from both congress and the UN.

I never thought I would be feeling thankful to House Speaker Richard Armey. But I have to admit he is saying the right things: it will be unconstitutional, unwise and an aggressive war. These by the way, are phrases that were almost never used about Vietnam, except by Senator [Wayne] Morse. On the Democratic side there is scarcely more opposition than there was under Morse and Gruening. So I can't say I rely on Congress to save us, though it will be what I'll be trying to achieve by adding my voice to whatever else is happening. I expect to be using my book tour as much as possible for showing the analogy between then and now and trying to prevent another Tonkin Gulf resolution.

Q: One difference now if that Bush is behaving as if he can do what he likes with or without resolution.

Ellsberg: Nixon and Johnson believed they were entitled to do that, but Bush is more open about acting as an emperor than any president that I can remember. He pays less lip service to democracy or to constitutional constraints, let alone to the UN. Has he acknowledged even one international commitment that he likes or feels bound by? Yet, now with Iraq, Bush wants to revise basic principles of international order, which Chirac describes as desirable and as only a few rules, a few principles, a few laws.

Q: In tandem with a war on terrorism is an attack on the home front. It seems clear that the illegal activities the Nixon boys waged against you can be gotten away with today: breaking into your psychiatrist's office, wiretapping your lawyers, even arranging to have you assaulted.

Ellsberg: Surely. Bush is in the process of removing all those constraints. The things that were done against me I suspect are pretty much happening right now. It hasn't all been tested much, legally. He's maintaining the idea of secret courts, of detention without charges, without even releasing the names. We are moving in the direction of a police state now. I don't want to overstate how bad it is. We're not there yet. He's removed the freedoms he wants but it's mainly been against Middle Easterners and so made other people pretty passive about it. People are passive about it just as with AIDS,

which they thought only affected the gays, but it ain't gonna stop there. It can get great deal worse.

Q: Do you see any rays of light?

Ellsberg: There is much more leaking than anytime during the Vietnam War. A big difference from the Pentagon Papers time is that virtually all the military are opposed to this operation. There's a handful of civilians who think defeating Iraq will be as easy as deposing the Taliban or as cracking the Iraqi draftees in Kuwait. The military is not so confident and is worried about what he would do if attacked, and rightfully so. Perhaps now, as in 1991, Saddam would be deterred from using chemical and biological weapons. His ability to constrain himself, to be deterred, already has been tested in a way no other power ever has. No other power which possessed weapons of mass destruction, as he did, has been bombed for over six weeks and refrained from using those weapons. The idea that he would impulsively use those weapons when he is not being attacked is ridiculous.

Our military also is not counting on the Revolutionary Guard divisions to collapse in the way the divisions invading Iraq collapsed. And they are not counting on this being an easy pacification program, or occupation. So they are leaking in a way like nobody did at the time of Vietnam, and that a good sign. There should be more of it.

Q: Do you seen the "Vietnam Syndrome" operating today, by which I mean we don't jump into potential quagmires without clear and cogent objectives, wide public support, and an exit strategy?

Ellsberg: All that is operating, and there are some tones of one further thing that was part of the Vietnam Syndrome. The usual critical questions are: Can we succeed? What will the cost be? Is it really worthwhile? The question that was rarely raised at the time was: did we have a right to succeed?

One big difference today outside the administration, and which certainly is affecting our allies, is that this would be seen as clear-cut aggression in a way that Vietnam was not perceived by most people. As I describe in my book, I did not perceive it as an aggressive war either when I was at the Pentagon or was in Vietnam. It was reading the history that changed my thinking. Of course I already had felt we should get out, that the war was hopeless and so forth. But in 1969 I went beyond that by reading this history to see that the notion that this was a legitimate, though perhaps doomed, effort was wrong.

That we really were engaged in an aggressive war, a colonial war which was not justifiable in terms of our values.

Q: In *Secrets* you recall remarking to an American soldier in Vietnam, "do you ever feel like you are a redcoat?" and he says he does.

Ellsberg: Exactly. This is clearly looming as an aggressive war. People can see that. "Preemptive" is the word the military uses for action against an attack about to be launched. But what he is talking about is not imminent attack; it is a preventive war; it is about a speculative possibility. That is what the UN charter prevents. The question of aggression is being raised more now than during Vietnam. We were effectively confused by the bullshit put out by [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk and the generals.

Q: And the empire is always striking back.

Ellsberg: You see articles now by people like Tom Friedman in the *New York Times* about what is to be said for the good side of empire. They are acting with more self-awareness and less apology. They're making the case that the world needs an empire, and if not us, who? The arguments for this Iraq operation is the case made for empire, for the good countries of the world to exert leadership and bring enlightenment and order to the world. At least there is a good deal of skepticism

I think the fact that there is as much criticism as there is, and it is growing, could induce Bush to move quicker. Cheney said time is not on our side. He thinks opinion is going against him and it gives him lots of incentive to do what he can. So Bush is announcing that we are what any other nation will be perfectly fair in describing as a rogue superpower. We don't feel bound by anything, really. All this stuff about the weather is not right and it takes longer to prepare is disinformation to confuse the Iraqis and catch them by surprise. I and a lot of other people will do what we can to avert that. I think there is a chance of averting it by drawing on valid analogies and what memories there are of Vietnam.

Q: As a thought experiment, let's compare Powell in regard to the stance you took when placing loyalty to country over loyalty to a boss.

Ellsberg: Powell is in the position that McNamara was in early 1966. By then McNamara felt that our policy was not only hopeless but wrong, and should end. But he didn't chose to get out then. I suspect Powell's inclination is to

act very much as McNamara did. Others had that temptation, like George Ball in 1964 and 1965, feeling that they might at a critical moment influence the president in the right direction. I didn't have that positive incentive to keep my mouth shut.

I believe McNamara thought of himself as protecting the country from what the Joint Chiefs of Staff then wanted to do. Powell may be staying in for a similar reason. Not to protect us from the Joint Chiefs, who probably agree with him very closely, and he was chairman of the JCS himself, but to protect us from civilian militarists who are far more reckless and unconstrained than the military. So in a way the position of civilians and the military have reversed since the Vietnam War. The Joint Chiefs then were pressing for a larger and bloodier and more dangerous war than we did see. I think that the public to this day has underestimated how dangerous that situation was. That perception from the inside—and everything I have seen since has confirmed it—was driving me [in the Pentagon Papers episode].

Q: I was surprised to see LBJ say he would have given Westmoreland 200,000 more troops in 1968 but for the leaks.

Ellsberg: I wasn't entirely sure where LBJ stood in 1968. I did learn from Paul Joseph who did interviews of Westmoreland and Wheeler who brought it out that he was very open to enlarging the war, more than I realized. I did fear that this polity would go in that direction. I believe we now have a Secretary of State who really does not want to go into Iraq, but I see very strong signs that he may be drawn into serving as the rationalizer and legitimizer of this attack. I do think, just like McNamara, he could prevent this war

Q: How?

Ellsberg: His prestige is such that if he resigned, the resignation alone might have a great effect, although of course there's no guarantee. If he honorably got up and did what [weapons inspector] Scott Ritter, a former marine colonel did in speaking out about what he knew as an insider. He could do what McNamara should have done, and that was to testify before Congress with documents as to what the facts were. If McNamara did it in closed session with Fulbright in February of 1966, but let it leak out, I believe he could have ended the war. It would have been at the cost of any further executive appointment and membership of the establishment. The advantage would be saving forty to fifty thousand American lives and several million Vietnamese lives. That is what he would have to weigh.

The same is true of Powell. We are looking at horrendous things that may happen, in terms of a real nuclear war resulting from this, and even short of that, enormous Iraqi casualties and perhaps significant American casualties if city fighting does result. And a wave of hatred in the Arab and Muslim world that poses a concrete [threat of] terrorism in this country.

Q: Aren't there real dangers of nuclear terrorism?

Ellsberg: There are real dangers, but the war against Iraq is a diversion. The fear is that Saddam will give the weapons to Al Qaeda. Now that would be making a case for preventive war. It is important to keep Al Qaeda from getting nuclear weapons, but the notion that they would get them from Saddam is close to ridiculous.

The notion that Al Qaeda would get them from Pakistan is not ridiculous at all. The notion that they would get them from Russia is not crazy either— not by Russian state action, not from Putin, but by buying or stealing or hijacking them. That is a real danger and there is no one in the world I'd less rather have them than Osama bin Laden. How do you deal with that? You deal with that by helping with Russian security for their weapons. You deal with it by dealing with Pakistan in a number of ways which are not improved by attacking Iraq. The nuclear weapon would be safer from Al Qaeda if Saddam weren't attacked than they would be in Russia or Pakistan. So that is a total hoax there.

Q: Another theme of your book is that speaking truth to power is not enough.

Ellsberg: During the Vietnam War a major theme of a Quaker activist group I knew of was telling truth to power, which was exemplified by literally going into the Pentagon or White House and speaking frankly in a dialogue with them. I don't at all want to say that is worthless, but there is a difference in values and priorities there. These people are not going to be reached by that. There is an expression in Congress—that "They may not see the light, but they'll feel the heat."

What people in power need is to have their own power undermined by exposure of their wrongly held secrets and their pretensions to legitimacy and their concealment of what their real politics are. They need to be confronted by generating counterpower through Congress, the courts, the Unions, the universities, and the press. None of which did very well in the Vietnam War.

Still, without all of them in motion, it would have gone on a lot longer and it would have gotten a lot worse.

So I think an important lesson of the book is that I was inspired by Randy Keeler and others who stood in the doorway of the Oakland induction center, and were in demonstrations, and who were not simply speaking the truth behind closed doors to power. They were inspiring people to join in a movement that challenged that power. I was convinced then and I am all the more convinced now that this has to be done nonviolently. Violence simply plays into the hands of the violent institutions. It legitimizes their means and legitimizes their use of them, and justifies repression. It makes it easier for them.

Q: Does any other lesson occur to you looking back on the Pentagon Papers?

Ellsberg: Given a non-violent philosophy, the personal risk-taking that's involved in telling the truth that the boss does not want told can be effective, although there's no guarantee of it. If Powell stays in office I suspect it will be partly in the tradition of a McNamara who says to himself that nothing he does as an individual against the will of the president will have any effect. I've known so many people who tell themselves that 'nothing I do can possibly have any effect.' Well, actually I did, and Nixon through his own reaction did things that brought himself down. You can have an effect.

Commentary

Senator Paul Wellstone: In Memorium
1944-2002

by
Stephen Eric Bronner
&
Frances Fox Piven

Politicians and pundits were quick to offer their obituary rituals for Paul Wellstone. It is somehow jarring to hear so much warm praise for the independence and principle of someone they often ignored and usually scorned. Paul was always a man of the left. But he was also able to reach beyond the left. Especially in Minnesota, but all over the country, his admirers are more numerous than his political supporters, and they are stunned and grieved. Marchers carry his name aloft on banners, people gather in candle light vigils, they construct memorials to the man that are reminiscent of the memorials to the victims of 9/11. We are still shocked by the tragedy of his death, that of his wife, his daughter, three of his aides, and the pilots of that small airplane. We think of him and, suddenly, we recognize Paul's qualities, and realize the magnitude of our loss.

Paul Wellstone was spirited and energetic and lived for his politics. But he also lived for people: for his wife, his family, his friends, his supporters, and his constituents. He took risks that few politicians would dare, usually confident that he would somehow persuade enough people to make it worthwhile. But Paul also knew how to pick his battles: he was willing to compromise. More than that: he understood that the politician—not the academic and not the advocate—but the politician cannot help but compromise. What made him unique was not his purity, for that is the quality of saints not politicians, but his ability to make clear that his retreats were tactical and that he was committed to a broader vision. He lived his politics as if it were a moral calling, rather than as a job or a series of photo-opportunities, and he embodied a term that is often used derisively. He was pragmatic, a pragmatic idealist.

For many of us, politics follows or seems to follow from some master theory, a theory about capitalism or class conflict or neo-liberalism or empire, perhaps. Paul Wellstone knew all our theories, he had indeed taught them when he was a political science professor at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. But those theories only loosely informed his political efforts. Rather, he viewed politics as a moral enterprise, grounded in elemental convictions about equality, democracy, community and a mutuality of respect. He took for granted that those convictions were actually widely shared and that if only he could discuss them with people, if only he could reach out, common cause could be made for the common good. Or, putting it another way, he genuinely believed that by sharing with people something of their lives, he and they together might make our world more egalitarian, more democratic, and more intelligent.

So it was for his entire adult life: as a professor at Carleton where the students flocked to his classes; as an organizer of welfare recipients in Rice County; as an activist in the P 9 meatpacking workers doomed strike against Hormel; with farmers fighting a war with the utility companies over high voltage power lines; and countless other struggles. Everywhere he went, and in every battle he joined, Paul reached out, ready to smile and joke and talk, about politics as he saw it, politics as a moral enterprise of the community. Even in the Senate, he was invariably cordial and warm and gregarious, probably convinced that even the members of what is increasingly becoming an all-white country club could, in time, be won over. It is these human and ethical qualities that we think—we hope—are being appreciated as we all grieve over his death.

Again, however, it should not only be these qualities. There have been many fine men and women of warmth and charm with similar convictions and ideals. Paul was, after all, elected to the Senate three times with slim margins in a state with strong conservative forces. Ideals aren't enough to achieve that: he did not stay in the Senate, and he did not wield a measure of clout in the Senate, simply by turning up and voting for what was right. He wore his flag in his lapel; he voted for the Patriot Act; he voted for the Defense of Marriage Act, something he later regretted, and there were other times he cast his vote with those or different convictions or those with no convictions at all.

Accepting the existence of many injustices is perhaps the prerequisite for changing any of them. Success in politics, especially in electoral politics, requires flexibility and pragmatism

Paul could not help but consider the degree of political opposition to his causes while trying to make the most of political opportunities for furthering them. He suffered those calculations intensely. Which issues should he endorse? How far could he go? What was the price? Who might serve as an ally on a mental health bill or in opposing welfare retrenchment or the looming war on Iraq? And on top of it, as he made these gut-wrenching decisions, he had to wonder just how much we on the Left—his friends and his comrades—would pummel him for one compromise or another.

Sometimes the criticisms of Paul were legitimate, other times not. This is not the place for a litany of the issues and how he voted. But it is the place to consider that he showed us on the outside, because we are on the outside, what we too often tend to ignore: the difference between intelligent pragmatism and rank opportunism. That difference is not set in stone: it becomes apparent only insofar as we are provided with a plausible way of justifying compromises and maintaining the connection between ends and means. Few politicians can do either. Paul Wellstone could do both. This gave us reason to trust him. That is why he is a politician whom we will remember not merely with affection, but with respect and reverence.

Commentary
Iraq's Tragedy: Waiting for Godot!

by
Wadood Hamad

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I

A horrendous presentiment of yet another war is looming. Hawks in Washington, and their egregious apologists in London, are preparing to unleash a devastating war against Iraq under the pretext of "liberating" it from the dictator Saddam Hussein who is presumed to possess weapons of mass destruction, and hence a threat to U.S. security. Students of the not-too-distant history would recognize that the Butcher of Baghdad had been a U.S.-U.K. ally for well over three decades, and his use of deadly chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers and the Iraqi Kurdish population, under the very watchful eyes of U.S. and U.K. policymakers and military experts during the 1980s, has been well documented. The fact, as British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw averred on October 9, 2002, during his visit to Tehran, that the west had been wrong in cozying up to Saddam Hussein's régime during the 1980s, and that a wrong must now be righted, should not be taken at face value. Has the west's conscience just been pricked and now it wants to right a wrong? Has the decade-long demonization of Saddam Hussein as an Arab Hitler resulted from the sudden awakening of the intelligence and state apparatchik in the U.S. and Britain? Is the imminent war being prepared at the Pentagon aimed to "liberate" the people of Iraq? Was it by happenstance that the *New York Times* credited Saddam Hussein in 1975, then vice-president but effectively the first man in command, for his "personal strength" in seeing to the "pragmatic" and "cooperative" nature of the burgeoning Ba'athist régime of Iraq? Were these epithets not testimony to the fact that this régime, with explicit U.S. support and backing,[1] overthrew the first republic in a bloody coup on February 8, 1963, executed thousands of leftists, progressive independents and communists and effectively abrogated an organically grown experiment toward establishing democracy? This very régime consolidated power in 1968, having liquidated even its erstwhile allies within elements of the Arab-nationalists in Iraq. It seems imperative that one

at least attempt to probe a little beneath the thick surface of disinformation laid daily by U.S. mainstream media outlets and scions of officialdom so as to endeavor to proffer serious responses.

My main concern is the hapless people of Iraq, victim to four decades of an atrocious Ba'athist reign of terror aided and abetted by U.S.-British self-serving geopolitical interests and a U.S.-sponsored campaign of dehumanization, subjugation and sheer extinction through the imposition of genocidal economic sanctions during the last twelve years. How and where do they figure in the Anglo-American plans? A cursory review may help elucidate the point.

II

In 1976, Saddam Hussein struck a deal, orchestrated and blessed by Henry Kissinger, with the Shah of Iran, which promulgated the latter's halting support for the Kurdish insurgents in Iraqi Kurdistan in return for Saddam Hussein's giving away half of Shatt al-Arab, the water estuary at the tip of the Gulf, to Iran. (In 1980, reclaiming this estuary was the pretext for waging war against the new Islamic régime of Iran.) Immediately thereafter, the Iraqi régime, then presided over by Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (deposed by Hussein in 1979, then killed), unleashed its first cycle of deportations. Thousands of Iraqi Faili Kurds were driven out of their homes, barely with clothes on, and literally thrown at the Iranian borders. Their crime? The Ba'athist régime professed their impure lineage since their ancestors had originated from Iran several centuries back. Shortly after his palace coup and accession to power in 1979, and intensively during the early '80s, Saddam Hussein would deport more than 500,000 Iraqi Shi'ites, most of whom were Arabs, using the same pretext. Hundreds of children, old women and men perished in the rugged terrain between Iraq and Iran as the hapless deportees were unloaded from lorries and left to the elements and wild life, with no food or proper clothing. All this, and more horrendous atrocities, took place while the west, particularly the U.S. and Britain, armed, traded, supported this régime and deliberately ignored the cries of the Iraqi progressive opposition, which experienced systematic torture and eventual exile: because it suited the west's "strategic plans" and "national interests."

Historical analysis has fallen victim to rabid trends glorifying theories of cultural specificity, especially, but not exclusively, applied to Third World societies. Their theoretical framework embodies cultural "incompatibility" and other varyingly sanitized and fragmentary versions of what may be presented as "identity politics" or "communitarianism." Samuel Huntington—the arch proponent of this morbid picture epitomized by his thesis of the "clash of civilizations"—propounded some years ago that dictators in the east were a catalyst to development, then prophesied that owing to intrinsic "cultural differences," the east was "destined" not to catch up with the developed west. To many of these pundits, Confucianism was responsible for China's backwardness, but it is *now* the essence behind its accelerated economic development. These pseudo-theories are based on the prejudice that differences are always decisive, while similarities are the result only of coincidence: a parochialism that transcends any sense of rationality.

Besotted by this trend, it has been suggested, on-and-off for well over a decade, that Iraq is an artificial formation and owing to its "ethnic" and "religious" diversity which caused much turmoil, only the scenario of cantonizing the country would, according to those pundits, prove stable. However, a crucial point, ostensibly obfuscated, is that social diversity could prove an element of strength to any one country. Fawaz Gerges, professor of International Affairs and Middle Eastern Studies at Sarah Lawrence College in New York State, reduces Iraq's vibrant, but troubled, history to being "the most violent and volatile country in the region."[2] He further supports his conclusion by relying on the veteran Egyptian journalist Mohammed H. Heikal's pronouncement that "violence has become ingrained in Iraqi character." Such absurd reductionism and marginalization of Iraq's richly diverse political and intellectual fortitude not only runs contrary to the historical record,[3] but smacks of the sheer submission of Arab pseudo-intellectuals to a culture of politico-religious fundamentalism originated and perpetuated by right-wing forces, whether in the east or west. No one does—nor should one—suggest the innateness of violence within Lebanese society as motley political and religious factions tore each other apart during the years of the bloody civil war. Neither should one profess the dismemberment of Egypt as a result of the politically motivated inter- and intra-religious hostilities that claimed hundreds of innocent Copt and Muslim lives—which marred the country's social and political progress. And, how does the history of U.S. slavery figure into the making of the American psyche; is prejudice engrained in the white man's make-up?

A pseudo-psychoanalytical examination of human history is patently flawed. The agency that drives and distorts history does not solely lie within the realm of self-motivated communalism, or inherent psychological biases, but necessarily within the socio-politico-economic context of any one society. Hence, Gerges's depiction that Iraqis turned "inward to the safe harbor of tribalism and religious and ethnic fractionalism," completely misses the trajectory and reality of Iraq's history, and speaks volumes of the schematic attempts by such pundits to talk the talk that gets them to U.S. national media limelight: abandon history and rationality, and you shall accede to the status of (well paid) "experts." And, who is better to denigrate Arabs than an Arab lackey?

Since the emergence of the modern Iraqi polity, sectarian chauvinism, while not explicitly enforced as in Lebanon, has been systematically institutionalized in all aspects of governmental political machinations, dealings and planning: the progeny of the British concocted Cox-al-Naqeeb[4] plan laying down the basis for the pyramidal power structure in the nascent government of Iraq in 1921. The Ba'athists' contribution culminated in marrying this structure with brutal means of political suppression. However, the experience of the Iraqi working class challenges the conceptual construct of sectarianism: workers who were poor, largely illiterate, and drawn from a wide variety of ethnic and religious communities, demonstrated not only the ability to organize labor unions but to sustain solidarity during long and drawn out strikes where the full repressive force of the British and the Iraqi state were brought to bear. Effectively, sectarianism was largely confined to the urban lower middle and middle classes, particularly members of the Sunni Arab community.[5] When resorted to by the state and upper classes, it was viewed cynically and deployed for instrumental purposes. This matter has received only limited analysis and exposure over the whole of the twentieth century; consequently handing over unbridled control to ferocious right-wing forces, within and outside Iraq, to exploit this aspect and hence direct Iraq's social diversity into a time bomb, when not exploding, severely damaging the societal structural fabric and, in this conjuncture, compromising the social consciousness of the people. As such, this resulted in the breakdown of the modern formation of society and the absence of any semblance of a popularly supported polity; and, consequently, culminated in the people slowly reverting to archaic notions of mobilization by relying on one's family, tribe, sect and/or neighborhood.

Thereupon, efforts to establish a culturally pluralistic and participatory political system in Iraq can still draw on the experiences of the Iraqi working class. Their behavior demonstrates that the chauvinistic, exclusivist and repressive politics that have hitherto characterized Ba'athist rule do not represent the only future for Iraq, and solutions, that are lasting and progressive, may well arise organically. The history of Iraq's working class indeed offers hope against the dominant notion that we are destined for a civilizational clash and a culturally based "politics of intolerance."

III

The situation in Iraq presents a dilemma for its people, not so much because it is the only one of its kind, but due to the fact that internal repression has been intricately intertwined with imperialist western designs. The extent of hurt and perpetual suffering has accumulated and become synonymous with the Iraqi milieu. A brutal totalitarian polity for well over three decades, and the devastating economic sanctions régime continue to strangle the people of Iraq and the country today is on the verge of social and economic collapse, placing the lives of its civilian population in great peril. In this human tragedy, the innocent people of Iraq are held hostage by the U.S.-British policy of collective punishment and by Saddam Hussein's reign of terror. There is no legal basis for U.S.-British plans to wage war against Iraq, and an attack would be in violation of Article 1, Section 4, of the Charter of the United Nations which states: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state . . ." Furthermore, there can be no moral justification for the wanton punishment of an entire populace for the sake of deposing a political régime however despotic it may be, and however desirable a goal this may be.

The response of Iraqi exiles and émigrés—particularly those living in the west—has reflected the dominant state of despondency that permeates political discourse within the entire Arab world. The "political kiosks"—inaccurately referred to as political parties or umbrella groups—that sprang up after 1991 and have been fully co-opted by one foreign intelligence service or another, but predominantly by those of the U.S.: the Iraqi National Congress (INC), Iraqi National Accord (INA), the Monarchist Movement,

etc., were the outcome of both (i) the fragmentation and successful marginalization resulting from years of systematically oppressing legitimate secular and religious opposition forces; and, equally importantly, (ii) U.S. desire for complete control over a country that is hugely wealthy in intellectual and natural resources. The mere act of bombing Iraq, during the 1991 U.S.-led Gulf War, would not, on its own, have ensured unchallenged U.S. control and domination over the country. Its people needed to be humiliated into long-term submission in order to safeguard those treasured U.S. interests. Hence the institution of the economic sanctions régime, while retaining Saddam Hussein's police apparatus almost intact. Iraq's infrastructure: water and electric facilities, bridges, even ravines, etc., was instead ferociously rained upon with B-52 bombers and long- and short-range missiles. A people and a mainly conscript army, out of eight years of a depleting war with neighboring Iran and the ignominious adventure into Kuwait, rose up spontaneously and virulently a mere few days after the U.S.-dictated cease-fire only to discover (perhaps naively) that their overthrowing Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and endeavoring to establish some democracy were contrary to U.S. strategic interests. Another bombing campaign would now consummate this hegemony for the foreseeable future, and hermetically seal the entire region from irredentist tendencies for quite some time.

A weak Iraq reigned over by a ruthless, but now toothless, despot would serve those interests rather well. Iraq experimented with national rule for the interest of its people for a brief episode after the 1958 revolution. Plans, as now clearly evident from declassified U.S. National Archives, to abort this experiment earnestly materialized once Law No. 80 was basically put into effect. Law 80 was to usher the gradual transfer of Iraq's national curse, oil, from the almost complete hegemony of British-U.S. companies to the control of Iraq's inhabitants: a sacrilegious move that prompted the ferocious coalescence of U.S.-British power to instigate and direct the Ba'athist-led coup of 1963, and the decades of disaster that ensued. Iraqi Ba'athists, with Saddam Hussein at the helm, have diligently and obsequiously served their U.S. masters; contributed to ruining Iraq, materially and socially; abandoned the Palestinians on many an occasion—let them be massacred by Jordan's King Hussein in 1970, for instance—while conveniently withdrawing Iraqi troops stationed just outside the refugee camps; killed over half-a-million Iranians and Iraqis in a pointless 8-year war which caused a serious set-back to independent industrial development in either country; contributed to the

creation of two generations of Iraqis almost devoid of political national aspirations for self development, self rule and progress.

Nationalism and religion have been employed, to suit their ends and in a manner peculiar to the circumstances of their environment, equally by Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush: God and flag are ushered to whip up hysteria among the people and, hence, ensure their submission. What is most interesting, however, is the diametrically opposed significance and subsequent effects of these notions in the cases of Iraq and the U.S.: the majority of Iraqis have never willingly accepted, nor genuinely believed, these implementations; they were, in essence, marshaled by Hussein and his clique for an Arab/Islamic audience, who had, to varying extent and foolishly, not rejected—partly because it *appeared* as an antidote to the inherent racism in Bush *et al.*'s rhetoric itself. It is as if George W. Bush is assiduously buttressing Saddam Hussein's credentials as a pious Muslim and Arab-nationalist: neither of which has ever been seriously substantiated by deed on Hussein's part. (Segments of the Arab and western left had also unquestioningly taken Saddam Hussein's novel credentials at face value: something that will seriously hamper their understanding of the intricacies of the imperialist-dictator complex, and ultimately distance them from the oppressed in Iraq and elsewhere in the Third World.) In this entangling clash of rhetoric, the American people have seemingly begun to forfeit their essential civil liberties and human rights for a mythological conception of a perpetual enemy who is ethereal, "envious" and "jealous" of their "way of life." The continued campaign of disinformation carried out by the U.S. mainstream media is bound to accentuate the level of historical, geographical, political and cultural ignorance that, alas, will necessarily translate into malice: from the manufacturing of consent, as Noam Chomsky aptly characterized the role of the media, to purposely manufacturing a clash of cultures.

While Iraq continues to be raped, Europe bleats every now and then in opposition. Effectively and essentially, it is engaging in, borrowing from the poignant description penned by Norman Geras, a "contract of mutual indifference." Eyes are averted from the genocidal economic sanctions that may have claimed some half-a-million Iraqi children, and gravely effected lasting damage to the societal fabric—much as Europe ignored the gas chambers and became complicit actors in the Jewish holocaust, a guilt that is now manifested in basically having to ignore racist Israeli policies aimed toward

dispossessing, humiliating and ethnically cleansing the Palestinians. However, the Arab world, demoralized, powerless, and basically comatose, intermittently awakens to nefarious and pointless bouts of terror instigated by an obnoxious reversion to an irrational conception of history and a deformed yearning to a long-lost mythological age that seriously set them backwards: a defeatist cycle effectively nourished by the dynamics of the U.S. imperialist-local dictator alliance.

Yet, sadly, many Iraqi exiles and émigrés foolishly try to convince themselves that the U.S. seeks to "liberate" their hapless compatriots—in spite of the damning historical evidence to the contrary (which they should know so well) and the occasional spouting of expressive Pentagon war plans: military occupation of Iraq, akin to the British mandate of the early twentieth century, to establish firm control over the country in order to ensure the "uninterrupted and free flow of oil" under the direct auspices of the unchallenged emporium of our time. At least the U.S. administration does not shy away from vocally declaring that it is oil that it principally seeks to liberate. Listen to their words, and judge their deeds. Notwithstanding, Kanaan Makiya, a champion of the imperialism-better-than-fascism camp and an arch proponent of a U.S. invasion of Iraq, summersaults rational reasoning by propagating the myth that it is necessary to overthrow Saddam Hussein's régime, by whatever means appropriate, "[i]f the challenge represented by the [terror] attacks of Sept. 11 is going to be met."[6]

Could it conceivably be moral for anyone, much less Iraqi exiles/émigrés, to accept that one or two hundred thousand Iraqis might perish under Anglo-American bombing? If the price is worthwhile, why do those exile/émigrés not make their way right now to Iraq and present themselves as sacrificial lambs instead of the war-torn, sanctions-fatigued inhabitants of Iraq? Is death by U.S. bombs and missiles somehow more humane than Saddam Hussein's brutal killing machines? Are economic sanctions a "civilized" form of mass annihilation? To suggest that we may soon emerge from this malignant abyss would be pure fantasy and sheer foolhardiness. Nonetheless, there is plenty in Iraq's history to suggest that we can oppose, in one breath, defiantly and unhesitatingly, both imperialist hegemonic power and repressive brutal dictators—almost always clients of the former.

It is rather apposite to draw to a close by borrowing a hypothetical setting from Terry Eagleton's brilliant book *The Gatekeeper—A Memoir*. If Brecht

were to direct Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, he would have a sign lurking in the back of the stage which reads "He is not coming, you know!" It perfectly applies to Iraq. Only people, history's prime agency of change, can effect progressive, lasting change within their society; otherwise, to discount their potential when they appear voiceless and the empire preternatural and invincible, would be folly.

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Stockholm
23 October, 2002

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Notes

[1] Refer to declassified U.S. diplomatic and national security documents compiled by Lexis Nexis Academic & Library Solutions: National Archives, College Park, Maryland. Record Group 59, General records of the Department of State, Decimal Files 787, 887 and 987 (Internal Affairs) and Decimal Files 687 and 611.87 (Foreign Affairs) for 1960-January, 1963.

[2] *Washington Post*, October 8, 2002.

[3] Amongst the best works on the history and sociology of Iraqi political developments is Hanna Batatu's landmark study of Iraq's social formation during the twentieth century, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq—A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and Its Communists, Ba'thists, and Free Officers*, Princeton University Press (1978).

[4] Sir Percy Cox was chief political officer to Sir Stanley Maude who invaded and captured Baghdad in March 1917; Cox later became the British High Commissioner in Iraq; al-Naqeeb was a landowning Sunni religious figure.

[5] This argument relies, besides primary evidence available to this writer, on excellent field research by the Iraq-specialist and political scientist Eric Davis—who expounds on this theme in a forthcoming book.

[6] *New York Times*, November 21, 2001.

Commentary

The United States Hostile to the
International Criminal Court: Why?[*]

by
Dick Howard

What does the Bush administration's firm refusal to accept the Rome Treaty and the creation of an International Criminal Court mean, considering that Chris Patten, EU external affairs commissioner and European representative in Bosnia, views it as the most important step toward international progress since the creation of the United Nations? To appease his allies, Clinton had initialed the treaty even though he did not necessarily have the intention to submit it to the Senate, which would have refused to ratify it. But the Bushies are not afraid to rush these same allies as they propose, first, a (scholastic) diplomatic innovation designed to un-sign the treaty, and then, a few weeks later, take the risk to provoke a crisis when they refuse to participate in future United Nations interventions unless they are granted an explicit exemption from all jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Is this a bluff? Or is this the expression of a deeper intuition of which the Bushies are not even aware?

Some commentators are trying to explain this choice in terms of domestic policy and the perspective of the elections (as a well known aphorism suggests, all politics are local: in the November elections, Republicans may loose the control of the House where they have a majority of only six seats). But this explanation is too simplistic. Indeed, most Republicans (as well as a large majority of Americans) firmly support the "anti-terrorist" Israeli policy, interpreted as the necessity to preserve a threatened sovereignty, such as the American one, by terrorism. But to reduce foreign policy to what is at stake with the elections does not take into consideration the novelty of the situation, which has existed since the end of the Cold War and which further changed since September 11, 2001.

American sovereignty is at stake, the Bushies claim. Very well. But American sovereignty can be protected in two distinct ways. Either by the isolationist option, which consists of withdrawing one's marbles and leaving the playing field to those who are willing to occupy it (with a cynical look toward this, Europe, which often talks about morality in politics even though it is unable to invent interventional means to solidify her eloquent ideas); or by the unilateralist intervention, clearly defined by Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense, who said that the intervention in Afghanistan—unlike the one in Kosovo—would be "the mission which will determine the coalition," and not the opposite.

During the 2000 presidential election, George W. Bush seemed to lean toward the isolationist option, criticizing the Clinton-Gore team for its velleity of "nation building" which, especially in Somalia, proved to be disastrous. However, since September 11, after a brief period during which multilateralism was evoked, unilateralism predominates. Thus, for instance, the prisoners captured in Afghanistan are still in detention at the Guantanamo Naval Base, deprived of protection under the Geneva Convention and *a fortiori* of any possibility to eventually appear in a new International Criminal Court. On the battlefield, although various allied governments are trying to demonstrate their good intentions by sending either military forces or aid to reconstruct the country, the Americans clearly lead the game.

From this standpoint, the American threat to withdraw itself from United Nations' missions may be considered as one more manifestation of a unilateral policy which has no use for multilateralism, which may be viewed as the representation of a weakness and a lack of responsible will to, in the end, deter terrorism firmly and without pity. Hubert Védrine may have been right when he called America a "hyperpower." Hence, the United States will take action.

In this way, the cover page of the summer issue of *Foreign Affairs* announces, in large red letters, an article titled "American Primacy." Yet, if one takes a closer look at the article, one can see that, in fact, its title is "American Primacy in Perspective," which illustrates the enticing premises of the editors. Further, when reading the article, the reader observes that the heading of its last section is titled "Resisting Temptation." The logic proposed by the authors is worth summarizing.

The article, written by professors Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, first notes the superiority of the United States, manifested in all domains, over the rest of the world. In the military sector, this primacy is simultaneously quantitative and qualitative: the United States spends more on defense than the total expenditures of the next 15 countries; the United States spends three times more on military research than the next six powers. In the economic realm, the United States has no rival; California's economy, in itself, is larger than the sixth world power, France. As for technology, the expenditures in research surpass those of the next seven countries combined.

What is astonishing, according the authors, is that the United States dominates in these three crucial areas simultaneously. Indeed, other world powers have dominated in only one or the other of these categories—for instance, during the Pax Britannica, France and Russia combined spent more than the United Kingdom and were able to put together superior land forces. Further, with regard to the economy, the 24 percent of the world GDP controlled by the United Kingdom barely surpassed, in 1870, the young America or the rising German power. If we consider the Cold War era, the military power of the Soviet Union imposed limits on American affairs even though its economic capability was rather over estimated.

In a few words, it seems that nothing can moderate the American power, which can indulge in the joys of unilateralism. Normally, such politics would have incited other powers to create a counter-alliance to face the emergence of a hegemonic power. But America is different; it neither threatens to seize the territory of others nor does it threaten other regional powers. Finally freed from the ideological imperatives of the Cold War, it does need to run the risks of which the Vietnam War remains the archetype; nor does it need to support unreliable allies simply for ideological reasons. Because it does not need the support of allies, its decisions, freed from any external constraint, should reflect a policy of pure logic. What is this logic suggested by these authors?

"Resisting Temptation." Free to act as it pleases, the United States is also free to abstain from acting. Because it does not need allies, it can find reliable allies to establish alliances based on values (instead of alliances of complacency). But this great freedom that the United States enjoys also gives it the right to be magnanimous and to put in place a policy which integrates immediate choices into a long-term vision. Since, the authors conclude, "it is influence, not power, that is ultimately most valuable." For example, the authors continue, issues such as the environment, disease, migration, and trade barriers cannot be

solved by the application of a unilateral American power. Alluding to Machiavelli (which, of course, the authors do not cite in this quasi-official American periodical), this resistance to temptation would explain why the United States "is not only feared but also loved."

We can see how this pure political logic based on American dominance could serve as grounds for criticism of American policy in regard to the International Criminal Court. The real truth about a unilateral hegemony would be a generous multilateral policy. How can we understand this surprising reversal? Why does a similar analysis of the strategic situation by the Bushies lead to opposite conclusions?

What is striking is that these two political choices share the same vision, that of a pacified political world in which neither morality nor legality offers reliable standards when there is a need to judge ambiguous situations. The Bushies are confident of their rights and their own morality; they want to unshackle (literally) the goodness of American benevolence for the welfare of the world. Multilateralists assume that all problems can be solved when only the balance of power and the logic of self-interest intervene. The conflict is abolished; there is no room for doubt anymore; good will is sufficient.

If I underline this parallelism, it is crucial to criticize those who do not see that the juridicization by the International Crime Tribunal is subject to the same criticisms denouncing the juridicization of domestic policy. I leave the moral question aside, which some (referring to Kant) are still evoking. More importantly is the relationship between the juridical and the political. Any prosecutor must choose, once his investigation is well underway, the opportunity to hand over an accused to the courts. We know that for a long time Milosevic was untouchable, and that Karadzic and Mladic are still in hiding. We also know that it was once proposed to arrest Henry Kissinger at the Ritz during one of his visits in Paris; but we also know that the arrest of Pinochet in London has had a positive outcome for Chilean political life. What is the relationship between political decision and juridical act? And, in the case of the International Criminal Tribunal, what can be the outcome of this relationship?

The primary danger is thus a naive juridicization ignoring the dimension of political life; the second, on the contrary, comes from the inevitable politicization of the International Criminal Court. One example illustrating the first case is given by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former

Yugoslavia, which wants Jonathan Randall, a journalist for the Washington Post, to appear in the Hague. This juridical intractability does not take into account the predictable outcome of such a testimony on the journalistic profession and the public who depends on it: each journalist would henceforth become a threat that must be avoided if not eliminated, which would deprive the public of its access to the unraveling of political life, as for instance in Bosnia. A second example, a contrario, recently occurred in the United States where a law passed in Congress allows individuals who have been tortured to sue their torturers if they are on American soil. For instance, in July 2002, a federal jury in Florida ruled that two retired Salvadoran generals living in the United States (who had been pardoned, which was one of the conditions at the end of the civil war in El Salvador) were liable for acts of torture committed during the civil war. What should we think about future negotiations?

The second danger is the politicization that the United States fears. But one must take heed when evaluating the substance of their argument which, I believe, is rather weak except for one crucial point. In effect, it seems that the Rome Treaty anticipated most possible objections with regard to this matter; no one can really imagine that an American soldier who wears the blue UN helmet would be handed over to the Hague. On the other hand, given the American role, power (and omnipresence), one can imagine that a prosecutor, lusting for publicity, driven by ideology or jealousy, could seek to prosecute political figures. But again, sufficient protections seem to be in place regarding this matter. Consequently, the American argument lacks strength. It is only in light of the changes that have occurred since September 11 that we can understand the root of the American decision (which was made prior to this date, but that is another story: I do not work for the Bushies; I try to comprehend the world as it presents itself to us).

In effect, the justice system can only intervene subsequent to a criminal act. However, no politician would be willing to accept this limitation. The gravity of the unpredictable attacks was such that the American public asks and will ask that the State intervene or take preventative measures. However, it is difficult to respond to such a demand; no one knows how to define a preventive justice. This matter is being greatly debated right now, and it will be necessary to continue discussing it for a long time to come. This is an issue that must be decided upon in order to build a path to the future. For now, George W. Bush has responded in a brutal anti-political manner, first in May during his conference in the Bundestag, then in June at West Point. He referred to the necessity for preventative interventions, even pre-emptive ones.

This solution is not entirely satisfactory, especially when it involves a unilateralist American decision. We see the difficulty of the problem when we know that the Bushies' rhetoric is aimed at justifying an intervention in Iraq. But, before we agree with simplistic multilateralists and pessimists, one must note that this antipolitical choice is also a political one, as the fact that he was criticized by both the press and the public indicates; and that this decision is not unanimous within the Bush administration. In other words, there is nevertheless room for politics. It is up to us to bring our grain of salt.

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Poetry

by
Dennis Brutus

No Banyan, Only

The quiet wisdom of the body's peace:
Carnality, in this our carnal world, is all
Bamboo and iron having sealed
Our mundane eyes to views of time and peace.

Now I am strong as stones or trees are strong,
Insensible, or ignorant with vibrant life;
Streams or the air may wash or pass me by
My mind breathes quiet, lying yours along.

(Upon what meat is this man fed
That he is grown so great?
Diet of eloquent delectable accolades
Warm, soft, kindly, sweet and red.)

Under no banyan tree I strip no onion skin
To find a néant kernel at the still center:
"A little winter love in a dark corner?"
No, Love (for Chrissake, no) no love, no sin.

Sublunary no more, yet more acutely mundane
          now
Man's fingers claw the cosmos in gestures of
          despair,
Our souls, since Hersey, seek the helix of
          unknowing
Save mine, you-saved, now leafing like a bough.

Breaking through theory-thickets I thrust
To this one corpus, one more self

That gives Content and content to an earth
Littered and sterile with ideas and rust.

Let alphabetic electrons bloat on Freudian
        excrement,
Our golden bodies, dross-indifferent, count no
        gain,
Finding Gaugin's eternal island afternoon
And you hibiscus and my continent.

Most kindly you and what indeed can be
More most-required than kindliness
In this our shared world? And thus
My thanks for heartsease balm you render me.

Animals, perhaps, without merit of their own
—Forgive me Poverello, Paduan, my conceit—
Attain at last such steady ecstasy
As this you give, a gift to make us both your
own.

On The Beach

Seablue sky and steelblue sea
surge in cubist turbulence,
dissolve, reform in fluid light
and cadences of sandsharp breeze;

spindrift from sand-dunes tresses down
to inlets where rock-fragments shoal,
seaspray and statice distil the mood
salt-sweet, foamwhite, seaweed-brown.

All in this jagged afternoon
where rock, light, sand and sea-air sing,
brown hair and air-live skin complete
this transitory plenitude.

Their Behavior

Their guilt
is not so very different from ours:
— who has not joyed in the arbitrary exercise of
      power
or grasped for himself what might have been
      another's
and who has not used superior force in the
moment when he could,
(and who of us has not been tempted to these
things?) —
so, in their guilt,
the bare ferocity of teeth,
chest-thumping challenge and defiance,
the deafening clamor of their prayers
to a deity made in the image of their prejudice
which drowns the voice of conscience,
is mirrored our predicament
but on a social, massive, organized scale
which magnifies enormously
as the private dehabille of love
becomes obscene in orgies.

Art or Science?

by
Wolf Singer*

A rt and science appear as complimentary attempts to discover the conditions of the world which could not be more different from each other. Artists explore their innermost experience, search for an expression for that which they recognize, and so add new realities to what they find. Scientists collect and describe what they find, order it through separation and association, discover regularities and formulate laws only giving credence to that which can be proven through replication, that which works, or that which is at least equally comprehensible to all those who adhere to agreed-upon rules of observation and organization of phenomena. The former provide information about their most private, that is, subjective, experience of the world, while the latter claim that they paint an objective picture of the world.

Still, what each one does is not so different. They have in common the idea that things—the concrete inventory of our world—are the tangible, visible, fixed points in an infinitely complex web of relationships, which—inaccessible to the primary senses—ultimately give things their meaning. They share the often-passionate desire to make these relationships accessible and to find descriptions for the invisible, which is not immediately comprehensible through the senses. They also have in common—if they then manage to do their own claims justice—the ability to learn or to invent languages which make all this possible. Of course, these artistic languages appear in disguises that make them seem different, despite similar fundamental structures. Presumably the uncovering of hidden relationships and the ascribing of meaningful connections always depend on the same cognitive processes, a function of the brain which we call "creativity": the observation of the immediately knowable; the premonition of relations; the playful permutation of combinative possibilities; circumscription and elimination; the recognition of coherence using who-knows-what criteria (maybe even the criteria of logic are aesthetic); and then the arising of the certainty (in the case that the exercise has been successful) that a new relationship has been discovered and a new ascription of meaning has

succeeded. We do not know what motivates this mostly laborious search, nor what makes the uncovering of new connections and the experience of coherence so satisfying, that the search for them can develop into an often painful addiction. It is difficult to imagine, however, that the struggle for the right proposition in the artistic expression is based on anything other than the search for coherent relations in the sciences—and that is why it is good when art and science recognize one another.

Gabriele Leidloff must have had an inkling of the invisible relationships between the hitherto unconnected languages of these two descriptive systems when she began to use tools developed by others in her search to make the invisible conceivable. Her work with visually presentable medical procedures and her project "log-in/locked out"—a forum between art and neuroscience—stand as metaphors for the premonition that behind the appearances lie hidden fundamental structures and relationships. It is these structures and relationships which must be discovered if one wants to add to the realm of experience more of the world than is immediately recognized by the senses—senses that, due to evolutionary pragmatism, are initially only interested in what lies at the surface and serves the ability to get away. The search for hidden relationships and basic structures also reveals itself in the combinative game in which Gabriele Leidloff plumbs the depths of the relational realm by permutating confrontations. Here too the reduction to the essential precedes the combinative search for relationships—a common procedure in the sciences. Gabriele Leidloff places reproductions, imitations, and copies—and not the concrete objects themselves—in relationships. She is interested in the relation between already abstracted contents and in the process takes advantage of the reductionist effect of each method of reproduction. In this way she frees the observer from the pressure exerted by the visual languages of media and protects him or her from being dominated by concrete, completely formulated pictures, which leave no room for wandering attention and the search for the invisible. After all, reproductions, excerpts, and fragmented sequences are in need of individual reconstruction, demand synthesis by the observer, and allow the option of concentrating on that which is not visible, on that which is in between, and on the relationships which help give meaning to the depicted fixed points.

In this way the search for the invisible produces new realities which mutate into problems demanding further research. Neither science nor art can thus ever come to a conclusion, and because they both seek to discover the same

world, each would do well to take notice of the other's suggestions—Gabriele Leidloff's work presents one possible way of doing this.

Kurt Jacobsen

Review: *Empire*
by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri

reviewed by
Kurt Jacobsen

E*mpire* is the silliest "serious" book I have had the misfortune to read all the way through since the late Allan Bloom's ultra-dyspeptic rightwing bestseller *The Closing of The American Mind*. I suppose now as then a lot of half-educated, overly earnest readers will dip into this profoundly numbing prose and emerge shivering and feverish, feeling like reborn, fully cultivated and thoroughly hip human beings. All one need do for redemption is wade resolutely through a woefully obscurantist four hundred plus page pseudo-philosophical obstacle course bristling with sub-Althusserian jargon - although poor demented Athusser, unlike Hardt and Negri, occasionally had brilliant things to say.

On principle Hardt and Negri never stoop to use of a simple term where a supercallifragilisticexpialidocious monstrosity will substitute. One then watches in far from enraptured horror as the authors knit together the woolliest of conclusions from the stray floating fluff emitting from post-modernism's worst tendency: a relentless reduction of everybody and everything to a phalanx of airy abstractions. Let's talk about the "ganglia of the social structure" or the "collective biopolitical body" or "juridical transformative function" or maybe the "dense complex of experience," not to speak of good old-fashioned (by now) "hybridity" which seems to be their key heroic notion: the more hybridity, the better.

What on earth is the "concrete universal," and where is it? Mere mortals clinging to everyday "planes of immanence" by our fingernails may be pleased to hear that "ontology is not an abstract science" but a goodly few will reserve judgment on the, ahem, matter. Any New Age pilgrims who imagine that they can navigate this brave new globalizing world by the dim lights of the blurry instrument panel supplied here are well on their way to a dire plunge over the edge of the world straight into neo-virtual reality, which

is way better than the real thing, which of course isn't so real when you really examine it. I like "de-naturalizing" stodgy concepts as much as the next guy but where is all this stuff going? There's nothing here but recycled insights and ill-considered guesswork.

The authors' ambition is to herald a remarkable new phase of capital accumulation, a frothy fermented post-modern phase. Like Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, Hardt and Negri come to bury capitalism, not only to praise it fulsomely. In so doing, they revive the hoary economistic creed that history is on "our" side whether the other guys like it or not. Their message of good cheer, the gospel inside the jargon, is that triumphalist capitalism, via the impersonal cunning of history, is producing a form of labor power that is "immaterial" and raring to go to overturn the creaky old binary order of self/other, and presumably capital/labor too. Immaterial labor produces "a service, cultural product, knowledge or communication." It "involves social interaction and cooperation" such that workers "don't need capitalists to supply elements that enable valorization, and can do it themselves which means" there is a mouth-watering "potential for a spontaneous and elementary communism." As old-line communists foretold, the "circuits of production are finally making labor power capable of governing." Productivity no longer results from abject "regulation of the multitude" but rather from "the productive synergy of the multitude" who produce as well "democratic pressure to surpass every limit." Labor (I first slipped and wrote, life,) becomes "increasingly immaterial and realizes its value through a singular and continuous process of innovation in production, merging and hybridizing with the machine" in a "machinic metamorphosis" - call it android anarchism. Sound appealing? How about familiar?

A lot of people, from Marx and Engels to Daniel Bell and Brian Aldiss, have been here before. In her intriguing 1988 book *In the Age of The Smart Machine* Shoshana Zuboff smartly tackled this subject of "immaterial labor" in a study of conflicts between management and the work force over control in several service industries where computerization enabled the devolving of the big boss man's duties to the peons. But Zuboff stressed, like numerous other critics, that this potential is resisted by masters who don't want their precious power to vanish. Hardt and Negri are majestically content to augur an empowered proletariat, then assume away the existence and importance of managers/owners/union breaking consultants and suchlike intent on shaping

developments in their own interest. Does it not matter that there are agents out there avidly interested in keeping their good thing going?

Hardt and Negri believe there is afoot a "new global logic and structure of rules that reconfigures what we view as sovereignty." Sovereignty for them is a bad thing, a betrayal, ultimately, of every progressive movement that ever arose. (Many scholars point out that sovereignty was always a porous and contested category.) Is anyone in charge here? The US "does not, and indeed no nation-state can today, form the center of an imperial project," a statement which looks a tad premature in this post-9/11 world. The coming Empire instead is "the political subject that effectively regulates the global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world"—except "it" can't be touched, "it" has no address, "it" is a phantasm that liberates capital from all remaining fetters, such as the state. Hardt and Negri's promiscuous use of "it" dubiously presupposes that the "it" is not itself a political creation. They always speak of "processes of globalization" as if they were autonomous, as do business organizations, which lobby like crazy for rule changes and piously pretend afterward that the advantages they gained were an effect of impersonal forces. That in good part is how Enron, and all its associated malefactors, happened.

Without the state, "social capital has no way to project and realize its collective interests," but the "decline of the autonomous political sphere" means that there is no point in trying to modify or even take control of the state. (Yet another venerable debate.) A "new type of resistance has to be invented," but does it follow that all the old forms need to be ditched? Will humanitarian NGOs nudge aside nation-states? The link between sovereignty and the people—nationalism—may have been devised as a mystifying force but that is hardly all there is to it. Can anyone demonstrate that progressive movements occurring outside states have become the main driving forces of beneficial change within them? The "dominating powers," unbeknownst to themselves, are "mutating." So we need an "affirmation of fragmented identities as a means of contesting the sovereignty of both the modern subject and nation-state." The state must be smashed but in that unlikely event, aren't the reins of power likely to be reconstituted nastily in the international realm, just as when a concert of European powers arose to crush the revolutions of 1848? They also oppose any futile "delinking" from the world economy, but de-linking is different than demanding deals that are senstive

to internal needs. Dani Rodrick and others point out that states prosper more when they impose some conditions on "free" trade.

The "new symbolic order produced not only commodities but subjectivities" (although commodities disappear immediately after they are mentioned). Hardt and Negri's discussion of the formation of subjectivities surprisingly agrees with the way so many "bourgeois" philosophers portray it, as a matter of pure passivity, of hapless subjects always being acted upon. The discourse-obsessiveness of the analysis make the clarion call that "Truth will not make us free, but taking control of the production of truth will" sounds downright Orwellian (our Ministry of Truth against theirs). The authors encourage the "affinity of hybridities and the free play of differences across boundaries" but corporate sharpies, as they say themselves, incorporate it, revel in it and sell it back to us in house-trained forms. "The ideology of the world market has always been the antifoundational and anti-essentiality discourse par excellence" so that "capitalist marketing strategies have long been postmodernist." So what is to be done? Well, can you subtract yourself from the relations of domination? Great refusal, anyone?

Hardt and Negri plaintively argue that it's good "not to forget the utopian tendencies that have always accompanied the progression toward globalization." Sure, but when exactly did these utopian tendencies kick in and who exemplified them? The conquistadors or the US cavalry or the British East India Company? The authors celebrate the "love of differences or the belief in the universal freedom and equality of humanity proper to the revolutionary thought of renaissance humanism." But this tendency isn't remotely promoted or desired by corporate CEOs whose highest idea of culture is shedding a safe tear at the opera. The latter want no part of untameable utopian tendencies. To take a page from Polanyi, could it be that what modern globalization under corporate auspices is battling is anyone who wants to reform, humanize, soften, or transform its harsh features to allow for a humane existence? The enemy that present-day globalization wants to steamroller are precisely the inadvertent ceding of power to (for lack of a better term) popular forces, to stamp out any inadvertent rebellious sparks it has spread since its inception. That may not be all that is happening, but it is part of it. As the authors admit, we are facing a "complex, contradictory, uneven development."

The gist of the authors' case only becomes clear when they fasten on Marx's ambivalent celebration of British colonialization of India as an implicit analogy to modern global forces, as if the latter merely uprooted hidebound cultures with no progressive intent or possibilities within them. The benighted, the superstitious, the cruel are doomed. The new globalization has a "double mission," as Marx wrote of India, "one destruction, the other regeneration—the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundation of western society in Asia." This is the postmodern rendition of the invisible hand, which performs wonderful deeds that were no part of the ruler's intentions. Don't sweat the sweatshops, the forces of history are on our side. There'll be pie in the sky, by and by. Is this a tune we need to hear credulous radicals singing?

They ultimately pin their hopes on "transversal mobility" which evidently generates "nomadic desires" that cannot be controlled within the "disciplinary regime," a regime spreading wily-nily throughout the world. The authors anticipate that the common interests of first world and third world workers (or "multitudes," as they like to call them) will find effective expression through the different tools they wield to attack an increasingly de-legitimized order. Never underestimate the innovation and antagonism inherent in economic processes. Well, that at least is good advice. They hail the "profound economic power of cultural movements," whatever that may mean, which forge a "new subjectivity" that changes everything. But enough. Somewhere in their long meandering tour through philosophers and critics, Hardt and Negri accurately describe 'Orientalism' as a scholarly project conducted "not to gain real knowledge but a discourse that creates its own object." That unfortunately is exactly what they accomplish here in their own wrong-headed and supposedly counter-hegemonic way.

Review

The Radical Center: The Future of American Politics
by Ted Halstead and Michael Lind

reviewed by
Joe Kling

L et's cut to the chase. What we have here is the latest attack on New Deal philosophy, values, and programs, brought to us courtesy of two of the current crop of the best and the brightest—Ted Halstead, founder and president of the centrist think-tank, New America Foundation, and Michael Lind, reformed conservative activist, social critic, novelist, and senior fellow at the foundation. These are brash young thinkers, members of the new, technocratic, intellectual elite, for whom, when it comes to public policy and the meeting of social needs, the privatizing structures of the information economy are all, and the role of ideology in giving interpretive meaning to those structures, nothing.

Halstead and Lind are celebrants of the new middle, a Third Way on steroids. It is "high time for a new political program," they tell us, "one tailored to the new realities of Information Age America and yet anchored in our nation's timeless values." (15) Since their goal is to move beyond what they consider the obsolete policy commitments of the traditional left and right, they call their new political program—and their book—*The Radical Center*, although while it is deliberately, even aggressively centrist, there is little about it that is radical.

The authors do claim to be writing in the American progressive tradition, rather than the conservative, and their commitment to a society in which no one goes without is well meant, energetic, and complex. But their framework is the progressivism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and their models, Herbert Croly, theoretician of the emerging liberal corporate state, and Theodore Roosevelt, its political embodiment, whose presidency was the first, through the use of regulatory legislation, to attempt to rein in the social ruin bred by an unrestrained capitalism. Just as Croly and Roosevelt, standing at the cusp of the transition from an agrarian to an industrial America, developed a public philosophy for negotiating the social

and political upheavals brought about by the latter, so Halstead and Lind seek to develop a public philosophy for negotiating the social and political upheavals initiated by the rise of the programming technologies that structure the information economy. The challenge today, as it was then, they tell us, is "not to reject technological and economic progress, but to channel it to minimize the bad effects and share the benefits with all Americans." (213) Such a challenge, they argue, is beyond the capacities of the New Deal paradigm. Time, therefore, to re-order the social contract.

Admittedly, one could do worse than look to the middle-class progressivism of early twentieth century America which gave us antitrust legislation, the first worker safety laws, wilderness conservation, the abolition of child labor, beginning oversight of the food and drug industries, and even, with the Sixteenth Amendment (1913), the income tax. The question, however, is whether we could do better. The analogy between our contemporary economic transformations and those of the Progressive era is not so much false as facile. The problem facing post-industrialism is not, as it was for the Progressives, how to develop a public philosophy of social accountability across the range of economic and social difference. It is how to hold onto such a philosophy. For the central political problem of the information society is to maintain a system of governance based on people's increasing social and economic *interdependence*, even as that interdependence becomes less visible and immediately experienced, but still no less embedded than in previous eras in the structures of everyday life. The public philosophy offered by Halstead and Lind, however, remains blind to the ways in which the economic and social relations ordered by advanced communications technologies continue to link people together in common predicament.

Post-industrialism breaks apart and isolates the critical elements of the system of production. Computer based processes fragment the workplace into globally disparate sites, increase, domestically, the proportion of economic resources devoted to professional and low-wage services rather than commodity output, and segment the goods and services production stream through outsourcing and routine use of the technical expertise of small, independent firms. Such dislocations create the illusion that individuals in the post-industrial workforce are more singular, autonomous and self-dependent than in the past, and come to disguise the continuing reliance of a majority of the population upon social services and public goods. Halstead and Lind, unable to transcend the myopic frame that presents to view only an increasingly individuated work process, are thus led, logically enough, to

reject the basic pillars of the New Deal social contract. "The guiding principle of an Information Age contract should be to link all benefits directly to individuals rather than to employers or other intermediary institutions." (64) They call this a *citizen-based social* contract, which connects the distribution of resources and rewards immediately to individual recipients, and eliminates the role of all bureaucratic agencies, private or public, corporate or state-based, from responsibility for social welfare delivery. "The overwhelming advantage of a citizen-based social contract is that basic benefits would flow directly to *individuals* following them from job to job." (72) Building upon this notion of the "citizen-based social contract," Halstead and Lind claim to shatter the rigid programmatic thinking associated with the issue configurations and policy presuppositions of the old industrial welfare state. Because it steps outside these presuppositions, theirs, they argue, is a public philosophy free of ideological taint.

Indeed, unconstrained by the traditional perspectives of the major parties, Halstead and Lind bounce back and forth from one side of the political spectrum to the other, offering policy proposals that will sometimes please and sometimes offend progressives and conservatives alike. Yet while their overall schema might appear to be an eclectic menu of proposals, a sort of one from column A, one from column B approach to public policy, their framework of analysis has, in fact, an ideological consistency. For, in every case, they focus on programs that target benefits to the abstract 'individual citizen,' rather than take into account the collective formation of which those individuals may be part, and ignoring whatever problems of the commons might lurk behind the scenes. To make this point more clearly, in what follows I want first to assess the ways in which the authors approach two policy issues in particular, universal health coverage, and the viability of Social Security. I follow with a cursory survey of some of the other policy proposals discussed in the book, so that I might make more explicit their underlying and connecting public philosophy. Finally, I'll conclude with a critique of Halstead and Lind's general philosophy of social policy, arguing that it misjudges the role and character of the public sphere in an era governed by programming technologies, and has the potential to undermine critically the democratic fabric necessary to hold a post-industrial world together.

As I have tried to show, at the center of Halstead and Lind's concept of policy formation is the principle that social benefits ought flow directly to individuals, free of the connective tissue of mediating corporate agencies,

whether private or public. In the case of medical coverage, for example, they argue that health insurance should no longer be tied to employment. Rather, government should institute a mandatory individual health insurance system, which, funded by payroll deductions, would, at the same time, support independent workers, low-wage employees, the unemployed, and the indigent.

> Just as most states require citizens with cars to buy car insurance, so every American would be required by the federal government to purchase a basic private health insurance policy . . . The federal government, meanwhile, would subsidize the purchase of private health insurance by those unable to cover full cost of a basic plan . . . (75)

No one would be allowed to fall below a governmentally determined health care minimum. Since private insurers would carry these policies, but all persons required to hold one, the proposal would be a form of universal health coverage. Yet it would keep the insurance industry happy, and have the added advantage of portability, following individuals from job to job, or, should unemployment strike, out of the job market altogether.

Such a market-oriented response to the crisis of health coverage in the United States still leaves the problems of what minimums would be set, how fees would be determined, how the system would handle regional variations, and how much leverage the insurance industry would exercise. The plan would probably do no better in bringing health coverage to every member of the polity than the current Section 8 rental assistance program under HUD has done in bringing adequate housing to everyone below a defined income level. That program, after all, lacks any provisions mandating that sufficient low-income housing be built, so the shortage of such housing remains. The homeless are still with us—and in growing numbers, it would seem. But just as more low-income people have better access generally to housing because of Section 8 subsidies, so too under Halstead and Lind's plan, would more independent, low-income, part-time, and unemployed workers have greater access to health insurance than they do at present. To be sure, it is not a single-payer system, as exists in Canada, and which Senator Paul Wellstone and Representative Jim McDermott proposed to the 103rd Congress, but finding a way to disconnect the health insurance provision from its unique association with employment would go a long way toward extending coverage to the many of whom a service economy, unless buffered by some

form of a national health service, leaves uninsured. The point is that this proposal, by holding government accountable for the availability of health coverage for all, ties itself to the principle of shared citizenship, the idea that the state needs to support a public sphere through which citizens take some level of responsibility for one another's economic security. The health insurance subsidies will, after all, come out of tax dollars. But Halstead and Lind's proposed resolution to the dilemma posed by Social Security on the other hand, moves in the opposite direction. Although rooted in the same concept of the 'citizen-based social contract' as their health coverage proposal, it undercuts the public sphere's role by weakening the societal commitment to protect against the potential economic ravages of, in this case, retirement.

Not surprisingly, driven by the same logic of an individually-centered public policy, Halstead and Lind support the political initiative, originated by the Cato Institute, to privatize—or, as it supporters insist, 'partially privatize'—Social Security. The technical policy arguments for either privatizing Social Security, or finding ways to retain its basic structure of generational income transfer are familiar. Loosely speaking, given the declining proportion of younger to older workers, and the fact that surplus Social Security taxes are used to purchase low risk, but low-yield government bonds, the fund is expected to run out of money sometime in the second quarter of the century. The way to uphold a viable pension program, according to one side of the argument, is to allow workers to invest a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes in private—"personal"—financial accounts. Those who want to retain an independent and publicly directed Social Security Trust offer a number of alternatives. Revenue into the fund could be increased, for example, by lifting the cap on the earnings subject to the payroll tax, or by allowing the government agency responsible for the trust to invest a portion of its monies in higher yield public or private securities. No resolution is totally satisfactory at this point, and there is no need here to rehearse in detail the various proposals. What I do want to suggest, however, is that one of the key issues at the root of this policy debate is not the efficacy of this or that specific program, but the deeper question of the role of the public sphere in the service-based economy, and the ideal of shared citizenship to which that sphere is connected.

Halstead and Lind make clear their disdain for any concern with the promotion of shared citizenship as part of public policy, particularly in relation to Social Security.

> The major reason for replacing, rather than reforming the
> Social Security system inherited from the New Deal, is as
> much philosophical as it is pragmatic. A public pension
> system should be based primarily on individual savings
> rather than an intergenerational transfer system; it should
> encourage individual self-reliance, with assistance when
> necessary from the government, not paternalism by an all-
> providing government. Many on today's Left . . . defend
> Social Security on the grounds that it provides a sense of
> shared citizenship among Americans . . . [But] Franklin
> Delano Roosevelt thought of Social Security as insurance,
> not as a sacred political expression of egalitarian solidarity . .
> . (86)

Now, it is certainly *not* the case that the normative principle of social accountability of citizens to one another should trump all other criteria for policy adoption, including the plain and simple one of a program's ability to realize its material goals effectively. But the singular focus on a recipient's direct connection to the distribution of benefits, as opposed to a perspective that takes into account his or her relation to countless unknown others through complex societal formations, may be particularly wanting as a philosophy of public life. It may both weaken the consensual solidarity necessary to overcome the vastly differentiated social worlds created by advanced technological modes of organization and production, and, in many areas, simply not be adequate to get the job done. Privatization of social security, in fact, fails on both these counts. The recent collapse of the private security markets, and the devastating loss of value in 401k's, demonstrate that failure on the empirical side. And it is not clear that, despite his patrician standing, the presidential leader who made freedom from want and freedom from fear two of the pillars of his political vision was as dismissive of the normative ideal of shared citizenship as Halstead and Lind imply he was.

An overview of the policy proposals offered throughout the text of *The Radical Center* shows they are all guided by the same general principle of "enhancement of individual self-reliance." Tying their ideas to this premise allows the authors to move back and forth between traditionally "left" and "right" proposals, since no ideological perspective within a democratic framework is actually opposed to self-reliance as a value. The issue for progressives has always been whether government action is necessary to *create*

the conditions whereby the greatest number of citizens can *achieve* self-reliance. Thus, some of Halstesd and Lind's suggestions are compatible with *both* increasing individual opportunities for the pursuit of well being *and* governmental responsibility for shaping the life-world situations that make those opportunities possible. They urge, for example, that the United States replace its fifty separate state sales tax systems with a single and simple national consumption tax, whose proceeds would be rebated to the states on a per capita basis, and would therefore be progressive and redistributive in nature. Individuals whose incomes are at the higher levels, and who therefore consume more, would be compelled to pay more to the commonweal, while the states would be compensated on the basis of population, whatever their contribution to the general revenue. On the other hand, as a trade-off, Halstead and Lind would get rid of the corporate tax, while increasing taxes on capital gains and passive income, thus eliminating "the corporate middleman," ending "the double taxation of capital" and placing the tax burden "where it belongs—on shareholders." (136) It is not clear, however, whether ending taxes on corporate profits would further social justice.

In the disputes over education, Halstead and Lind, not surprisingly, support voucher systems—ignoring the two-tier educational structure which such programs, by abandoning public schools to the students with the greatest learning and behavioral difficulties, would inevitably create. Apparently, the Information Age has no need to give priority to the maintenance of a strong and inclusive public education system. At the same time, however, they advocate a national program to end to the unequal funding of public schools, urging that the revenues from their proposed national consumer tax be distributed to the states on a per pupil basis. (154) Thus, those left behind in the public education sector would at least be provided uniform resources with which to meet national standards. Finally, when it comes to the issue of racial equality, Halstead and Lind would, of course, eliminate affirmative action. "[W]e need to abandon the system of racial classifications and preferences that, at this stage in our nation's history, only serves to reinforce racial differences instead of diminishing them, and to polarize our nation instead of unifying it," they insist. (176) Now, there are many difficulties with race-targeted programs, including the backlash and divisiveness they re-enforce, but there is an equivalent backlash created by public policies that ignore the continuing impact of past discrimination both on people's cultural self-identity, and on existing inequitable distribution of resources. It is questionable whether one can create a legitimizing consensus across a history of racial discrimination and denial of opportunity by banishing the claims of

those on the minority side of the divide, and attempting, by policy definition, to render color invisible. Still, even as the authors recommend erasure of the formal political recognition of racial differences, they call for the retention of anti-discrimination laws. And though, in the interest of justice for members of all groups, such laws are essential, it is unclear how they could be meaningfully enforced unless the state insisted on collecting records in employment, housing, education, and banking and consumer services that acknowledged the viability of racial classification generally.

In the end, it is not particularly fruitful to approach this book by assessing its policy prescriptions one by one, though it is important to have some sense, at least, of what those prescriptions are. It is much more crucial to examine the public philosophy the text promotes, and the underlying assumptions by which its authors support or reject policy proposals. As I have tried to show, its first principle of tying welfare delivery directly to individuals misses the crucial role played by the political imaginary of the public sphere, which understands the fate of all members of a polity to be linked in some way. This is not to argue that, within the frame of a welfare state, all social service programs must rely on bureaucratic implementation, or that no privatization of services can ever achieve public purpose, or that the use of markets to realize collective ends is in every case counterproductive. To put the matter another way, to pose against each other the safety net and universal provider models of government economic protection is to offer a false dichotomy. Sometimes one model will achieve the goal of economic security, sometimes the other. The test in every case is *precisely* the extent to which a policy legitimizes and reinforces the notion of shared citizenship, particularly given the insular living spaces created by the information society. For we threaten the very networks of democratic culture when we shred the convictions that define the contemporary public sphere. These are the beliefs that people are accountable to one another across the borders of class and group identity, and that governments are responsible to provide the institutional supports that allow each individual to attain an economically productive life.

Review

Communism: A History, by Richard Pipes

reviewed by
John C. Berg

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When I was growing up, every few years an old Japanese soldier would emerge from the caves of an island in the South Pacific, someone who was still fighting the war twenty years after it was over, not realizing that his side had lost. Richard Pipes is like that, but even worse: he does not realize that his side won.

While the Cold War was on, in book after book, Pipes lied, distorted, and quoted out of context to argue that the Soviet Union and communism were thoroughly evil and must be destroyed at any cost. His efforts won him a place in the National Security Council under President Reagan and a chance to help implement the policies he advocated. The results are history: the Soviet Union collapsed and the communist parties of the world ran for cover, emerging a few years later (if at all) as parties of the democratic left.

Time, one might think, for an old cold warrior to sit back and reflect, to mellow out, to wonder whether his enthusiasm for the fight had led him to overstate his position. Not Pipes. Here he is once more, throwing everything he can find at communism, kitchen sink included.

The essence of the Pipes approach can be seen in his discussion of private property. Early in the book we find the following:

> In the oldest civilizations, dating back five thousand years—
> pharaonic Egypt and Mesopotamia—agricultural land belonged to
> palaces and temples. Ancient Israel is the first country where we
> possess firm evidence of private land ownership. . . . But land
> ownership in ancient Israel was hedged by many religious and clan

restrictions. It is in classical Greece that from the earliest times agricultural land was privately held (pp. 6-7).

Pipes immediately adds a gloss, "In other words, there is no evidence that at any time, even in the most remote past, there existed societies that knew 'no boundary posts and fences' or ignored 'mine' and 'thine'—but the quoted passage actually says just the opposite, namely that private property of any kind arose with the beginning of civilization, and individual property much later than that. By the end of the book he has forgotten all about the beginnings of property in ancient Greece, and asserts:

> Marxism's basic contention that private property, which it strives to abolish, is a transient historical phenomenon—an interlude between primitive and advanced Communism—is plainly false. All evidence indicates that land, the main source of wealth in premodern times, unless monopolized by monarchs, had always belonged to tribes, families, or individuals. Livestock as well as commerce and the capital to which it gives rise were always and everywhere in private hands. From which it follows that private property is not a transient phenomenon but a permanent feature of social life and, as such, indestructible (p. 148).

Aside from the self-contradiction, this passage is symptomatic of the readiness with which Pipes resorts to sleight of hand: property was always (except for prehistoric times) privately held (except when it was held by the state, in the form of monarchy, or by the public, organized as tribes), and therefore always will be (an argument by which all modern technology would be impossible).

The sad thing about this is that Pipes neither confronts Marx's argument about property, nor makes his own best argument in response. Marx attempted (successfully, in my opinion) to show that the capitalist property relation creates a dynamic whereby capitalists are forced to grow at all costs, with poverty, environmental devastation, and war as the inevitable result. Thoughtful liberals have countered that the institution of private property is the only way that individual freedom can be preserved from the tyranny of a power-hungry state.

These conflicting arguments raise serious questions, not only for the left but for humanity. Can we find a way to end exploitation while preserving freedom? The Soviet communists failed to do so, and we can learn a lot by asking where they went wrong, and whether they could have done differently. Such deep thinking is beyond Pipes's powers, however; hence his reliance on dishonest wordplay.

Elsewhere in the book, Pipes

- asserts that, as of 1927, the threat of a war in which the Soviet Union might be invaded was "imaginary" (p. 58)—Germany not only invaded, but overran much of the country;

- also claims that "The short-lived Popular Front governments founded in France (1936-37) and Spain (1936-39) did little to bring the Communist parties into the mainstream of political life" (p. 107)— the Communists in Spain were killed or driven into exile by the fascist regime; those in France formed the background of the Resistance and were the main opposition party through the 1960s;

- criticizes Stalin because in World War II he "bought victory by the lavish expenditure of his subjects' lives" (p. 108)—as opposed to saving lives by surrendering to Hitler, apparently.

I have singled out these howlers because they typify Pipes's argument. Anything bad done by any communist—and there are many such things, regrettably—is taken as inherent to the nature of communism. Since Pipes never explores Marx's analysis of capitalism, his is unable to distinguish between stupid mistakes by sincere revolutionaries, opportunist claimings of the "communist" banner by such tyrants as Stalin, and developments which follow inevitably from Marxist principles.

In short, this is not a book, nor an author to be taken seriously. Modern Library has published *Communism* as part of their "Modern Library Chronicles," putting Pipes in the company of, among others, Chinua Achebe on Africa, Paul Fussell on World War II in Europe, Frank Kermode on the age

of Shakespeare, Hans Küng on the Catholic Church, Catharine Stimpson on the university, Steven Weinberg on science, and Gordon S. Wood on the American Revolution. The choice is unworthy.